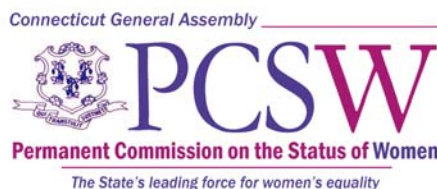


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**Testimony of
Teresa C. Younger
Executive Director
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Labor and Public Employees Committee
Tuesday, February 24, 2009**

In Support of:

S.B. 362, AAC Equal Pay for Equal Work

H.B. 6187, AA Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Leave to Employees

Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of S.B. 362, AAC Equal Pay for Equal Work and H.B. 6187, AA Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Leave to Employees.

S.B. 362, AAC Equal Pay for Equal Work

PCSW has been working for the past 35 years to establish pay equity for women, and therefore we strongly support S.B. 362, AAC Equal Pay for Equal Work, which would strengthen State law by providing an enhanced State enforcement law for employees discriminated against on the basis of gender.

Since the Equal Pay Act was signed in 1963, the wage gap has been closing at a very slow rate. In 1963, women who worked full-time made 59 cents for every dollar earned by men.¹ In 2007, women earned 77.8 cents for every dollar earned by men; in Connecticut it was 71 cents.² **That means that the wage gap has narrowed by less than half a cent per year.³**

¹ "The Wage Gap over Time: In Real Dollars Women See a Continuing Gap" National Committee on Pay Equity. Accessed December 9, 2008 <<http://www.pay-equity.org/info-time.html>>.

² Institute for Women's Policy Research. *The Gender Wage Gap*, 2007.

³ National Committee on Pay Equity.

Women of color earned significantly less, with African-American women earning 70 cents and Hispanic women earning 62 cents for every dollar men earned.⁴

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.⁵

The number of working women has risen from 18.4 million in 1950,⁶ to 67.8 million in 2007,⁷ and is anticipated to grow to 76 million by 2014.⁸ In Connecticut, women make up 51.3% of the state's labor force,⁹ 66.5% of private not-for-profit wage and salary workers,¹⁰ and 63.5% of local government workers.¹¹

Today most mothers participate in the labor force. There is a pay gap for women due in part to their caregiving responsibilities over the lifecycle, since women take an average of thirteen years out of the workforce for family caregiving.¹² Studies show that working mothers suffer a wage penalty for parenting. For women under the age of 35, the wage gap between mothers and non-mothers is larger than the gap between men and women.¹³ 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.¹⁴ Single mothers are affected the greatest, making only between 56 cents and 66 cents to every man's dollar.¹⁵

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Perspectives on Working Women: A Databook," Bulletin 2080, 1980.

⁷ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Employment and Earnings, Annual Averages*, Table 11 "Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity," 2006.

⁸ Mtira Toosi. "Labor Force Projections to 2014: Retiring Boomers", *Monthly Labor Review Online*. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, November 2005, Vol. 128, No. 11.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, *Connecticut Selected Economic Characteristics: 2005-2007*.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 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: 2005-2007*.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Jeffrey R. Lewis, and Cindy Hounsell, eds, *What Women Need to Know About Retirement*. Heinz Family Philanthropies and the Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement.

¹³ Shelley J. Correll et al., "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?" *American Journal of Sociology*, 112:5, March 2007.

¹⁴ <<http://www.momsrising.org/manifesto/chapter7>>.

¹⁵ <http://www.mothersmovement.org/features/krf_interview/next_for_women_2.htm>.

However, the wage gap is not solely due to women's caregiving responsibilities; even when women work in the same occupations as men for the same amount of time, they still do not earn equal pay. In 2007, certain professions showed a significant wage gap:¹⁶

- Female physicians and surgeons earned a whopping 41% less than their male counterparts.
- Females in professional and related occupations earned over 27% less than their male counterparts.
- Female college and university teachers earned over 25% less than those who were male.
- Female lawyers earned 23% less than male lawyers.
- Females in sales and office occupations earned 23% less than similarly employed men.
- Female elementary and middle school teachers earned nearly 10% less than similarly employed men, despite comprising 82% of the field.
- Female registered nurses earned more than 10% less than their male colleagues, although 90% of nurses are women.

