



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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New Prostitution Law begins to recognize the Harm in Prostitution

[Ottawa, Ont.] —Wednesday, June 4, 2014 –The Women's Coalition for the Abolition of prostitution, Pan Canadian women's-equality seeking coalition, is hopeful seeing the new law addresses the core harm of prostitution – the buying, the commodification and the pimping of women's bodies. However, the coalition is critical that the law doesn't fully address the compounding inequalities of gender, race and class of women in prostitution and that some elements of communicating for the purpose of selling sexual services are criminalized.

Michèle Audette for the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) explains the coalition's position: "prostitution exploits women and increases inequalities based on gender, race, age, disability and poverty. Our goal is to stop the prostitution of women through legal measures and public policies that recognize the obligations of the state to provide basic needs and protect women and young women from male violence against women."

The coalition insists that women should not be blamed for their own exploitation and that the sole responsibility will rest on the men who buy and sell women.

Lee Lakeman for CASAC (Canadian Association of sexual Assault Centre): "CASAC opposes the continued blame for women contained in this bill. No matter where this violence against women is committed it is the responsibility of those men who are buying sex. CASAC does therefore welcome the emphasis on criminalizing the actions of those buyers and managers of this sex industry. However vigilance will be required to assure that it is men buying not women selling sex against whom this law is imposed. The proposals for increased sentencing in this situation are both disheartening and unpersuasive since men are virtually never arrested much less effectively sentenced."

Kim Pate for the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) says: "Decriminalizing the women and holding accountable the men who buy and sell women and girls means nothing if women's economic, racial and social inequality is not addressed."

The coalition urges all parties in Parliament to support women's groups in their fight for women's equality and liberty. Diane Matte for Concertation des luttes contre l'exploitation sexuelle (CLES): "The Parliament needs to adopt new objectives to the law on prostitution. These objectives must take into account that prostitution is, at its very root, a form of violence against women. It is time that Canada looks at prostitution for what it is, a practice of inequality. We now count on all the political parties to embrace a non-partisan approach and choose women's right to equality and security."

Members of the Women's Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution:

Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes (AOcVF)

Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC)

Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS)

Concertation des luttes contre l'exploitation sexuelle (CLES)

Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)

Regroupement québécois des centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions caractère sexual (RQCALACS)

Vancouver Rape Relief & Women's Shelter

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