

Why New Englanders Against Sexual Exploitation

Sex trafficking cases have been prosecuted in every New England state. Often traffickers and sex buyers cross state lines to commit this crime. Last year, the federal government convicted a [pimp who sold women in MA and CT](#). An unrelated trafficker was indicted for exploiting teenagers [in RI and MA](#). A husband and wife couple were arrested in late 2018 after trafficking [Chinese women in ME, NH and VT](#). Sex trafficking survivors Darlene Pawlik and Jasmin Grace of NH describes being [sold to men](#) in multiple New England states.

Traffickers lure vulnerable victims to meet demand, especially to serve markets where prostitution is normalized. And sex buyers travel to places where sexual exploitation is legal or decriminalized.

When prostitution was legal in Rhode Island (1980–2009), [sex buyers came from Massachusetts](#) and other neighboring states to exploit prostituted people, especially women.

To confront sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, **we must work as a regional force.**

Bekah Charleston - Nevada Lawsuit

NCOSE

October 8, 2020

Bekah Charleston 00:00

My name is Bekah Charleston. Today I'm actually suing the State of Nevada, its Governor, and legislature, to end legalized prostitution. This is really important to me, because I was trafficked through the legal system of prostitution in Nevada. And I know exactly what it felt like being inside those dusty, dirty, disgusting hallways, having to meet men and turn as many customers as you can. Because the House took 50% off the top, and then my pimp took the other 50. So it was never enough for either of them. I always had to show up at every single bell, and keep going, no matter what my body was telling me. I think there's a lot of well-meaning people out there that have somehow confused this issue. And somehow it's become about women's choice, and autonomy over their own bodies. And that somehow, by fully decriminalizing prostitution, essentially legalizing it, that we're empowering women, that prostitution is a viable choice that they should make, when it's anything but. Prostitution is about the power and control men have over women's bodies. That women are a commodity to be bought and sold. And I think once you've lived a single day in the life, once you've had a single act of prostitution, you know, that is not true. You tell yourself those lie, to get up every day, and look at yourself in the mirror and get ready for work again that night. But once you're out of it, you can't help but look and see the destruction, that it will lead waste to your life. That no little girl ever wakes up one day and says, Mommy, I want to be a prostitute someday. That doesn't happen. Those are things that people are forced, manipulated, and coerced into doing. It doesn't matter if you're there through force by a trafficker or a pimp, or if you're there due to circumstance, because you've been living in poverty, you've experienced homelessness. There's so many drivers that get people to the, to the basest form of humanity. Or somehow you think that all you deserve is what people are willing to pay you for your own body. I'm here saying with this lawsuit, that it's not okay. Every single human being has dignity and value and worth and deserves to live a life free from exploitation. This case being heard before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, gives me hope. It gives me hope that no other woman has to go through what I went through because of a legal system set up on antiquated laws from 50 years ago that still allow women to be treated like public sexual property. Having this case heard in court means that my treatment wasn't justified, it means that I did not deserve to be abused and exploited in Nevada, because pimps and buyers thought it was legal. This is a landmark case, because it's the first of its kind ever where it's survivor led, survivors coming out to say, this happened to me, and I'm not willing to stand by and let brothels and pimps operate with impunity anymore. We can't be pro-prostitution and against human trafficking, because where you have one, you have the other. They are inextricably linked. Wherever you have a legal market, it only increases the demand for prostitution, which increases the illegal market. If you would like to help end legalized prostitution in America, you can help us in multiple ways. You can write the governor, the legislature, to let them know that we're not just going to stand by and let women and children be treated like commodities, as public sexual property. To let them

know that you do not condone a legalized system of prostitution, because it does not make it safer, or healthier. It simply normalizes it and teaches our kids that are growing up that it's okay to be bought and sold by other people. If you're in one of the states that is trying to fully decriminalize this issue right now, Washington DC has been a big push. New York, California have had big pushes. You have to get involved by writing your congress people. You have to get involved by writing your lawmakers, your assembly people. We have to let them know and hear survivor's stories. People like myself, there's hundreds, if not thousands of us that have come out and now can speak to the harms of what it's like working inside a legalized system of exploitation. I'm asking the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to declare Nevada's laws unconstitutional, and to provide injunctive relief for all the women that are still being purchased and treated as property. We need to see exit services and true choices and options to help women get free and realize that they are worth more.

