



**BRIEF TO THE  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS  
HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**Bill C-36**

**Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act**

**June 30, 2014**

**BACKGROUND OF BIG SUSIE'S:**

Big Susie's is a working group which was started by and for sex workers in Hamilton Ontario plus surrounding areas, in 2009. Our purpose is to fight back against the stigma and silence that degrades, devalues and dehumanizes sex workers and their work. Big Susie's is a sex-positive and sex worker- positive organization that advocates for the total decriminalization of sex work to allow sex workers self-determination of their own bodies.

Goals for the organization include:

- To provide support, education and information to sex-workers so that they may live in safety and with dignity
- To sensitize and educate the public and service providers about sex work and the realities faced by sex workers
- To fight stigma and discrimination against sex workers
- To promote the decriminalization of sex work
- To provide sex worker positive referrals, informal counselling and peer support
- To offer safer drug, HIV & STI health education and materials
- To provide a safe place for sex workers to interact, network and socialize
- To actively maintain and operate within an anti-racist, anti-oppression framework

Big Susie's demands the immediate repeal of all laws that work to make illegal the exchange of sex for money or other valuable/needed items, as well as the acts enabling this exchange to take place. We also oppose all punishments exercised upon sex workers which are associated with this illegal status, such as workers being evicted when using their place of residence for sex work purposes.

We do not believe popular rhetoric that rationalizes criminalization as a method of ensuring safety for communities and protection from violence for women. Any form of legalization or regulation placed upon sex workers inhibits our ability to negotiate the conditions of our services, making it difficult for work to be performed in safer and worker-controlled conditions. These laws also increase risk for sex workers by creating situations where we can lose our “straight” jobs, have friends or family charged and arrested, and where we face criminal records. As such, laws criminalizing sex work perpetrate the isolation and stigmatization of sex workers, and prohibit public and widespread discussions of our rights.

Big Susie’s recognizes that criminalization happens as part of a larger political agenda centred on gentrification of our communities, accompanied by an increase in surveillance and community policing of people considered to be “undesirable” such as sex workers, people who use drugs, and people who appear/or are homeless. We also recognize that criminalization of sex work is used in conjunction with other government powers- based in prejudice and systemic oppression- to target particular populations such as Aboriginals, racialized people, people with disabilities, queer-identified people, women, youth and the working class. Further, we acknowledge that criminalization is rooted in a predominantly sex negative culture, as well as global constructions of certain types of work as illegitimate.

We believe that sex workers should have the decision making power to determine how, when and in what ways our service, and the industry, should be regulated and run.

Reference: Big Susie's website

The “Summary” of Bill C-36 states its objectives as:

**SUMMARY:**

“This enactment amends the Criminal Code to, among other things,

- (a) Create an offence that prohibits purchasing sexual services or communicating in any place for that purpose;
- (b) Create an offence that prohibits receiving a material benefit that derived from the commission of an offence referred to in paragraph (a);
- (c) Create an offence that prohibits the advertisement of sexual services offered for sale and to authorize the courts to order the seizure of materials containing such advertisements and their removal from the Internet;
- (d) Modernize the offence that prohibits the procurement of persons for the purpose of prostitution;
- (e) Create an offence that prohibits communicating — for the purpose of selling sexual services — in a public place, or in any place open to public view, that is or is next to a place where persons under the age of 18 can reasonably be expected to be present;
- (f) Ensure consistency between prostitution offences and the existing human trafficking offences; and
- (g) Specify that, for the purposes of certain offences, a weapon includes anything used, designed to be use or intended for use in binding or tying up a person against their will.”

Reference: Bill C36

Big Susie's opposes the proposed Bill C-36 Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act as the social science research evidence, plus the lived experiences and testimony of our sex work experiential members, proves that all forms of criminalization of the sex industry cause harm to our communities. We believe that Bill C-36 is unconstitutional, is a violation of our human rights, and defies both the spirit and the legal ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada in *R v. Bedford*. We will outline why we think this proposed Bill is harmful to sex workers in Canada, and look forward to your questions and comments.

