



Canadian Federation of University Women  
Fédération Canadienne des Femmes Diplômées des Universités

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February 7, 2014

Mr. Justin Trudeau, M.P.  
Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Trudeau:

**Re: Canada v. Bedford et al.**

The Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) has followed the Canada v. Bedford et al case closely, and recognizes that the unanimous decision the Supreme Court of Canada delivered on December 20, 2013 presents an important opportunity to develop legislation and strategies that better protect women and girls who experience high rates of violence and exploitation within the sex industry.

While individual experiences may differ, the vast majority of women and girls have entered prostitution as a result of poverty, violence and racism. For this reason, I write to you on behalf of CFUW to urge the Liberal Party of Canada to support the development of legislation that is similar to the model adopted by Sweden and most recently embraced by France, whereby prostituted persons are decriminalized, women and girls are supported in exiting the sex industry, and the demand for the purchase of sex is targeted by criminalizing purchasers and pimping, and raising awareness through public education.

This approach has proven to be successful in reducing human trafficking and prostitution in Sweden and other countries that have implemented similar models.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, countries that have fully decriminalized sex work have reportedly seen net increases in human trafficking.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to altering the Criminal Code of Canada, CFUW believes that the Government of Canada should work with provincial, territorial and municipal governments to address structural factors that limit women and girls agency and increase their vulnerability to sexual exploitation through the sex industry. These factors include gender inequality, poverty, inadequate and unaffordable housing, gender-based violence, racism, and lack of adequate mental health supports and services, among others. To ensure greater equality for all women and girls, including those involved, or becoming involved in the sex industry, we would like to see all levels of government working together to:

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond, J. (2010). "The Swedish Approach to Trafficking, Prostitution and the Sex Industry". Retrieved from: [http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/sites/default/files/imce/TheSwedishApproachtoTrafficking\\_JaniceRaymond.doc](http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/sites/default/files/imce/TheSwedishApproachtoTrafficking_JaniceRaymond.doc)

<sup>2</sup> Cho, S. et al. (2012). Does Legalized Prostitution Increase Human Trafficking?. Retrieved from: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/geographyAndEnvironment/whosWho/profiles/neumayer/pdf/Article-for-World-Development- prostitution -anonymous-REVISED.pdf>

- Implement national poverty, housing and homelessness strategies that are sensitive to gender differences;
- Promote equitable access to full and productive employment and decent work for women;
- Implement a comprehensive national action plan to address all forms of violence against women and girls;
- Respect Aboriginal rights, treaties, and international human rights of Aboriginal Women; and
- Improve mental health supports and services, again ensuring sensitivity to gender differences.

We would appreciate receiving a response, outlining the Liberal Party of Canada's position on this important issue. Thank you for your time and consideration.

CFUW is a non-partisan, voluntary, self-funded organization with over 100 CFUW Clubs, located in every province across Canada. Since its founding in 1919, CFUW has been working to improve the status of women, and to promote human rights, public education, social justice, and peace. CFUW is the largest affiliate of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW), the leading girls' and women's global organization run by and for women, advocating for women's rights, equality and empowerment through access to quality education and training up to the highest levels.

Sincerely,



Susan Murphy  
President, Canadian Federation of University Women

Cc:

Mr. Sean Casey, M.P., Liberal Party of Canada Justice Critic

Ms. Kirsty Duncan, M.P., Liberal Party of Canada Critic for the Status of Women