

COYOTE Rhode Island
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RI Legislators Hear From Experts On Impact of Prostitution Laws

The Rhode Island legislature is considering a bill (HB 5354) sponsored by Chairwoman Anastasia Williams to create a special study commission to review the health and safety impact of commercial sexual activity laws. In a historic moment, the Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee will hear from a broad range of experts and advocates about the impact criminal prostitution laws have had on our community. Research indicates a clear correlation between repressive policing and negative health and safety outcomes.

On April 30th, 2019, shortly after 4pm, the House Judiciary Committee will hear from Dame Catherine Healy, New Zealand Order of Merit, who will tell legislators what happened after New Zealand decriminalized sex work in 2003. Scott Cunningham, PhD, Professor, Baylor University who studied the impact that decriminalizing indoor sex work in RI has had on rates of sexually transmitted infections and sexual assault.

The committee will also hear from members of COYOTE-RI including Elena Shih, PhD, Assistant Professor at Brown University, Bella Robinson, the Executive Director of COYOTE-RI, Meghan Peterson, an MPH candidate at Brown University, Yeonhoo Cho, a student, Brown University, Malana Krongelb, a student, Brown University, and Dayana Tavarez, a student, Brown University,

Also testifying will be Philip Chan, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine, Brown University & Medical Director of Rhode Island STD Clinic, Katherine Kerwin, Providence City Council, Kate Mogulescu, JD, Assistant Professor, Brooklyn Law School & Founder of the Legal Aid Society's Exploitation Intervention Unit, Jillian Modzeleski, JD, Senior Trial Attorney in Charge of the Human Trafficking Intervention Court, Jill McCracken, PhD, Associate Professor, University of South Florida and Melissa Broudo, JD, MPH, Co Director of SOAR Institute.

We cannot continue to support policies that sound good on paper, but actually do a disservice to the people they aim to support. In this case, we aim to engage in research and study this issue further to ensure our laws support all people engaged in the sex industry.