Summary of issues/bills CWEALF testified on during the 2006 legislative session

CWEALF as leader:

Civil Rights

H.B. 5597 An Act Concerning Discrimination (Did not pass)
What this bill would do: strengthen current laws as well as send a strong and important message about the value of the residents of our state, regardless of their actual or perceived gender identity or expression. Also, this bill would add "sexual orientation" to the class bases set forth in Connecticut's deprivation of rights statute. While discrimination against students based on sexual orientation is prohibited in our education statutes, in order to reach that statute, section 46a-58(a) needs to be amended to include sexual orientation as well.

Family Law

HB 5536 An Act Concerning the Burden of Proof in Custody Proceedings Regarding the Relocation of a Parent with a Minor Child ***(Against) (PASSED)***
This bill: Removed the shifting burden on both parents in a relocation case and placed it solely on the relocating parent to show that 1. the move is legitimate 2. the proposed relocation is reasonable and 3. in the best interest of the child(ren)

5539 An Act Concerning Private Hearings and Confidential Records in Family Relations Matters ***(Against)****(Did not pass)*
What this bill would do: Provide that the hearings of family relations matters shall be private upon motion of either party or of counsel for any minor children, and that the records and papers in such matters shall be confidential, unless otherwise required in the public interest as determined by the court. *(CWEALF argued that this proposed bill was unnecessary since these provisions do not change existing law.)*

Senate Bill 5600, An Act Concerning Parenting Time and Parental Responsibility With Respect to the Custody of a Minor Child ***(Against)****(Did not pass)*
What this bill would do: Create presumptive joint legal physical custody.

Workforce/Employment Equity/Access to higher waged work

H.B 5079: An Act Concerning the Advanced Study in Mathematics and Science Initiative (Did not pass)
Emphasis on providing community college students, particularly those returning to school after many years, training that is critical to their success in the 21st century workforce.

H.B. 5528 An Act Establishing a Loan Forgiveness Program for Employees in High Need Occupations (Did not pass)
What this bill would do: Establish a loan forgiveness program for employees in high needs occupations.

H.B. 5619 An Act Concerning Nursing Shortages and Loan Repayment for Nurses (Did not pass)
What this bill would do: The bill's investments in the state's public and private institutions that educate nurses recognizes the need for investments at every level of the nursing ladder (licensed practical nurse, registered nurse, Master's level nurse educator).

H.B. 5767 An Act Concerning Licensed Practical Nurse Programs in Vocational-Technical High Schools (Did not pass)
The bill promotes: Flexible educational programming and supports in order for working adults to pursue higher level occupations. Part-time LPN programs would allow workers to balance school and employment while helping the state to meet its workforce needs in this area.

H.B. 6859 An Act Concerning a Career Ladder Program for Education Paraprofessionals and Loan Forgiveness for Teachers
What this bill would do: Recommended strategies for career advancement such as scholarships, loan forgiveness and education incentives.

Senate Bill 70: An Act Concerning a Community Technical College Transfer Incentive Program (Did not pass)
What this bill would do: Ensure that financial obstacles do not preclude individuals from pursing advanced degrees.

SB 146 An Act Concerning the Establishment of Pilot Programs that Promote College Education for Low-Income Students (Did not pass)
What this bill would do: Create three pilot programs to provide for student household and family expenses of students with dependents while such students are attending a community-technical college or Charter Oak State College.

S.B. 354 An Act Concerning A Full-time Faculty Plan (Did not pass)
This bill recommends increased investments in key institutions of training and higher education.

S.B. 455 An Act Concerning the Early Childhood Education Workforce ***(PASSED)***
What this bill does: Development of accelerated pathways and bridge programs to assist individuals in attaining higher education and appropriate ECE training and certification.

S.B. 1098 An Act Concerning the Professionalization of the Early Childhood Education Workforce
What this bill would do: Establish a committee to review and assess pathways to advanced degrees in early childhood education and promote the professionalization of the field.

Youth/Title IX

S.B. No. 200 An Act Concerning Gender-specific and Trauma-informed Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse Services (Did not pass)
What this bill would do: this bill will have a positive impact on women served by behavioral health services and substance abuse services provided by the state and will have a particularly strong impact on women attached to the juvenile justice and adult correctional system.

H.B. No. 5504 An Act Concerning A Safe Learning Environment for Children and Youth (Did not pass)
What the bill would do: examine the current effectiveness of policies, report on the relationship of bullying and school drop-out rates and student suicide, identify practices that work to reduce bullying and harassment, and develop and independent Office of School Bullying Ombudsman.

H.B. No. 5548 An Act Concerning School Reporting of Bullying (Did not pass)
What this bill would do: strengthen the reporting mechanisms necessary to tackle bullying.

H.B. No. 5563 An Act Concerning Bullying Policies in School and Notices Sent to Parents or Legal Guardians ***(PASSED)***
What this bill does: refines the definition of bullying and empowering parents to be more involved in their children's school experience. Public Act 06-115

CWEALF supporting role:

Budgets

Testified at Appropriations about the Department Of Labor and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women budgets

Employment Law

SB 463 An Act Concerning Family and Medical Leave for State Employees for the Serious Illness of a Child ***(PASSED)***
What the bill would do: To permit a state employee to take family and medical leave to care for an ill child who is in the care of the employee, such as a custodial grandparent.

Senate Bill No. 22 An Act Concerning Family And Medical Leave For Employees Of Municipalities (Did not pass)
What this bill does: Extends coverage of family and medical leave to various municipal and school employees, thereby giving more Connecticut employees job stability and flexibility. *(Still does not cover boards of education, etc. just removes municipal and school employees from the exemption in the definition of employer).*

Senate Bill No. 23 An Act Concerning Family And Medical Leave For State Employees (Did not pass)
What this bill would do: Extend to state employees the same flexibility in using up to two weeks of their accumulated sick time for family and medical leave that private employees have.

Miscellaneous bills

Senate Bill No. 462 An Act Concerning a Fair Share Health Care Surcharge (Did not pass)
What this bill would do: Establish a Fair Share Health Care Surcharge to defray the costs to the state of providing health care coverage to employed individuals.

SB 445 An Act Concerning Emergency Health Care For Sexual Assault Victims (Did not pass)
What this bill would do: Require that hospitals that receives state money would provide, or arrange to provide, emergency contraction to rape victims.

SB 203 An Act Implementing Recommendations of the Child Poverty Council Concerning Educational Activities and Eligibility Under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (Did not pass)
This bill contained important education and trainings services to enhance women's ability to participate in Connecticut's skilled workforce.

SB 479 An Act Concerning Revisions to the Temporary Assistance Program (Did not pass)
What this bill would do: Exempt families with medical excuses from time limits, remove the "family cap," and expand extensions and Safety Net services to include families who are playing by the rules but have not secured employment that yields wages above the TFA payment standard