(Excerpts from) Prostitution is the “choice” of the choice-less, it preys on vulnerable populations.

Prostitution is a lack of choice, and typically is the last resort for those with the fewest of options.[1] A survey of those in prostitution found that 89% wanted to leave prostitution but felt like they had no viable alternative.[2] In a world where so many homeless persons, sexual abuse victims, foster care children, immigrant and indigenous women, refugees, persons of color, learning disabled, and transgender person already suffer from lives of political, social, and economic marginalization, it is a travesty of justice to decriminalize those who take pleasure in and literally profit from their sexual exploitation. The legalization and full decriminalization of prostitution assents to the sexual exploitation and trafficking of marginalized persons.

Systems of prostitution are not a “social security” substitute for the poor and disenfranchised. No one should ever be expected to give men access to their bodily orifices- mouth, vagina, and rectum in order to obtain shelter, healthcare, social services or to feed themselves and their children. Our society needs to invest in fixing the problems with healthcare, social services, homelessness, the foster care system, and more, instead of acquiescing to them and sanctioning that individuals should have to accept strangers sexually penetrating them in order to gain access to basic human needs.

Further, to the extent that prostitution is every truly a choice, and for most of the people it is not, it is a choice filled with inherent dangers.[3] This “choice” of danger includes physical and sexual violent traumas of rape, gang-rape, stabbings, beatings, and torture.[4] Prostitution is not a choice that any caring society would endorse as healthy and normative given the violence and harm within it.

[1] Catherine A. MacKinnon, *Trafficking, Prostitution, and Inequality*, 46 HARV. C.R.-C.L. L. REV. 271 (2011).

[2] Farley, M., Cotton, A. et al. (2003). Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries: An Update on Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. *Journal of Trauma Practice*, 2(3/4), 33-74.

[3] NCOSE. Bright Light on the Red Light: The Truth About Prostitution. <https://endsexualexploitation.org/prostitution/>

[4] Ibid

The Oldest Oppression ~ Vermont

Tricia Grant, Sex Trafficking Survivor:

When I was being trafficked in Vermont I was a minor. I was 15 years old. And every time, when I was in my home in Maine, and I knew that we were going to be brought to Vermont, I became frightened because it was the one place where I knew I would be brought and I never knew if I was going to end up coming home, or not. The people who purchased me, none of them cared about me. None of them cared about who I was or how old I was or if I wanted to be there. They had an agenda, which sometimes can be brutally violent. I know that other survivors that I have mentored and worked with have been brought to Vermont in many areas, homes, hotels, motels, massage parlors, strip clubs, bachelor parties. I can honestly say that 100 percent of the women that I've worked with, and I've worked with close to a thousand people, and I have not personally met even one person who has said that they wanted to be there and that this is empowering for them, or exciting, or something they love doing. Not one.

Taini Bien Ami, Executive Director, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women:

When you are talking about prostitution, you are talking about a system of brutal exploitation.

Audrey Morissey, Prostitution and Trafficking Survivor, Associate Director, My Life, My Choice:

The women that I encountered, they are so beaten. So traumatized.

Rebekah Charleston, Prostitution and Trafficking Survivor, Rebekah Speaks Out:

The vast majority have been abused, manipulated, forced into it, or they're trapped by circumstance.

Lauren Hersh, National Director, World Without Exploitation:

Those who are being bought are women and girls of color who are mostly poor.

Stacy Reed, Prostitution and Trafficking Survivor, Peer Mentor Advocate, RIA House:

I was turned out when I was 14 years old. Every time I tried to run away, there was no resources for me. Not a day that I've ever spent in the life of prostitution was okay for me.

Unnamed:

99 percent of the buyers are men.

Helen Taylor, Director of Intervention, Exodus Cry:

You can't fully achieve equality between men and women while there is this gender-based form of exploitation.

Peter Qualliotine, Co-Founder, Organization for Prostitution Survivors:

The problem originates with men, so unless we tackle the issue of demand, there's going to be generation after generation of vulnerable populations who are hurt in precisely this way.

