

Kylee Nixon

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February 16, 2022

for PCEPA review
Government of Canada

To whom it may concern for PCEPA review:

I am writing to you again, as I have in the past, regarding the PCEPA legislation. I'm speaking from two positions: 1. As a former longtime resident of a neighborhood beset by both street and parlour prostitution. 2. As a mental health therapist with experience doing psychotherapy with prostituted women and children (boys and girls).

I will end with my concerns about the PCEPA legislation.

1. As a former resident of Edmonton's inner city I quickly became aware of the detrimental effect of prostitution on the neighbourhood, on families, on the women, men, and children being exploited. Throughout the 10 years living there, I worked at Alberta Hospital- the psychiatric hospital just north of the city. I saw patients from the hospital prostituted on the street. I saw children I worked with in the PChad (provincial teen detox program) program and kids I knew from the neighbourhood prostituted. There were instances of men going to the local playground and offering children money. I could not myself go out to walk anywhere in the neighbourhood without my dog and/or my 3 kids without at least one man in a vehicles slowing down to try to talk to me about sex in exchange for money. The result is high distress, especially for women and children residing in the neighbourhood. There were (and still are) 2 "body rub centres" within 2 blocks of my house, both within one block of an elementary school, both within one block of the local Boys and Girls Club (a non-profit providing free after school care and meals for families in need).
2. I am a mental health therapist, a master's level clinical social worker, an employee of the provincial health authority Alberta Health Services. I have worked with kids (male and female) and women who are involved in prostitution. I can say unequivocally that prostitution itself, whether voluntary or involuntary (the majority of the clients I've known would have declared themselves voluntarily involved) is harmful to the prostituted person. The harm manifests as psychological injury (disorganized thinking, difficulty knowing oneself, loss of identity due to spending so much time role playing what others want, suicidal ideation, self-harm, addiction), physical injury (rape, STIs, vaginal, anal, oral injuries that may lead to long-term/chronic pain, auto-immune disease due to chronic/acute stress),

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spiritual injury (existential concerns, low self-worth), and interpersonal injury (difficulty relating with others, difficulty maintaining close relationships, severe trust issues, difficulty holding down a job, difficulty establishing and maintaining healthy sexual relationship). These various injuries can result in poverty and isolation in many cases.

My last and very important point is the following: we all agree that prostitution is harmful and unsafe to prostituted people (women primarily) in the large majority of circumstances –research indicates in all circumstances. People in government and citizens in general want to help this situation by focusing on how to make the practice safer for the women involved. PCEPA acknowledges the truth about prostitution, that it cannot be made safer as the practice itself is inherently detrimental to the women being bought and sold, and to the status of women in general in Canada. The damage and harm in prostitution comes primarily from the buyers, the demand, the industry where women are commodified. Consider where the Nordic Model on prostitution sprung from: Sweden, in 1999 after great push from feminists, women working with and for women. While Sweden is known and praised for its social safety nets, and these left leaning Swedish women recognized that the market for women is the root of the problem, not the resulting lack of safety for the women involved. They understood that there is no safety for women as long as a segment of us can be bought and sold by any man with no repercussions, with anonymity. The buying of women is the problem and that must be the target of our work to safeguard and provide equality for women and girls in Canada.

As a last note: PCEPA has barely been implemented in Canada. As it has never been used to any significant degree or enforced, it is impossible to review the legislation to see if it is working. We must figure out why the legislation has not been used, and how to start using it, only then can we realistically review it to see if it's working.

Sincerely,

Kylee Nixon

Enclosure