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Two Women and Girls' Funds Give Grant in Support of PCSW

STATEWIDE – In their first-ever statewide collaborative effort, two major philanthropic funds for women and girls have granted a total of \$25,000 to the Foundation for Connecticut Women in support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). For the second year in a row, Gov. M. Jodi Rell has called for the elimination of the non-partisan, 37-year-old PCSW, and the newly announced grant was given along with testimony at a public hearing held recently to call attention to a broad range of issues affecting women, as well as to the PCSW's work on those issues.

The two funds – the Fairfield County Community Foundation's Fund for Women and Girls, and the Community Fund for Women and Girls, a component fund of the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven – together serve a third of all women in the state. In pooling their resources, the two Funds recognize the need for the advocacy, research and public policy work of the PCSW.

The Fairfield County Community Foundation's Fund for Women and Girls, which serves a region of 900,000 voting women, donated \$15,000, and the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven's Community Fund for Women and Girls, serving 315,000 voting women, donated \$10,000. The grants were announced at Women's Day at the Capitol, an annual informational public hearing convened recently by the PCSW to provide Connecticut women an opportunity to give oral and written testimony on issues of concern to them.

“In Greater New Haven, the Fund for Women and Girls focuses on investments in education and job training, health and safety, including violence against women, and political participation,” Helene A. Robbins, chair of the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven's Community Fund for Women and Girls, said in making the announcement on her organization's behalf. “These areas represent core issues for women and girls and where our grants can have the most impact, and we arrived at them based on the data and recommendations of the PCSW. We depend on the PCSW to inform our decisions, make them strategic and effective, to reach our mutual goal of true equality for our grandmothers, our mothers, our daughters, our granddaughters, our sisters – for all of us.”

The Fairfield County Community Foundation's Fund for Women and Girls grant was announced by Steering Committee members Mary Lee Kiernan and Kyle Wilcox. In their testimony, they explained why this fund – the largest women's fund in New England – supports the PCSW.

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“There is no other resource in the state that gathers and tracks gender-specific data across a range of issues. Additionally, PCSW’s advocacy on behalf of women advances the Fund’s mission and inspires both our work and our donors’ support. Supporting a legislatively created, highly respected, and credible commission such as PCSW will keep Connecticut focused on issues that disproportionately and unfairly impact women.”

The grants were made to the Foundation for Connecticut Women, a 501c (3) that exists to support the work of the PCSW and the women it serves. The PCSW, an arm of the Connecticut General Assembly, focuses on work in three priority areas: women’s economic security; health and safety; and the elimination of gender discrimination.

“Throughout society, women give 80 percent of philanthropic donations, and the Women and Girls’ Funds throughout Connecticut are known not only for their generosity to their individual communities – nearly \$700,000 each year – but for their strategic recognition of the full range of issues affecting women,” said PCSW Executive Director Teresa C. Younger. “It’s gratifying for us to work collaboratively with them on a statewide basis because, as Connecticut’s leading force for women’s equality, we work on the broad spectrum of issues that affect women across their lifespan, regardless of economic strata, geography, age or race. We’re very pleased that in working with the Women and Girls’ Funds, we’re able to bring to bear our research, advocacy and public policy efforts on behalf of the women we all serve.”

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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 “all matters concerning women, and in furtherance of that responsibility shall: (a) inform leaders of business, education, State and local governments and the communications media of the nature and scope of the problem of sex discrimination, with a view to enlisting their support in working toward improvement; (b) serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with services for women; (c) promote consideration of qualified women for all levels of government positions; (d) oversee coordination and assess programs and practices in all State agencies as they affect women.”

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