

Connecticut General Assembly



PCSW

Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

The State's leading force for women's equality

Official Statement

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

FROM: Teresa Younger, Executive Director

DATE: March 26, 2014

RE: Minimum Wage Increase

“The increase to \$10.10 will affect women more than it does men. According to the Economic Policy Institute, 80,000 Connecticut women are directly affected (as compared with 60,000 men) and 46,000 women (as opposed to 41,000 men) are indirectly affected.

“That’s about 16 percent of the total female workforce in Connecticut (estimated at 766,000); additionally, 55 percent of the total workforce that earns at (or near) minimum wage is female.

“As women increasingly become the sole or primary breadwinner, that’s a significant number of families who will be able to move that much closer to economic security. And, especially critical for women, the raise will make it a little easier to begin to acquire retirement assets so as to have more security in their old age.

“Since the minimum wage rarely registers as a viable number to determine the cost of living in an expensive state such as Connecticut, PCSW has contracted with researchers to develop a report that more accurately report what is needed to be self-sufficient in Connecticut: the *Family Economic Self Sufficiency Standard* (FESS), which calculates what a working family needs in order to meet basic expenses.

“According to FESS, a minimum wage of \$10.56/hr. would allow families to maintain basic needs without government assistance. So while a minimum wage of \$10.10 doesn’t quite reach this benchmark, it is a very good step in the right direction, and will move thousands of families closer to self-sufficiency. If we want workers to succeed, and to be able to support themselves and their families, then we have to create a realistic floor on wages – not one that leaves working adults and their families at or below poverty.”

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.