

# Sex trade decriminalization not the answer to protect women

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On behalf of our group, Nova Scotia End Demand, we would like to respond to a recent article (Sex trade assaults on the rise, says Ally Centre director) that appeared in the Cape Breton Post on July 12.

A representative from the Ally Centre in Sydney reported sexual assaults involving prostituted women and that these recent stories 'highlight a need for the decriminalization of the sex trade.'

Decriminalization is not the answer.

Every jurisdiction in the world that has decriminalized prostitution has seen an enormous increase in human trafficking and violence against women in prostitution. A dubious study out of Vancouver, which was cited in your article, does not disprove the hard data out of the Netherlands, Germany, New Zealand and other jurisdictions that have decriminalized prostitution.

Canada's current law on prostitution (BillC-36: The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act) is based on the Nordic Model approach, which has consistently proven to decrease levels of human trafficking in the countries where it has been adopted. If more resources were committed to the enforcement of our existing law, we would see similar results in Canada. The law does not target the people prostituted, rather the johns and the pimps who buy and sell (primarily) women's bodies.

The Nordic Model takes the End Demand approach to preventing prostitution and sexualized human trafficking. By arresting the johns

and pimps, it has proven a successful approach to ending the demand for prostitution and lessens sexualized human trafficking. It is also known that the End Demand approach decreases organized crime activities.

Sexualized human trafficking is a very serious and growing problem in Nova Scotia, and the repeal of all laws surrounding prostitution in Canada would be an unmitigated disaster for the women and girls lured and trafficked into prostitution.

As a society we must confront the violent entitlement of the men who purchase sex, and Bill C-36 was an important step in the right direction.

Since Bill C-36 took effect, the Cape Breton Regional Police were the first police force in Nova Scotia to conduct john stings that were made public, and released the names of the johns to the media. It is evident, that as an organization, they have acknowledged the violent sexual exploitation inherent in the purchase of a woman's body.

Our group, Nova Scotia End Demand: Nova Scotians for the Prevention of Prostitution and Sexualized Human Trafficking, is a collective of women from across Nova Scotia who are working to prevent and end prostitution and sexualized human trafficking. Our work is informed and supported by people who have been directly impacted by these forms of sexualized exploitation.

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