### **CRIMINALIZING CLIENTS AND COMMUNICATING:**

#### **(a) Create an offence that prohibits purchasing sexual services or communicating in any place for that purpose**

On December 20, 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the communication law 213 (1) (c) on the basis that it violated section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The law undermined the ability of sex workers to security and safety when working in the street-based sex industry in particular. The new proposed Communicating provision is similar to the Communicating law that was struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada, with the only difference being its application to sex workers who are at or next to places where anyone under the age of 18 could be reasonably expected to be, as mentioned in this part of the summary of provisions:

### **COMMUNICATIONS IN VIEW OF MINORS:**

#### **(e) Create an offence that prohibits communicating — for the purpose of selling sexual services — in a public place, or in any place open to public view, which is or is next to a place where persons under the age of 18 can reasonably be expected to be present**

There are a number of reasons why sex workers need to be able to communicate with potential clients before entering their vehicles, or meeting them somewhere for the transaction to take place. Sex workers need to be able to discuss with their clients what services are offered, and the agreed upon prices in order to have a fair trade where both parties are consensual within the negotiated transaction. We are concerned that the new proposed provision of Bill C-36 that would make it an offence to communicate in any place where persons under the age of 18 can reasonably be expected to be present effectively re-criminalizes *all* communication for the purposes of selling sex in virtually *any* public place. This proposed new law therefore fails to consider the SCC ruling in *R. v. Bedford* which found that laws against communicating for the purposes of selling sexual services are unconstitutional as they limit sex workers' constitutional rights to safety and security.

For a street-based sex worker to have to enter a vehicle without the legal freedom to communicate, prevents the sex worker from being able to look inside the vehicle for

potential weapons, or to gauge the current mental and emotional state of the prospective client. This law heightens the risk of violence or murder for sex workers, because it will require sex workers to enter vehicles or other unsafe situations without this screening process.

When a prospective client pulls over a vehicle to speak with a sex worker, it is not the sex worker who is stopping traffic; rather the client makes the decision to pull over their vehicle to inquire about the potential services and rates offered. What the public would potentially see, if they were to see the act of Communication happening, is a car pulling over to the curb, and talking to a person who is standing or walking on the sidewalk. There are no sexual acts taking place in public view during the Communications process, and nobody else can hear the conversation. Big Susie's believes that no harm is committed against minors who see a driver in a car pulling over to talk to a person.

Street-based sex workers are often working for basic survival, and are up against homelessness and impoverished conditions. They are the most marginalized of all sex workers, and face the highest level of violence and murder. As proven to the Supreme Court of Canada, the Communications law endangers sex workers who are working in the street-based sex trade. Taking away their means to screen clients is unconstitutional and violates their human rights.

Indoor-based sex workers such as escorts and dominatrices may use their cell phones in public when booking a prospective client. This Communications law could be used to potentially criminalize these sex workers, who are not typically deemed a public nuisance, for no other reason than talking on the phone to screen clients and negotiate the terms of the transaction. Indoor-based sex workers have safer working conditions and are able to control their working environments better than street-based sex workers, however with the Communications law in place, this screening practice will be affected and sex workers could face potential occupational harms.

#### **CRIMINALIZING CLIENTS:**

Another part of this provision that becomes of concern is the criminalization of clients. Criminalizing clients will harm sex workers as sex workers will lose clients due to the fear of the penal system, resulting in sex workers facing impoverished conditions. Sex workers will have to conduct their business secretly, away from police protection, in order to maintain a solid client base. Sex workers deserve to be able to use police services when facing violence, sexual assault or theft, just like any other Canadian citizens. However sex workers will not want to obtain assistance from the police if clients are criminalized. Experienced sex workers at Big Susie's state that most clients are good customers, and are completely respectful within the adult consensual transactions in accordance to their business.

#### **RE-CRIMINALIZING LIVING ON THE AVAILS:**

**(b) Create an offence that prohibits receiving a material benefit that derived from the commission of an offence referred to in paragraph (a);**

“Living off the avails” was struck down by the SCC as unconstitutional because it impairs the safety of the worker. Most sex workers are consensual adults, and many choose to have someone act as a manager in their trade. There are already laws against sexual and physical assault, kidnapping, forcible confinement, and sexual interference. So the law against those who “live off the avails” or derive a material benefit is unnecessary when it comes to adult consenting sex workers.

There are some people who willingly prefer to work through an escort service and use a driver/security person to transport them to “outcalls” which take place at a client's residence, their hotel room, or other space which could be a yacht, limousine, or at their work places for examples. People call escort services and other sex industry services, asking for employment opportunities. A good sex industry service effectively screens calls and clients, plus then provides safe transportation for their employees, staffed with security workers. The people who provide the business administrative parts of the transactions between sex workers and clients are not receiving benefit from the sex worker's labour but from their own labour answering phones, call screening, driving, and providing security services.