Rob Spectre, CEO, Childsafe.AI:

Every single policy maker needs to go to a hobby board where these buyers congregate, and read what they have to say. Time and again they are demonstrating that what they feel they are buying is a commodity, not a human being.

Ben Gauen, Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for King County, WA:

A lot of men are deterred from engaging in prostitution because it's illegal, and if you were to take that illegality out of the equation, you would have an increase in demand. In order to meet that demand you would have a supply that would need to increase.

Haley Halverson, Vice President of Advocacy and Outreach, National Center on Sexual Exploitation:

A study from the London School of Economics analyzed 150 countries. Wherever prostitution was legal, demand for it skyrocketed and sex trafficking increased.

Rebekah Charleston, Prostitution and Trafficking Survivor, Rebekah Speaks Out:

I was actually trafficked through the legal system of prostitution in Nevada, in the brothels. And because of that legal market the sex trade in Nevada is 63 percent higher than the next highest state.

Melissa Holland, Co-Founder, Awaken:

Nevada's number 2 in the country for women to be murdered by men. Number 6 in the country for women to be raped by men. In the top 10 for youth to be trafficked.

Dr. Donna Hughes, Professor, University of Rhode Island:

Rhode Island decriminalized prostitution in 1980, and then ended it in 2009. It was becoming a sex tourist destination. It started attracting organized crime. And because the local law enforcement simply couldn't investigate prostitution, the state could not participate in federal investigations of sex trafficking of minors.

Unnamed:

Legalization, full decriminalization, these have been tried and these have failed. Both remove restriction on pimps, sex buyers, and brothel keepers. Especially full decriminalization, where there are virtually no regulations so they can exploit with impunity.

Tricia Grant, Sex Trafficking Survivor:

So if you're considering legalizing prostitution, my message is, talk to survivors of trafficking. Talk to people who have walked through this. Talk to people who have experienced this firsthand. Not just people who are advocating for decriminalization.

Audrey Morissey, Prostitution and Trafficking Survivor, Associate Director, My Life, My Choice:

People say, it's the oldest profession. It's actually the oldest oppression.

The Oldest Oppression | VERMONT

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKYKOr5B3ds>

Respectfully Submitted,

Maggie J. Kerrin

Vermont Chair

New Englanders Against Sexual Exploitation (NEASE)

As a service provider, professional, survivor, and leader in the movement to end exploitation, I respectfully submit this statement in opposition to this Burlington City Charter change, I write representing Amirah, Inc., one of the largest providers of exit and aftercare services to women exiting the commercial sex trade in New England. We work with women who are U.S. citizens and to date 61% of the women we have serve in our Residential program were sold for sex in Vermont at some point during their time in the sex trade.

In our 10 years of work, we have served more than 400 women who were sold in the commercial sex trade in the United States. We have learned through the stories of those who are from Vermont and were exploited in Vermont that the commercial sex trade is particularly active in Burlington and is directly connected to gang activity.

Those who survived the Vermont sex trade experienced an incomparable amount of physical and psychological harm. Upon admission to our program, we have had women still in recovery from having their pelvises and jaws broken by sex buyers. The gangs who exploited several of the women we have served brutalized their bodies to within inches of their lives. We have served women who had their heads shaved by their traffickers to humiliate them into submission. These women have experienced forced addictions, as traffickers used drugs to make them comply. Their families were openly targeted by traffickers and gang members. To this day, most of these women are unable to even return to the state of Vermont out of fear for their lives.

It has been well documented that when the sex trade has been fully decriminalized, there has been a significant increase in those who are being trafficked and exploited. What I have listed out has been happening now to women without the decriminalization of the sex trade. Should this happen, Vermont is guaranteed an increase in violence, and an increase in the exploitation of the most marginalized here in Vermont. While this charter language is seemingly harmless, removing archaic language, it in fact limits Vermont's ability to pursue legislation that would effect real change and help, rather than harm, all who find themselves in the commercial sex trade.

We recognize that some people choose to participate in the sex trade, but they are in the minority. The data show that as many as 89% of people in prostitution want a way out of the sex trade and many are there without a trafficker because they have no other way to survive.

