

# Who we are and what we do...

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) was created in 1973 by an act of the Connecticut State Legislature.

Under Sections 46a-1 through 46a-6 of the Connecticut General Statutes, a seventeen-member Commission, the staff and volunteers work to eliminate sex discrimination in Connecticut.

Five Commission members are appointed by the Governor, four are appointed by the Speaker of the House, and four are appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. These members are unpaid and serve for terms of five years. Co-Chairs of the Judiciary committee and ranking minority members also serve on the Commission.

As required by statute, the PCSW studies all matters concerning women; informs the leaders of business, education and government about the nature and scope of sex discrimination; serves as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with services for women; promotes consideration of qualified women to all levels of government positions; and works with state agencies to assess programs and practices as they affect women. (C.G.S. 46a-4)

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## Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

Susan O. Storey, Chair  
Cindy R. Slane, Vice-Chair  
Adrienne Farrar Houel, Secretary  
Jean L. Rexford, Treasurer  
Marcia A. Cavanaugh  
Barbara DeBaptiste  
Anne Dailey  
Sandra Hassan  
Patricia T. Hendel  
Tanya Meck  
Robin L. Sheppard  
Carrie Gallagher Sussman  
Patricia E.M. Whitcombe

## Legislative Members

Senator John A. Kissel  
Senator Andrew J. McDonald  
Representative Michael P. Lawlor  
Representative Robert Farr

## Honorary Members

Connie Dice  
Patricia Russo

## Staff

Leslie J. Brett, *Executive Director*  
Barbara Potopowitz, *Public Information Officer*  
Natasha M. Pierre, *Senior Legislative Analyst*  
Rosemary Lopez, *Senior Administrative Assistant*  
Lillie Wright, *Senior Administrative Assistant*  
Christa Homola, *Legislative Secretary*



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## Public Policy

Since 1973, the PCSW has provided valuable research and analysis to the legislature and state leaders regarding such issues as sex discrimination in education, employment and credit, the health and safety of pregnant workers, child day care, women in nontraditional employment, sexual harassment, child support enforcement, equal education, women and healthcare, the economic status of women and welfare policy.

## Complaints: Information and Referral Services

A large part of the Commission's work is taking complaints from individuals who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of sex in employment, public accommodations, credit, education and other areas. Although the Commission is not an enforcement agency, its staff provides information and referral regarding legal rights and assistance in filing formal complaints with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

## Public Information

The PCSW provides speakers, fact sheets, educational booklets and other materials addressing a broad range of women's issues. In addition, the PCSW can provide skilled workshop leaders who can facilitate discussion on subjects from sexual harassment to health care to welfare reform to the economic status of women for community groups, businesses or government agencies.

## PCSW Talent Bank

The PCSW maintains a file of qualified women for consideration for appointments to state agencies and various boards, councils and commissions in state government.

## **S**pecial Projects of the Commission include...

- Trafficking of Women and children is a project that is concerned with studying the laws, services and protections for victims of trafficking for labor or sexual exploitation.
- Congressional District Advisory Councils to create a forum for leaders in different regions of the state to share information and ideas about women's issues.
- Nontraditional Employment for Women program which has three components: a Pre Apprentice Training Program to prepare women to enter skilled trades apprenticeships; technical assistance about recruitment and retention for training providers and employers; and an annual Women in the Trades and Nontraditional Occupations Conference.

## Ongoing Projects...

The Connecticut Women's Agenda (CWA) was established by the PCSW as a forum for groups concerned with women's issues to meet and share information and ideas regarding public policy.

The Connecticut Women's Health Campaign (CWHC) convened by the PCSW to create a strong voice for women's health care needs as public policy and healthcare reforms are developed and implemented.

Women's Economic Development Initiative (WEDI) works with women, legislators, leaders in government and the business community to create and enhance economic development opportunities for women business owners in the state. One of the projects of this initiative is a video and accompanying booklet, *Starting and Growing A Small Business: Choices for Success* and is available in all libraries in the state as well as through the PCSW office.

## **P**ublications/Reports

- Annual Legislative Summary
- Annual Report
- *Continuing Progress for CT Women*
- PCSW Brochures:
  - Who We Are and What We Do* (in English and Spanish)
  - Talent Bank*
  - Internship Program*
  - WEDI*
  - CDACs*
- *A Directory of Women's Organizations in Connecticut*
- *The Concerns of Women Business Owners - Public Hearing Report*
- *Trafficking of Women and Children in CT*
- FACTS UPDATE 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2002 editions
- *Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Consultants*
- *Selected Highlights of Women's History - US and Connecticut 1773 to the Present*
- Briefing Papers on Women's Health
- *Nontraditional Jobs for Women: A Resource Guide for Counselors and Women in Connecticut*
- Nontraditional Occupations Information Packet

*These and other publications are available free of charge from the PCSW office.*