

Decriminalize Sex Work

www.DecriminalizeSexWork.net

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Sex Workers Are Organizing Against Proposed Prostitution Registry in Florida

Half a dozen sex worker rights activists traveled from all over Florida to fight a proposed law that will target them and their clients. They are building a coalition of organizations to fight efforts to increase surveillance and policing of the oldest profession, including a new prostitution registry which would permanently and publicly list anyone arrested for prostitution-related offenses.

Florida Senate Bill 540 and House Bill 851 falsely claim to be trying to help victims of human trafficking, but sex workers know that these laws will only make violence and exploitation within the sex industry worse. Alex Andrews from SWOP Behind Bars has been fighting for people incarcerated for prostitution for 11 years, she's seen up close the devastating effects of criminalization.

Andrews said, "These lawmakers think they're helping but they won't listen to us. We know how to stop trafficking, we can start by stopping the arrests for prostitution."

Grace Taylor, who traveled from Tampa, told legislators that "They need to listen to sex workers. I've been a sex worker for over 15 years, I'm in my 50's. Listen to me."

Christine Hanavan traveled from Orlando to explain to her elected officials that policing prostitution doesn't help anyone, least of all victims of trafficking. Hanavan said, "Our concerns are for survivors and current victims of human trafficking in the sex industry, adult consensual sex workers, and people who don't fit neatly into one category. All of us share the goal of ending human trafficking. All of us want better services for victims and survivors."

Six brave women are speaking to their elected representatives in Florida today. Let's see if their legislators can hear them. They are joined by Florida National Organization for Women (NOW,) the National Center for Transgender Equality, Positive Women's Network-USA, Restorative Justice Coalition, Sex Worker Solidarity Network, Sex Worker Outreach Program (SWOP) Behind Bars, SWOP Tampa & SWOP Orlando.

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