

## The Case for the Nordic Model

- In 1999 Sweden criminalized the buying of sexual services and decriminalized the selling of sexual services. A Swedish government publication of the law's first ten years shows that street prostitution has been cut in half; that there is no evidence that there is an increase of indoor prostitution; and that the ban has had an effect on traffickers who find Sweden an unattractive market in which to sell children and women. (1)
- CFUW position is based upon the Nordic Model of prostitution law. This model has been adopted in Norway, and with modification, in Iceland and Finland. It is now moving beyond the region to other countries, including Scotland and Ireland.
- Canada is considered a transit and destination point for human trafficking. Women and girls across the country are exploited in sex trafficking. The Trafficking in Person's (TIP) Report cites minors in the child welfare system, individuals from Aboriginal communities, and women and girls from Asia and Eastern Europe as particularly vulnerable populations. Additionally, transnational criminal organizations are active in trafficking across the country. (2)
- Laws which criminalize the demand for women and children decrease that demand which leads to a decrease in supply (trafficking). Countries which have allowed the legalization of prostitution such as the Netherlands and Germany have experienced an increase in human trafficking, organized crime, and violence against women. (3)
- "Harm reduction" proponents claim that decriminalizing prostitution (thus allowing for an indoor setting in brothels) would result in less violence or harm to women. Abolitionist groups, including former prostitutes who now represent victims and survivors of the trade, state that violence against women, including murder, is dangerous in all settings even indoors (4). Abolitionist groups, such as those supporting the Nordic Model, seek "harm elimination" altogether rather than "harm reduction".(5)
- Prostitution is not a "choice" (a) if the individual is trafficked, (b) if the individual is underage and cannot legally consent, or (c) if the activity is part of survival on the streets. That is, the majority, up to as much as 97% of girls and women would leave if they could. (6)
- Implementing laws criminalizing the buying of sexual services would align Canada with existing international agreements it has already endorsed including UN protocols. The 2000 UN "Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Traffickers in Persons" is the first international instrument to identify the demand that leads to exploitation and trafficking. (7)

- (1) Raymond, J. (2010). "The Swedish Approach to Trafficking, Prostitution and the Sex Industry." Janice Raymond serves on the Board of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), the first NGO to have the issue of trafficking as it's mandate.
- (2) Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. Office to Combat Trafficking in British Columbia, Victoria, BC. octip@gov.bc.ca ; 2013 Trafficking in Persons Report.
- (3) Perrin, B. (2010). "Sweden's Fix: Jail the Johns." Globe and Mail, September 20, 2010. Article 1735817. Benjamin Perrin is a professor of law at UBC and the author of Invisible Chains.
- (4) Taber, J. "The Nation as Pimp," Globe and Mail, September 29,2001.
- (5) Bramham, D. "Why it would be wrong to legalize prostitution," Vancouver Sun, October 6, 2010.
- (6) CTV, ca News Staff. "Federal Government to Appeal Prostitution Ruling." <http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/CanadaAM/20100929/prostitutionlaws-100929/> September 29, 2010.
- (7) Ekberg, G. (2004). "The Swedish Law that Prohibits the Purchase of Sexual Services," Violence Against Women. 10,1187-1218.

## Recommendations\*

That Government of Canada is encouraged to:

- Amend the Criminal Code of Canada which currently prohibits the public purchasing of sexual services, to also prohibit the purchasing of sexual services wherever it occurs, including the media, internet and other technological tools, and to impose criminal sanctions on the purchasers of sexual services; and
- Amend the Criminal Code of Canada so that it no longer criminalizes prostituted persons.

Provincial, territorial and municipal governments should provide essential support services and funding to enable prostituted persons to earn a living free from prostitution.

**\*These recommendations are based on policy adopted at CFUW's 2010 Annual General Meeting**