The issue is that full decriminalization does not support those who are in the sex trade willingly or unwillingly. It will only increase the demand for their bodies, increase the violence that can be done against them, and support the buyers who often come from the most privilege. If your goal is safety for those in the sex trade, this will not help.

There are already little to no services in Vermont that provide support for those exiting prostitution. This is why I submit this statement representing an organization that is based in Massachusetts, because we are serving the women who are coming from Vermont looking for help.

I urge you to reconsider this proposal and be in conversation with those of us actively working in this field to explore other solutions that have been shown to benefit those in prostitution.

Respectfully,
Mary Speta
CEO, Amirah, Inc.

Dear Burlington City Council,

If the #MeToo movement has taught us anything, it is that the voices of survivors should be heard, respected, and believed. In the past month, survivors of the sex trade have stepped forward and provided testimony during the Burlington City Council meetings. We have spoken up *against* the City's choice to repeal all language in your ordinances and charter with regards to prostitution. But instead of listening to survivors, our voices were dismissed.

Perhaps our words weren't heard because many of us identify as sex trafficking survivors? You're likely wondering what prostitution has to do with sex trafficking. Before you come to a final vote, we need you to understand that prostitution has everything to do with trafficking.

Sex trafficking exists because there is a demand for commercial sex. When that demand is normalized through policies, or in this case abolishing policies, it outpaces the supply. Loosening policy- specifically making pimps, sex buyers and brothel owners legal, simply creates easier onramps into the sex trade for those already marginalized among us. You can be sure it will not be wealthy upper middleclass white women flocking to the sex trade for chances to feel empowered. It will be women and girls of color, impoverished people, indigenous people, and trans women who enter the sex trade.

To be clear, we want those sold in the sex trade to be decriminalized and provided with exit services, not criminal penalties. But we also want to make sure that those who are causing the harm- the pimps, brothel owners and sex buyers- are held accountable for the devastating harm they cause. By erasing language that prohibits sex buying and operating places of prostitution, you open the door in Burlington to those who wish to exploit others. By failing to add language that prohibits these behaviors, you put people just like us in harm's way.

Prostitution didn't help us overcome economic and social inequities. Those inequalities just forced us to choose the sex trade out of a set of crappy options. Regardless if we were trafficked or entered the sex trade by "choice," the system of prostitution caused us long-term harm and as the victims of the very violence you are considering giving a free pass to, we hope you will hear our voices.

Signed,

Alisa Bernard

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#LOVEHEALS



NATIONAL CENTER ON
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

10 REASONS

TO OPPOSE

**FULL DECRIMINALIZATION
OF PROSTITUTION**

CONFRONTING DISASTROUS PUBLIC POLICY
NORMALIZING SEX BUYERS, PIMPS,
AND BROTHEL KEEPERS

Prostitution is the exchange of sex acts for money or other things of value such as food or shelter. Those advocating for full decriminalization present prostitution as a job like any other, but that's deceptive. Systems of prostitution thrive on gender inequality, deeply rooted social injustices, as well as force, fraud, and coercion. Full decriminalization eliminates legal restrictions on **pimping, sex buying, and brothel keeping, not just the act of selling sexual access**. Here are ten reasons why this is disastrous public policy.

