



# ESPLER PROJECT INC.

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## **Judge White Denies Sex Worker Rights**

*Deeply Flawed Judgement Continues Discrimination Against Sex workers.*

San Francisco, CA - Yesterday Judge Jeffrey S White issued an Order in Northern California District Court dismissing the Erotic Service Providers Legal Education Research Project ([ESPLERP](#)) v [Gascon](#) court case, which challenged California's current anti-prostitution law, Penal Code 647(b).

Simply put... This is a deeply flawed decision... A judge's bias against sex worker rights in search of a legal justification.

This decision flies against all legal precedent, especially *Lawrence v Texas*, the 2003 Supreme Court landmark decision that held that intimate consensual sexual conduct was protected by the 14th Amendment. It also ignores the recommendations of a whole series of reputable international organizations, including [Amnesty International](#), the [World Health Organization](#), the *Lancet*, Human Rights Watch, and the UN Global Commission on HIV and the Law, all of which call for the decriminalization of sex work and recognize that consenting adults have the right to be free from state criminalization of their sex lives.

"This decision is horribly mistaken," said Claire Alwyne, Board Member of ESPLERP. "The judge completely misinterprets *Lawrence v Texas*. He claims that *Lawrence v Texas* only protects sexual conduct in the context of a meaningful relationship, while in fact it protects even the most brief, casual, and impersonal sexual interactions. While he might not like it, *Lawrence v Texas* clearly protects sex workers and their clients."

"It is completely offensive that a federal judge says that criminalizing sex workers promotes public safety and prevents injury and coercion," said Bella Robinson, of ESPLERP and CoyoteRI. "In real life, it's the other way round. Doing sex work under the constant threat of police and jail is far from occupational safety, and violence against sex workers is very common when sex work is illegal."

ESPLERP is consulting with its legal advisers. We have until May 6 to file an amended complaint, but seriously doubt that we will have a fair hearing in Judge Jeffrey S White's court. Given that, we may have no option but to appeal to the Ninth Circuit - where we are confident that the merits of our case will finally be recognized and we will be granted relief.

*The Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education and Research Project (ESPLERP) is a diverse community-based coalition advancing sexual privacy rights through litigation, education, and research.*

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