

The logo for Decriminalize Sex Work is a dark red square containing the text "Decriminalize Sex Work" in a white, handwritten-style 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

New Report: New York Prostitution Arrests Target Women and People of Color

Prostitution arrests seemingly shifted from street arrests to massage-parlor raids

New York, NY (February 15, 2022) – Prostitution arrests in New York State overwhelmingly target women and people of color, according to a [new report released by the national advocacy organization Decriminalize Sex Work](#).

The report aggregates data in New York that have not been previously examined in their totality, finding that:

- In 2019, the enforcement of crimes explicitly involving prostitution, including loitering for the purpose of engaging in a prostitution offense, resulted in the arrest of female-identified individuals 97% of the time.
- Similarly, in 2019, these prostitution-related arrests targeted people of color more than 90% of the time.
- In the last 10 years, 90% of individuals arrests for patronizing a prostitute in the third degree were Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), despite the fact that national studies report between 80% and 85% of sex buyers are white men. Convictions in New York showed a similar racial bias.
- Arrest rates for prostitution and related crimes are declining in New York. Instead, those arrests have seemingly shifted to people working at unlicensed massage parlors, locations NYPD Vice Squad regularly raid as a result of anti-Asian bias and discrimination.

“Lawmakers in New York, particularly in New York City, have been very vocal about trying to protect survivors of human trafficking as well as sex workers. However, in general, the lived experience of individuals does not reflect this,” said Frances Steele, research and policy coordinator at Decriminalize Sex Work. “Not only are these policies failing, but they are disproportionately harming people of color.”

“We all want to end human trafficking. Arrest data, public health research, and the lived experiences of those in the industry all point to full decriminalization of consensual adult sex work as the best way to diminish exploitation. Because this is a deeply emotional issue, individual beliefs and bias often get in the way of enacting the most effective and safest policies. We must turn to the data and ensure a fact-based approach to making policy – not one based on stereotypes, tropes, misinformation, or fear,” said Melissa Broudo, Legal Director of Decriminalize Sex Work.

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Decriminalize Sex Work’s new report – [“By the Numbers: New York’s Treatment of Sex Worker and Trafficking Survivors”](#) – examined trends in arrest and conviction rates for both prostitution and human-trafficking offenses in New York State, as reported by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services.

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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