1. **Systems of prostitution exploit vulnerability.** Many people in systems of prostitution suffer from vulnerabilities and marginalization. Common adverse experiences that are pathways to prostitution include childhood sexual abuse,¹ homelessness,² and poverty.³ Other factors associated with prostitution involvement include a history of foster care,⁴ not having a high school degree,⁵ being a racial minority,⁶ an immigrant⁷ an indigenous minority,⁸ or LGBT person,⁹ as well as “entry” into prostitution as a child¹⁰ (i.e., sex trafficking). Systems of prostitution prey on and exploit these vulnerabilities.
2. **Full decriminalization of prostitution does not make prostitution safe. Prostitution creates trauma that cannot be regulated or decriminalized away.** Prostitution is inherently harmful. Prostitution results in a wide range of devastating physical harms and/or psychological trauma to those sold in it—even when it's legal¹¹ or fully decriminalized,¹² occurs indoors¹³ or outdoors,¹⁴ online¹⁵ or off.¹⁶
3. **Fully decriminalizing the sex trade creates on ramps to more sexual exploitation;** it removes laws targeting sex buyers¹⁷ who are overwhelmingly men.¹⁸ Removing these laws normalizes male demand for paid sex.¹⁹ Thus, men who were deterred from buying sex by possible criminal penalties are no longer inhibited.²⁰ As more men buy sex, more people are pulled into and exploited in prostitution. This approach benefits men who want to buy sexual access to people's bodies, affirms male sexual entitlement, and perpetuates gender-based violence.
4. **Decriminalizing exploitation diminishes law enforcement's ability to detect and investigate sex trafficking.** Victims of sex trafficking rarely make official complaints to the police.²¹ Further, the fully decriminalized sex trade operates with little to no oversight.²² It conceals indicators of fraud, force, and coercion,²³ and diminishes the flow of investigative leads²⁴ which stem from police operations focused on enforcing prostitution laws. Probable cause²⁵ for misdemeanor prostitution enables law enforcement to confirm ages and identities of prostituted persons. For instance, the lack of laws controlling indoor prostitution in Rhode Island (1980-2009) impeded police investigations by preventing them from arresting pimps/sex traffickers and sex buyers, creating a “zone of impunity” for sex traffickers.²⁶ Without this frontline capacity, minors and other sex trafficking victims are not identified because police have “very limited basis to enter and investigate premises operating as a brothel.”²⁷

5. **Normalized Prostitution Increases Sex Trafficking.** Brothels, illicit massage parlors, escort agencies, and online platforms are overlapping systems of prostitution and sex trafficking occurs in all of them. Normalization of prostitution expands demand for paid sex. This emboldens sex traffickers who see this as a conducive “business” environment. Cross-national studies have found higher levels of human trafficking in countries with legalized or decriminalized prostitution²⁸ Research has also found 100% of convicted sex traffickers support full decriminalization of prostitution.²⁹
6. **Prostitution is not a substitute for social security safety nets.** Some people argue that prostitution is necessary because it provides income for poor and marginalized populations. This view turns prostitution into a faux social security system that *requires* the sexual exploitation of poor and minority individuals—especially women since the vast majority of people in prostitution are women.³⁰ This is regressive, misogynist, and dystopian. Governments should never reduce economically insecure people to a state of sexual servitude because they are poor.
7. **Street-level prostitution is likely to surge.** Street-level prostitution is already escalating in Brooklyn New York³¹ because the District Attorney “wiped” more than 1,000 open cases of prostitution.³² Without also instituting rigorous enforcement of laws regarding pimping and sex buying this has resulted de facto full decriminalization.
8. **Nonenforcement of prostitution laws harms disadvantaged communities.** The harm of prostitution rarely stops at the individual level; it also inflicts harms on communities, residents, families, and businesses.³³ Neighborhoods littered with condoms and drug paraphernalia,³⁴ neighborhood residents—women and children—being solicited for prostitution by roving sex buyers,³⁵ and adverse impacts to businesses³⁶ are typical. Poor and minority communities typically bear the brunt of such impacts.³⁷
9. **Sex buyers can be deterred.** Evidence points to the effectiveness of demand reduction tactics to combat prostitution. For example, studies in Jersey City, New Jersey, and San Francisco, California, and Bolton, UK, found that arresting and educating men for soliciting produced 40-75% reductions in prostitution.³⁸ An evaluation of an education program in San Francisco showed a reduction in re-arrests by over 40%, was simple, and implemented at no cost to taxpayers.³⁹ The fees paid by the offenders fully covered the cost of the program and generated over \$3 million in additional revenue that was used, in part, to support programs for survivors of prostitution and sex trafficking.⁴⁰ An evaluation of a similar “johns school” program in England found similar benefits.⁴¹ While many men have purchased sex, most have not.⁴² Buying sex is not inevitable.
10. **Full decriminalization of prostitution is not just.** The lived experiences of people in the sex trade⁴³ around the world reveal the abuses, harms, and chronic traumatization intrinsic to prostitution. Not only is this impossible to ignore, but it demands a just response. Just responses to these harms will:
 - A) decriminalize those sold in systems of prostitution,
 - B) create and enforce punishments that hold accountable those who facilitate or engage in the purchase of persons for sex, and
 - C) provide supportive services for those seeking exit from prostitution.