There are many reasons why sex workers choose to work with a service:

- They don't have private business phones, or they don't want to use their phone to speak with prospective clients, which can take up a lot of time.
- They don't have a residence at their current geographic location of work; or could be on tour, and prefer an experienced local agent to book calls.
- They have other jobs, and their time limits them from running their own business.
- They have children to care for, and do not want to negotiate with clients over the phone which could take time away from their parenting.
- They are pursuing an education and have limited time for phone and internet conversations.
- They prefer to have more personal free time and pay someone else to do administrative work.
- And the list goes on...

Escort agencies often can help to offer social and community supports to sex workers. Many people who apply to work at escort services could potentially be struggling with an addiction to drugs; a good agency spots these individual and directs them to get help. In some cases they assist the worker in exiting the sex industry. Big Susie's believes that increased safety for people who work in the sex industry requires increased options: options to work safely, options to exit, options to work in a variety of aspects of the sex industries such as exotic dance, adult film, burlesque performance, escorting, webcam work or phone sex, for example. When a sex worker is managed by another ethical party, they have a support system in place to help them to make decisions to suit their needs and goals.

Agencies, receptionists, drivers and security personnel are all very important to outcall services. They are providing services to the worker that prevents them from harassing unwanted calls, and drivers provide private security to subdue unruly clients. These

administrative jobs help sex workers to be able to focus on their particular specialty. Police forces would need to use a lot of extra personnel to provide these services.

Big Susie's believes that this new provision against receiving a material benefit is unnecessary, inappropriate, and unconstitutional.

#### **CRIMINALIZING ADVERTISING:**

**(c) Create an offence that prohibits the advertisement of sexual services offered for sale and to authorize the courts to order the seizure of materials containing such advertisements and their removal from the Internet;**

With the introduction of Bill C36 and anti-advertising laws pertaining to sex work, a pertinent question arises. Are these laws stepping on the constitutional rights of Canadians who are involved in sex work as consenting adults? In the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, it states that all Canadians have the fundamental right to earn a living. However, with a potential ban on advertising, that right is in jeopardy.

According to Alice Klein, editor and CEO of Toronto's NOW magazine, “ 'adult' advertising comprises a significant portion of revenue” (Freeman, S., 2014). As many print publications are experiencing shrinking revenue, a ban on such advertising will undoubtedly affect the business model (Freeman, S., 2014).

In addition, due to no clearly defined demarcation in the term “sex work”, ALL aspects of sex work are being subjected to Bill C36. These include professionals providing safe, consensual services, to surrogate sex therapists helping individuals dealing with issues affecting intimacy. People who work in and engage in activities that come under the umbrella of Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, Sadism and Masochism (BDSM) for example, are doing so consensually. The majority of those providing such services possess a gift for what they do, spent years honing their craft, invested themselves emotionally and financially at times, and to deny their right to advertise is a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as they offer a service that is sought after. A rudimentary search on Google found dozens of sex therapists advertising their services in the province of Ontario, and if Bill C36 were to pass into law, every single one of these therapists may find their livelihood in jeopardy.

It is understandable, and certainly noble that we want to protect those who cannot protect themselves- namely those forced into prostitution rings, and those who abuse their authoritative powers; however, there are existing laws that allow for the prosecution of all forms of violence, exploitation or abuse that may occur against people in the sex industry.

Reference: Freeman, S. (2014). Bill C-36, New Prostitution Law, Has Indie Magazines, Strip Clubs, Sex Shops Worried. Retrieved from [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/06/11/bill-c36-magazines-sex-shops\\_n\\_5481477.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/06/11/bill-c36-magazines-sex-shops_n_5481477.html)

#### **CRIMINALIZING PROCURING:**

**(d) modernize the offence that prohibits the procurement of persons for the purpose of prostitution;**

Sex workers and their business communities support laws that prevent children from being sexually exploited by adults, just like every other Canadian citizen would. We also support laws that prevent people from being forced into the sex industry against their will, including crimes such as physical and sexual assault, extortion, kidnapping and sexual interference and exploitation. Many sex workers are in the industry by choice and want others to be able to exercise the same right to determine their futures and support realistic programs to help people leave the industry when they choose to. Religious-based programs which will tell sex workers that they are dirty, or sinners, are concepts that are judgmental and don't promote any level of health, safety nor support for sex workers. If a sex worker wants to exit the industry on their own accord, then there should be programs in place to support this.

