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## **PCSW Joins Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman and Secretary of the State Denise Merrill in Calling Upon Congress to Pass Paycheck Fairness Act**

HARTFORD – In recognition of Equal Pay Day, several key political women leaders came together Monday to call upon Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. The Connecticut General Assembly's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) joined forces with U.S. Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-3<sup>rd</sup>), Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman and Secretary of the State Denise Merrill to demand an end to wage discrimination.

At a morning press conference at the Guilford Women and Families Center, the group, joined by representatives from the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the League of Women Voters, CT WOWPAC, Connecticut NOW, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and other women's organizations, protested the persistence of the discriminatory wage gap. Currently, women are paid, on average, just 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. The gap closes at less than half a cent per year, meaning that at the current rate, it will be 2056 before women are paid the same for a similarly qualified man.

In 1997, DeLauro first introduced the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would strengthen and close loopholes in the Equal Pay Act (passed in 1963) to help end workplace inequity. The Paycheck Fairness Act was the first law passed by the House of Representatives in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, but was not passed by the Senate and therefore not signed into law. DeLauro plans to reintroduce this legislation today.

PCSW Executive Director Teresa C. Younger said, "Despite incremental progress over the years, women across all economic strata are still being paid less than their male peers. This gender discrimination simply has to end, especially as women emerge as an even more vital segment of the workforce. Increasingly, women are becoming the primary breadwinners in many families, and so in addition to devaluing women, the wage gap deprives whole families of their economic security."

Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman stressed the long-term financial implications of the wage gap.

"This issue is not only about women earning less than men in the same job," Wyman said. "Women need to keep fighting for equal pay not only to support our families today, but so we can retire on the same footing as men. About half of all women are in jobs that do not offer retirement plans, which is a major reason why women make up the majority of older adults living in poverty. A lifetime of earning less pay means a retirement with less security for a woman and her family. That is not only an economic disadvantage, but is fundamentally unfair."

The PCSW, which has been the State's leading force for women's equality for 38 years, marks national Pay Equity Day with a series of public outreach and educational tools, including a sample lesson plan

and a Pay Equity Resolution municipalities can adopt. Several towns passed such a resolution this year, including Hartford, Middletown and East Haven.

In addition, at the PCSW's request, Gov. Dannel Malloy issued a proclamation designating today (Tuesday, April 12) Pay Equity Day in Connecticut, saying, "...a vast majority of households depend on the wages of a working mother and working families are often just one paycheck away from hardship."

The Governor also released the following statement today: "My wife, Cathy, an advocate for victims of sexual assault; my mother, a nurse and a union organizer; and the Lieutenant Governor, Nancy Wyman, are all examples of women who have worked as hard and become as successful as men in their respective fields. Despite decades of fighting for reform, on average, women in Connecticut working full time still earn only 76 percent of what men earn doing the same job. The time to end this systemic discrimination is long past due, and I commit to working with others to help make sure that men and women earn the same amount of money for the same job. In these tough economic times, it's unfair, and frankly, embarrassing, that we're making it any harder for families to make ends meet."

### Statistics about the Wage Gap:

- The Wage Project estimates that over a lifetime (47 years of full-time work) the wage gap amounts to a loss in wages for a woman of: \$700,000 for a high school graduate, \$1.2 million for a college graduate and \$2 million for a professional school graduate.<sup>i</sup>
- The wage gap extends across all job grades: Female physicians and surgeons earned 36% less than their male counterparts and female nursing, psychiatric and home health aides earned 17% less than similarly employed men, despite comprising 88% of the field.
- The gap is even worse for women of color: African-American women earned just 61.9 cents for every dollar earned by men in 2009 and Hispanic and Latina women earned just 52.9 cents for every dollar men earned.<sup>ii</sup>
- Mothers are 44% less likely to be hired than non-mothers for the same job given the same resume and experience. Additionally, mothers are offered an average of \$11,000 less than non-mothers with equal qualifications.<sup>iii</sup>
- In Connecticut, women make up 51.3% of the state's labor force<sup>iv</sup> comprising 66.5% of private not-for-profit wage and salary workers<sup>v</sup> and their median earnings are \$34,192 compared to \$41,923 for men.<sup>vi</sup>
- Women, who make up 63.5% of local government workers,<sup>vii</sup> have median earnings of \$40,201 compared to \$52,715 for men.<sup>viii</sup>
- Twenty-percent of Connecticut working families do not have enough income to meet their basic costs of living based upon the family economic self-sufficiency standard (FESS).<sup>ix</sup> Of the 20%, female head of households represent 29% vs. 14% of male head of households.<sup>x</sup>

<sup>i</sup> National Committee on Pay Equity, *The Wage Gap Over Time: In Real Dollars Women See a Continuing Gap*

<sup>ii</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research *Compilation of Current Population Survey Labor Force Statistics, 2009* < <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/C350.pdf> >

<sup>iii</sup> < <http://www.momsrising.org/manifesto/chapter7> >

<sup>iv</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *American Fact Finder, Connecticut Selected Economic Characteristics: 2005-2007*

<sup>v</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Fact Finder, *Connecticut Class of Worker by Sex and Earnings in the Past 12 Months (2007 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over*

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<sup>viii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Fact Finder, *Connecticut Class of Worker by Sex and Earnings in the Past 12 Months (2007 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over*

<sup>ix</sup> Diana M. Pearce, Ph.D. *Overlooked and Undercounted: Where Connecticut Stands*. Prepared for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, June 2007.

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*About the PCSW: The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women was formed in 1973 under Sec. 46a of the Connecticut General Statutes to study and improve Connecticut women's economic security, health and safety; to promote consideration of qualified women to leadership positions and to work toward the elimination of gender discrimination. As a non-partisan arm of the General Assembly, the agency monitors, critiques and recommends changes to legislation in order to inform public policy, and assesses programs and practices in all State agencies for their effect on the state's women. The PCSW serves as a liaison between government and its diverse constituents, and convenes stakeholders, including the business, non-profit and educational communities, local governments, and the media, in order to promote awareness of women's issues.*