Work and wage policies have not expanded to adapt to the existing and future workforce. You have an opportunity through this bill, to right an inequity that has gone on for far too long.

H.B. 6187, AA Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Leave to Employees

PCSW encourages passage of H.B. 6187 which would require employers of 50 or more employees to provide paid sick leave to their employees for the an employee's or an employee's child's sickness, and to handle sexual assault or family violence issues.

Here are three quick facts on paid sick leave:

- 40% of Connecticut employees have no paid sick days.¹⁷
- 77% of low-wage earners lack paid sick days.¹⁸
- 78% of employees working in food service and accommodations lack paid sick days.¹⁹

These three facts significantly impact the lives of women in the State of Connecticut.

¹⁶ National Committee on Pay Equity.

¹⁷ Vicky Lovell. *Everyone Gets Sick, Not Everyone Has Time to Get Better*. National Partnership for Women and Families. April 2008.

¹⁸ Vicky Lovell. *Time to be Sick: Why Everyone Suffers When Workers Don't Have Paid Sick Leave*. Institute for Women's Policy Research, May 2004.

¹⁹ Vicky Lovell. *Everyone Gets Sick, Not Everyone Has Time to Get Better*. National Partnership for Women and Families. April 2008.

40% of Connecticut employees have no paid sick days.

Women represent 51.3% of Connecticut's labor force.²⁰ Of the female population ages 20 to 64, 75.6% (1,063,307) are in the labor force, of which 66% have children under the age of 6 years old.²¹

77% of low-wage earners lack paid sick days.

According to the Family Economic Self-sufficiency Standard (FESS), 20% of Connecticut working families do not have enough income to meet their basic costs of living.²² Of the 20%, female head of households represent 29% vs. 14% of male head of households.²³

78% of employees working in food service and accommodations lack paid sick days.

Nationally, only 14% of hospitality and food service employees, 43% of retail employees, and 61% of healthcare employees have paid sick leave.²⁴ In Connecticut, these industries are dominated by women, as women represent 51.8% of sales and related occupations, 78.1% of personal care and service occupations, and 81.2% of healthcare support occupations.²⁵

In 2006, the PCSW commissioned a poll, conducted by the University of Connecticut's Center for Survey Research & Analysis, and found that more than half of Connecticut workers (56%) worry about losing pay or their job if they are sick; and, 36% worry about having trouble at work because of taking time off to care for a family member.²⁶

Employees with no paid sick leave must decide whether to go to work ill or take unauthorized time off without pay, which may result in the termination of their job. Lack of paid sick leave is a problem not only for employees, but also for their co-workers, employers and families. Employees who go to work ill are not only unable to perform at their usual level of productivity, but they also risk spreading their illness to co-workers. A recent Cornell study estimates that this situation costs our national economy \$180 billion annually in lost productivity which exceeds the cost of absenteeism and medical and disability benefits.²⁷

²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder. *Connecticut Selected Economic Characteristics: 2005-2007*.

²¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder. *Connecticut Employment Status: 2005-2007*.

²² Diana M. Pearce, Ph.D. *Overlooked and Undercounted: Where Connecticut Stands*. Prepared for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, June 2007.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ CT ACORN. *Paid Sick Days: Healthy Workers, Healthy Families* Fact Sheet, 2008.

²⁵ Connecticut Department of Labor. *Connecticut Occupational Statistics of the Civilian Labor Force* based on 2000 Census.

²⁶ University of Connecticut Center for Survey Research and Analysis. *Making Ends Meet: A Worry for the Majority of Connecticut Residents*. Prepared for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, October 2006.

²⁷ Ron Goetzal, et al. *Health Absence, Disability, and Presenteeism Cost Estimates of Certain Physical and Mental Health Conditions Affecting U.S. Employers*. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, April 2004.

Paid sick leave is an essential health care policy for all businesses. Employers' efficiency is raised when healthy workers are able to perform at their highest levels of productivity. This is not only the right thing to do, it is the financially sensible route: with the current state of economic turmoil, the business community cannot afford to risk lower productivity.

We appreciate your attention to these matters, and look forward to working with you on these issues.