Sex workers understand the concern for young people being forced into sexual exploitation by unscrupulous people, however there are already laws against such a crime. Sexual Interference (s. 151) prohibits the sexual touching of persons under 16 years of age, Sexual Exploitation (s. 153) prohibits the same from a person in a position of authority over the young person, Child Luring (s. 172.1) prevents using a computer to commit an offence under one of the other provisions, Agree/Arrange a Sexual Offence Against a Child (s. 172.2) prevents the same using the telephone. These are just a few examples of the laws that are available to Law Enforcement Officers when they are faced with instances of child sexual exploitation.

In addition, when sex work is criminalized and/or stigmatized, sex workers are less likely to come forward when they see instances of exploitation. Sex workers want to do the right thing but many fear for their own (emotional and physical) safety at the hands of police who have caused much of the stigmatization and violence they have suffered. Proposals like Bill C36 serve to further stigmatize sex workers and remove their agency as humans capable of making the choices that are right for them by branding them all as victims.

While many people do not like to admit it, sex work is real work. Sex workers do, however, sometimes require the services of agencies to help them book clients and facilitate working. An agency can provide any number of services to a sex worker including; advertizing, security, booking services, a work space, a driver, or any combination of those. These working arrangements, like any time an employee works for an employer, can be quite lucrative and beneficial to both parties involved, without any exploitation taking place. The best way to ensure that no exploitation is involved in this arrangement is decriminalization. By assuring sex workers their labour and human rights, they will feel secure enough to report abuse and exploitation by clients and agency employers alike to police or labour boards, whichever is most appropriate.

It is unrealistic and unfair to expect every sex worker to be an independent worker. Compare it to any other business - would we expect another type of business to all be sole proprietorships, under penalty of law? No one would stand for that type of discrimination, but when it comes to sex workers, already some of the most marginalized populations, the government sees no problem in further discriminating against them.

Once again, research and the lived experience of sex workers shows us that decriminalization, not more laws punishing sex workers or clients, is what will keep both sex workers and exploited persons safer.

### **CRIMINALIZING TRAFFICKING:**

#### **(f) Ensure consistency between prostitution offences and the existing human trafficking offences;**

The following constitutes Big Susie's position on "human trafficking": Migrant sex workers are people who relocate or cross borders to do sex work. They may be documented or undocumented, and experience varying degrees of choice or coercion in their mobility and labour conditions. Big Susie's condemns all coercive and exploitive work, in any industry, as well as the borders imposed on people, which helps to create the conditions necessary for coercion. The criminalization of migrant sex workers stands at the intersection of racist immigration policies, the spectrum of violence against sex workers, and the spectrum of exploitation of workers.

We stand in solidarity with women, men and youth who experience poverty and must take risks to survive, which may include crossing a border to do sex work, or doing sex work after crossing a border as an undocumented migrant. We oppose "raid and rescue" operations that abuse sex workers, seize their assets and deport them as prostitutes, forcing them to engage in even riskier activities to get back across the border. Instead, we see all migrant sex workers as persons entitled to work in the industries and countries of their choosing.

Big Susie's position on "sexually exploited youth": There are no needs for the creation of laws against youth in the sex industry because youth in the sex industry are not adult consensual sex workers. Rather, they are considered sexually exploited youth. The "age of consent" is the minimum age at which a person is considered to be legally competent of consenting to sexual acts. It should not be confused with the age of majority, age of criminal responsibility, the marriageable age, the age at which one can purchase and consume alcoholic beverages, or drive a car, or other purposes.

Laws already exist outside of the prostitution laws to protect those who are sexually exploited or sexually assaulted who are either migrants or are under the "age of consent." There are laws against rape, kidnapping, forcible confinement, violence and physical threats. Big Susie's does not believe that additional prostitution laws need to be created in order to keep migrants or youth safe.

### **BONDAGE & BILL C36: BAD FOR BUSINESS?**

#### **(g) Specify that, for the purposes of certain offences, a weapon includes anything used, designed to be use or intended for use in binding or tying up a person against their will.**

With the introduction of Bill C36, the proposed law that would consider restraints to be a



weapon is causing controversy among sex workers who provide safe, sane, and consensual BDSM and fetish services that include erotic bondage and sensual painful activities.

