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Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights  
House of Commons  
Canada

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We, the collective of Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter, provide support to women who are currently being prostituted, women who are trying to escape prostitution, and women who are no longer in prostitution but still struggle with its long-lasting emotional and physical impacts. Our analysis of prostitution is that it exists as a harmful patriarchal institution that exploits and compounds systemic inequality on the basis of sex, race, poverty, age and disability. Our commitment to abolition (the end of prostitution) is derived from, and reinforced by, the prostituted women who call us and the current and past members of our collective who have exited prostitution.

For the purpose of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights Review of the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act, we submit the following:

1. In British Columbia, as in most provinces, it is impossible to evaluate the impact of PCEPA as it has not been implemented. In most provinces, since the law passed, men have not been arrested, let alone charged with the criminal offence of obtaining sexual services. The same is true for men who receive a financial benefit from pimping women in prostitution.  
We call on the Justice Committee to criticize the provinces who have not been upholding the law and to demand a robust action plan for an immediate application of the law.
2. Some of the witnesses who've appeared before the Justice committee claim that women in prostitution have been routinely arrested since the law has passed. The data published by Statistics Canada (Crimes related to the sex trade: Before and after legislative changes in Canada, June 21, 2021) states that in the five years previous to the law (2010 - 2014), 2,364 women were charged in incidents of stopping traffic or communicating offences. In the 5 years since the new law, only 34 women were charged in these offences.  
We call on the Justice Committee to propose an amendment to the law that will remove any form of criminalization for women who resort to prostitution.

3. A few witnesses stated that women with precarious legal status in Canada have been deported as a result for being engaged in prostitution. This point was affirmed when MP Garrison confirmed with a witness that “Deportation takes place very frequently for sex workers.”  
We call on the Justice Committee to seek and publish the data on this troubling phenomenon. Furthermore, any punishment of women in prostitution is a reflection of inadequate immigration policies and not a result of PCEPA. We call on the Justice Committee to propose an amendment to the law that will protect women victims to prostitution from deportation, regardless of their status in Canada.
4. During the review, many witnesses (regardless of their position on the law) spoke about the marginalization and vulnerability of women in prostitution and how Indigenous women, migrant women and youth are at greater risk of sexual exploitation. We wholeheartedly agree with this evidence, it is consistent with the experience of women in prostitution who call our crisis line.
5. We call on the Justice Committee to affirm the importance of the law as a form of deterrence and discouragement for men from exploiting and profiting off of women in prostitution. The Canadian Parliament must immediately and effectively address women’s economic insecurity and vulnerability to sexual exploitation and violence. As such, we call on the Justice Committee to support Bill S-233/C-223, the National Framework for a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income Act.

Please visit our website at [rapereliefshelter.bc](http://rapereliefshelter.bc) to learn more about our work with women in prostitution.

Sincerely,

Hilla Kerner  
For the collective of Vancouver Rape Relief and Women’s Shelter