

Connecticut General Assembly



PCSW

Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

The State's leading force for women's equality

Official Statement

18-20 Trinity St., Hartford, CT 06106 • 860/240-8300 • pcsw@cga.ct.gov • www.cga.ct.gov/pcsw/

CONTACT: Christine Palm, Communications Director at 860/240-8449; or 860/836-2145

FROM: Carolyn Treiss, Executive Director

DATE: March 26, 2015

RE: S.B. 636 Committee Meeting

While the PCSW commends the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee for passing S.B. 636: An Act Concerning Affirmative Consent with a bipartisan vote, we find certain aspects of the committee meeting problematic. Specifically, we object to:

- The notion expressed that women frequently lie about being victims of unwanted sexual activity.
- Jokes and dismissive remarks made about a very serious and painful subject.
- Inappropriate behavior directed toward female committee members.
- The implication that “mild” forms of unwanted sexual activity may be permissible.
- The suggestion that prior consent may be a greenlight for future sexual advances, even if unwanted.
- And perhaps most importantly, the expressed belief that non-consensual sex is a matter of morality, and not one of violence against women.

While not wishing to cast any doubt on the sincerity of our elected officials in crafting public policy for the good of all, the PCSW believes that the tone of this publically broadcast committee meeting indicates we need a better framework for discussing sexual violence against women, an issue which has direct, severe, and long-term implications for our educational, social and public safety climates.

I want to stress we do not see this as a partisan issue, and that it would be foolhardy to single out any one individual or political party.

To that end, the PCSW has called upon leadership of all four caucuses to meet with us to address the incident as soon as possible.