Sex workers who are not coerced, forced, or lured, but those who realize that this is an area that they can make a difference in, are often professional dominants in the BDSM and fetish industries. A lot of stigma is associated with those who engage in activities that deviate from mainstream sexual behaviour, but that does not make it wrong, or illegal, just different.

Individuals who are involved in bondage play, domination, submission, or any activity that would come under the realm of BDSM, are aware of the risks that such play entails. Since we are aware of the risks involved, both parties discuss a scene beforehand, until a mutual decision is reached regarding what a scene will involve. Regarding bondage, it is only ever used when consent has been given, and never to the point where restraints are impossible to get out of. Those who are considered to be professional dominants are aware of what to look for in terms of maintaining our client's health and safety, and more importantly respect ALL limits and safe-words. A safe-word is a form of communication used between professional dominants and submissives to make the BDSM and fetish play activities immediately stop.

Those who engage in bondage play or other aspects of BDSM are not out to hurt anyone. This is not an issue of gender inequality, power, or being forced into an unsafe situation. Rape, child pornography, and pedophilia are issues that the law already addresses outside of prostitution laws. The criminal code already also has laws against kidnapping, violations against the “legal age of consent”, unlawful confinement, and sexual and physical assault. BDSM play should be taken out of this equation, as what professional dominants and submissives do in the sex industry is consensual; it is a form of sexual expression that many enjoy, and it should not be criminalized.

Many of the provisions of Bill C36 are in place with the stated objective to protect vulnerable populations, ie. sex workers, against exploitation, however this particular section seems an afterthought, something thrown in as a reminder that Bedford was a Dominatrix and not a prostitute when she was arrested under the laws struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada. This section of the Bill therefore seems to be aimed at practitioners of BDSM, whose main tenets are ‘safe, sane and consensual’ practice - the idea that all activity must be discussed between participants, the parameters and goals agreed upon before beginning with ‘safe’ words in place as a failsafe. Practitioners who do not meet these standards are quickly eliminated from the potential pool by word of mouth, something that would be harmed by other aspects of Bill C36. While responsible practitioners encourage education of both clients and providers, additional laws are hardly needed to add to the already ample coverage and protection that already exists under current criminal law.

By expanding the definition of weapons to presumably include rope, bondage restraints and other BDSM paraphernalia, this bill will risk pushing not only professional BDSM

practices underground, but those of the kink community as well. The two worlds, professional and lifestyle kink, are intertwined in more ways than many would like to admit. Professional Dominatrices often teach skills and safety to lifestyle players, so that they can enjoy a more varied and safe practice. Kinky parties and gatherings are held at dungeons that are financed by professional sessions during the day - without the clients who pay Pro-Dommes, the non-professionals wouldn't be able to enjoy the luxuries that the Professionals provide and share with the community.

Even without the effect on the Professional Dominatrix, the pressure placed on the BDSM lifestyle community is great. There have been questions about whether play parties - gatherings of like minded individuals for mutual enjoyment and engagement in kinky activities between consenting adults - would risk criminalization due to these potential new laws. If the 'toys' we use on a regular basis are suddenly declared weapons, is the consensual activity we engage in with other adults also then a crime?

Like the rest of C36, this provision of the act has far reaching consequences that could affect more than the intended targets. While the intention of the proposed laws are to protect communities and vulnerable persons, we can see how the act, if it becomes law, will do the opposite - it will cause harm not only to sex workers, in this case those who engage in paid BDSM and fetish activities, but also to the kink community as a whole.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, Big Susie's believes that every area of the provisions in Bill C36 violates the human rights and labour rights of Canadian adult consensual sex workers, clients and business owners. Our goal is to help protect the health and safety of all sex workers. We realize that there are vulnerable people and those who are under the age of consent who need additional supports and may wish to access exiting strategies. However we also believe that more resources must be put into harm reduction programming, to help prevent the occupational health and safety concerns associated with sex work. Meeting sex workers "where they are at" in their life journeys without using criminalization will decrease the harm done to people's lives.

With that in mind, Big Susie's also respects the support provided by clients and business owners towards sex workers, and we do not deem these two groups of people to be the enemy within the realm of the sex industry. A religious or moralistic approach deems certain parties, or all participants in the sex industry, as the enemy. Those within the adult consensual sex industry do not agree with this approach.

