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**FROM:** Teresa Younger, Executive Director, PCSW

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**RE:** New AAUW Report on State-by-State Wage Gap

**FACT:** Connecticut's gender-based wage gap is currently at 78%, putting it just one percentage point better than the national average of 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man.

"This is a 'good news/bad news' situation. While it's true that the pay gap in Connecticut has narrowed one percentage point over last year, Connecticut's middle-of-the-road ranking on the new AAUW wage gap report -- 25th out of 50 states -- is ongoing cause for concern. This figure is not a surprise to us, but the causes are less clear and may in part be attributable to the nature of industry here; many of the state's highest-paying jobs are in industries traditionally not welcoming to women, such as finance and defense.

"The wage gap has long-term consequences for the state and its citizens: the longer a woman works under this disparity, the wider the gap grows, which has devastating effects on women's asset-building potential. And, since women tend to live longer than men, it's a recipe for disaster in a state where 68% of residents over the age of 85 are female (*U.S. Census*). At its current rate, the pay gap won't close until the year 2056. That's not only a very long time to wait for gender parity, it's a drain on the state's economy now: the less women earn, the less families have to spend on goods; the less women earn, the less they pay in income tax; and the more women are deprived of equal wages, the less they receive from Social Security and the more they need the safety net. So, in this light, closing the wage gap can be seen as an economic stimulus. In fact, the Institute for Women's Policy Research estimates that if women were paid the same as men, it would boost the national economy 3 to 4 percentage points, or the equivalent of about \$3 trillion.

"This is just the latest piece of evidence supporting the need for passage of The Paycheck Fairness Act, sponsored by Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro and Sen. Barbara Mikulski of Maryland. The Act would improve upon the Equal Pay Act, put the onus on the employer to prove the wage disparity is not based on gender, allow employees to disclose salary information with each other (so that a woman can be aware of when she's making less than her male peers), and prevent retaliation against a woman who raises pay equity issues."

Read the AAUW report here: <http://www.aauw.org/learn/research/upload/simpletruthaboutpaygap1.pdf>

*About the PCSW: The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women was formed in 1973 under Sec. 46a-1 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.*