- ¹ Bridget Diamond-Welch and Anna E. Kosloski, "Adverse Childhood Experiences and Propensity to Participate in the Commercialized Sex Market," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 104 (2020): doi: [10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104468](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104468); Christine Kaestle, "Selling and Buying Sex: A Longitudinal Study of Risk and Protective Factors in Adolescence," *Prevention Science* 13 (2012): 314-322, doi: [10.1007/s11121-011-0268-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-011-0268-3); Kym R. Ahrens et al., "Association between Childhood Sexual Abuse and Transactional Sex in Youth Aging out of Foster Care," *Child Abuse and Neglect* 36, no. 1 (2012): 75-80; doi: [10.1016/j.chiabu.2011.07.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2011.07.009).
- ² Courtney Cronley et al., "Entering Prostitution in Adolescence: History of Youth Homelessness Predicts Earlier Entry," *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma* 25, no. 9 (2016): 893-908, doi: [10.1080/10926771.1223246](https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.1223246); Kaestle, *ibid*; Eric C. Wilson et al., "Transgender Female Youth and Sex Work: HIV Risk and a Comparison of Life Factors Related to Engagement in Sex Work," *AIDS and Behavior* 13 (2009): 902-913, doi: [10.1007/s10461-008-9508-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-008-9508-8).
- ³ Sahnah Lim et al., "Severe Food Insecurity, Gender-based Violence, Homelessness, and HIV Risk among Street-based Female Sex Workers in Baltimore," *AIDS and Behavior* 23 (2019): 3058-3063, doi: [10.1007/s10461-019-02643-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-019-02643-0); Cronley, *ibid*.
- ⁴ Kristin Hickie & Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, "Curiosity and a Pimp': Exploring Sex Trafficking Victimization in Experiences of Entering Sex Trade Industry Work among Participants in a Prostitution Diversion Program" *Women and Criminal Justice* 27, no. 2 (2017): 122-138, doi: [10.1080/08974454.2015.1128376](https://doi.org/10.1080/08974454.2015.1128376).
- ⁵ Cronley, *ibid*; Joan R. Reid, "Risk and Resiliency Factors Influencing Onset and Adolescence-limited Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Disadvantaged Girls," *Criminal Behavior and Mental Health* 24 (2014): 332-344, doi: [10.1002/cbm.1903](https://doi.org/10.1002/cbm.1903); Clarke et al., "Age at Entry into Prostitution: Relationship to Drug Use, Race, Suicide, Educational Level, Childhood Abuse, and Family Experiences," *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 22 (2012): 270-289, doi: [10.1080/10911359.2012.65583](https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2012.65583); Wilson et al., *ibid*.
- ⁶ Kaestle, *ibid*; N. Eugene Walls and Stephanie Bell, "Correlates of Engaging in Survival Sex among Homeless Youth and Young Adults," *Journal of Sex Research* 48, no. 5 (2011): 423-436, doi: [10.1080/00224499.2010.501916](https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2010.501916); Wilson et al., *ibid*; Lisa A. Kramer and Ellen C. Berg, "A Survival Analysis of Timing of Entry into Prostitution: The Differential Impact of Race, Educational Level, and Childhood/Adolescent Risk Factors," *Sociological Inquiry* 73, no. 4 (2003): 511-28. See also, Cheryl Nelson Butler, "A Critical Race Feminist Perspective on Prostitution and Sex Trafficking in America" *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* (2015): 95-139, <https://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/yjlf/vol27/iss1/3> (accessed October 13, 2021).
- ⁷ Licia Brussa, *Sex Work in Europe: A Mapping of the Prostitution Scene in 25 European Countries*, TAMPEP International Foundation, Netherlands, 2009 (accessed October 6, 2021).
- ⁸ Melissa Farley, Jacqueline Lynne, and Ann J. Cotton, "Prostitution in Vancouver: Violence and the Colonization of First National Women," *Transcultural Psychiatry* (2005): 242-271, doi: [10.1177/1363461505052667](https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461505052667); Gillian Abel, Lisa Fitzgerald, and Cheryl Brunton, "The Impact of the Prostitution Reform Act on the Health and Safety Practices of Sex Workers. Report to the Prostitution Law Review Committee (November 2007), p. 8, 61, <https://www.otago.ac.nz/christchurch/otago018607.pdf> (accessed October 12, 2021); Wai 2717, #1.1.1(a) Before the Waitangi Tribunal, In the Matter of The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 and in the Matter of The Man Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry (Wai 2700) and in the matter of a Claim by Bonnie Jade Kake on behalf of Wāhine Māori Concerning the Prostitution Reform Act of 2003 (Wai 2717), Amended Statement of Claim (August 31, 2018). See also, Alexandra (Sandi) Pierce, "Shattered Hearts (Full Report): The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of American Indian Women and Girls in Minnesota," *First Annual Interdisciplinary Conference on Human Trafficking* (2009), digitalcommons.uni.edu/humantraffconf/26; Jake Kake and Fern Eyles, "The Failure of the 'New Zealand Model' According to Māori Women, AF3IRM Hawai'i (February 2, 2021), hawaii-78988.medium.com/so-you-wanna-talk-sex-work-policy-the-failure-of-full-decrim-according-to-māori-women-4f46c1cb7a98 (accessed October 12, 2021).
- ⁹ Walls and Bell, *ibid*; Wilson et al., *ibid*; Robert Garofalo et al., "Behavioral Interventions to Prevent HIV Transmission and Acquisition for Transgender Women: A Critical Review," *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome* 72 (2016): S220-S225; Susan Rabinovitz et al., *No Way Home: Understanding the Needs and Experiences of Homeless Youth in Hollywood* (Hollywood: Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership, 2010), <https://www.scribd.com/document/155693348/No-Way-Home> (accessed October 12, 2021).
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Arguments Against Full Decriminalization of Commercial Sex Industry