We believe it is incumbent upon the Government of Canada to rescind Bill C-36 and instead support a model for the sex industry inspired by New Zealand's decriminalization approach. The social science evidence suggests that such a model will cause the least amount of harm and offer the most support to adult consensual sex workers. Decriminalizing the sex industry will create better working conditions and decrease violence and harms perpetuated against sex workers.

## RESEARCH CONSULTED:

The following peer-reviewed, social science articles and books are just a small sample of the existing research that demonstrates how the criminalization of the sex industry increases harm, stigma and violence and/or provides evidence of the benefits of decriminalization for people in the sex industry in Canada:

Benoit, Celia & Francis Shaver (Eds.). 2006. Critical perspectives on sex industry work in Canada [Special issue]. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 43(3).

Doezema, Jo and Kamala Kempadoo. 1998. *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition*. Kamala Kempadoo & Jo Doezema, Eds. New York: Routledge.

Ferris, Shawna. *Dangerous Order: Globalization, Canadian cities, and street-involved sex work*. McMaster University: PhD Dissertation, 2007.

Lowman, John. 2000. "Violence and the Outlaw Status of (Street) Prostitution in Canada." *Violence Against Women* 6.9: 987-1011.

Lowman, John. 2011. "Deadly Inertia: A History of Constitutional Challenges to Canada's Criminal Code Sections on Prostitution." *Beijing Law Review* 2:33-54.

Namaste, Vivian. 2005. *Sex Change, Social Change: Reflections on Identity, Institutions and Imperialism*. Toronto: Women's Press.

Ross, Becki. 2010. Sex and (evacuation from) the city: The moral and legal regulation of sex workers in Vancouver's West End, 1975-1985. *Sexualities*, 13(2), 197-218.

Shannon, K. 2010. The hypocrisy of Canada's prostitution legislation. *Canadian Medical Association Journal(CMAJ)*, 182(12), 1388.

Van der Meulen, Emily. 2008. Canadian and international policies on prostitution: Labour organizing, social change, and decriminalization. In Cohen, M. G. & Pulkingham, J. (Eds), *Public policy for women: The state, income security and labour* (pp. 332-352). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Van der Meulen, E. & Durisin, Elya. 2008. Why decriminalize? How Canada's municipal and federal regulations increase sex workers' vulnerability. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 20(2), 289-312.

Van Der Meulen, Emily, Elya Durisin and Victoria Love, Eds. 2013. *Selling Sex: Experience, Advocacy and Research on Sex Work in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Young, Allan. 2008. The state is still in the bedroom of the nation: The control and regulation of sexuality in Canadian criminal law. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 17(4), 203-220.

The following reports from government, legal, human rights, and sex worker advocacy organizations document the harms caused by criminalization and/or support the decriminalization of sex work in Canada:

Benoit, C. & Millar, A. 2001. *Dispelling myths and understanding realities: Working conditions, health status, and existing experience of sex workers*. Sponsored by Prostitutes Empowerment, Education and Resource Society (PEERS). Funded by BC Health Research Foundation, Capital Health District, and BC Centre of Excellence on Women's Health. Retrieved from <http://www.peers.bc.ca/images/DispMythsshort.pdf>

Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Subcommittee on Solicitation Laws. 2006. *The challenge of change: A study of Canada's criminal prostitution laws: Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights*. Ottawa, ON: Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

Cler-Cunningham, L. & Christensen, C. 2001. *Violence against women in Vancouver's street level sex trade and the police response*. Vancouver, BC: PACE Society. Retrieved from [www.pace-society.ca](http://www.pace-society.ca)

Davis, Susan, and Raven Bowen. 2007. *Labour on the Margins: Sex industry Safety and Stabilization*. <http://www.wccsip.ca/doc/laborOnTheMargins.pdf>

Pivot Legal Society. 2004. *Voices for dignity: A call to end the harms caused by Canada's sex trade laws*. Retrieved from <http://www.pivotlegal.org/pivot-points/publications/voices-for-dignity>

Pivot Legal Society. 2006. *Beyond Decriminalization: Sex work, human rights and a new framework for law reform*. Available online at [www.pivotlegal.org](http://www.pivotlegal.org)

In the following books, sex workers speak in our own voices about our work, our rights, the stigma and harms that arise from criminalization, and the benefits of decriminalization of the sex industry:

Jeffrey, L. A. & MacDonald, G. (2006). *Sex workers in the Maritimes talk back*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Oakley, Annie, Ed. 2007. *Working Sex: Sex workers write about a changing industry*. Emeryville, CA: Seal Press.