

The logo for Decriminalize Sex Work is a dark red square containing the text "Decriminalize Sex Work" in a white, cursive script font. A small white heart symbol is positioned at the end of the word "Work".

Decriminalize
Sex Work ♡

END HUMAN TRAFFICKING.
PROMOTE HEALTH & SAFETY.

www.DecriminalizeSex.Work

Maine Voters Oppose Proposed Changes to Prostitution Laws

AUGUSTA, ME (June 5, 2023) – A recent statewide survey shows Mainers overwhelmingly oppose legislation related to prostitution that passed the Maine House and will be heard in the Senate tomorrow. LD 1435, “An Act to Reduce Commercial Exploitation,” sponsored by Representative Lois Reckitt proposes to make it legal for adults to sell sexual services, but illegal for adults to buy sexual services. When asked if they support or oppose this proposed law, only 12% of Mainers stated they support it while an overwhelming 55% oppose it. 33% percent were unsure.

LD1435 is one of only three bills that have been introduced in the country this year that proposes enacting the policy model referred to as the Equality Model, the Nordic model, the Entrapment model, or the End Demand model. Lawmakers market this legislation as a means of curtailing prostitution and combating trafficking, while evidence from around the world shows it does neither. Countries that have implemented the entrapment model continue to see violence and exploitation in commercial sex.

Proponents of this legislation claim human trafficking and consensual adult sex work are indistinguishable, which is untrue. “When sex work and trafficking are conflated, law enforcement and other state resources are misappropriated. Money and time is used to prosecute any prostitution-related crimes, limiting resources that could be otherwise fully focused on trafficking investigations,” said Rebecca Cleary, staff attorney at Decriminalize Sex work. Notably, of Mainers who know someone who has been trafficked into the commercial sex industry, 48% oppose the policy model proposed by LD 1435, while only 11% would support it.

Because criminalizing clients pushes the entire industry further underground, sex workers are more dependent on potentially exploitative third parties to help clients avoid discovery in order to keep their business, even if this risks exploitation. Sweden and Northern Ireland implemented

Entrapment Model laws in 1999 and 2015, respectively. In both places, prostitution persists. In Northern Ireland, a 2019 review of the impact of the legislation found no decrease in demand, leading the Department of Justice to label the policy ineffective. [A study](#) released in Sweden in 2019 reports the unambiguous failure of the Entrapment Model to reduce demand for prostitution, or to deter people from engaging in sex work, or to provide meaningful resources to victims of human trafficking in or out of the sex industry.

The poll, which surveyed 538 registered voters in Maine was conducted by Public Policy Polling on May 24 and 25, 2023.

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Decriminalize Sex Work

Decriminalize Sex Work is a national organization pursuing a state-by-state strategy to end the prohibition of consensual, adult prostitution in the United States. We work with local organizations, advocates, and lobbyists to build community support and convince legislators to stop prostitution-related arrests. Evidence shows that decriminalizing sex work will help end human trafficking, improve public health, and promote community safety.

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