- There are **no independent studies** that show normalizing the sex trade by decriminalizing it or legalizing it makes it safer.
- On the contrary, wherever prostitution is legalized/legitimized there's **an increase in sex trafficking**, as demonstrated by an [academic study of 150 countries](#) led by the London School of Economics.

Why? For several logical reasons:

- **Once you normalize the sex trade, it explodes**
 - In Germany, where prostitution and brothels have been legal since 2002, an [estimated one million men buy sex each day](#), coming from all over the world.
 - The capital city, Berlin, alone has over 500 brothels.
 - **Portland will become a sex tourism destination** if Oregon approves HB 3088.
- **Men who don't buy sex when it is illegal, become new clients**
 - As a 2018 study of 8,000 U.S. men demonstrates, [over 20% of respondents who never bought sex said they might if it was decriminalized or legalized](#).
- **To satisfy demand, the sex trade has to lure in vulnerable people**, because there are never enough women willing to be exploited and degraded in prostitution
 - Sex trafficking cases [increased 70%](#) in Germany as a result of legalization.
 - In The Netherlands where prostitution was legalized in 2000, [an estimated 50-90% of women are selling their bodies against their will](#).
- **The illegal sex trade increases alongside the legal sector**, when it is normalized
 - Nevada, [the only U.S. jurisdiction with legal brothels, has the highest rates of an illegal sex trade](#)—63% higher than the next highest state, NY, and double FL.
- **Prostitution is inherently dangerous.**
 - A 2018 study of prostituted women, including trans women, in the U.S. found [61% suffered Traumatic Brain Injuries](#) while in “the Life.”
 - In a nine-country study of 785 prostituted women, [68% suffered PTSD at same severity as combat veterans](#) and victims of state torture.
 - The [mortality rate of women in prostitution is 200 times](#) the rate of the general population, according to a Colorado medical study examining two decades of evidence. **Why EXPAND the number of people harmed?**
- A more efficient way to **reduce sex trafficking** is to focus on the demand for paid sex because sex buyers drive the market, exploiting the vulnerabilities of prostituting people.
 - The majority of people in prostitution were [victims of adverse childhood experiences](#) (ACEs) especially sexual abuse; arresting victims does nothing to end exploitation or shrink the rapacious sex trade.
 - Fines and fees from sex buyers [can fund exit services](#) for prostituted people—few of whom want to remain in The Life.