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End The Anti-Trafficking Scam

The Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project calls on Federal and State bodies to stop grants to self-perpetuating anti-trafficking organizations

San Francisco, CA - The Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project (ESPLERP) today called on Federal and State oversight bodies, such as the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the California Department of Finance, to do proper oversight of anti-trafficking organizations in receipt of Federal or State funds, and to stop funding organizations whose sole purpose is to peddle misinformation and outright lies to generate further funding.

“This is a huge self-sustaining industry largely supported by our tax dollars” said Claire Alwyne, a board member of the Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project. “But it does very little to advance its stated purpose of helping trafficked victims. Instead it is all about keeping the grants flowing. We’ve long called upon legislators to create transparency and accountability of publicly-funded anti-prostitution and anti-trafficking groups. It’s about time the GAO and State oversight bodies started cracking down on them.”

“Simply reciting fake statistics shouldn’t be enough to get government funding” said Maxine Doogan, President of the Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project. “But thankfully some legislators, like California Assemblymember Quirk, chair of the Public Safety Committee, are trying to develop policy and allocate funding based on real data. The oversight bodies should really do the same.”

By some estimates 50 of the most prominent anti-trafficking organizations in the United States have [annual revenues of around \\$686 million](#) - much of which is Government and State grants. For example, in its 2013 IRS filing (the latest [available on GuideStar.com](#)), the Polaris Project showed that a quarter of its revenues (\$1,520,541) came from Government grants. These are significant numbers. But it is almost impossible to determine where that money goes, because the required IRS filings rarely break down expenses.

Most anti-trafficking organizations make big claims about rescuing victims from trafficking. But the reality is very different. Most "rescue operations" are law enforcement “raids” which entrap consensual adult sex workers and often end with incarceration of the supposed victims. Harassing and criminalizing sex workers might inflate the “rescue” numbers, but it has very little to do with trafficking. And to add insult to injury, the anti-trafficking groups rarely provide any services whatsoever to the arrested sex workers. Imagine if those

revenues were devoted to helping survival sex workers by providing services such as drop-in shelters, housing, counselling, education, ...

Instead, most of the anti-trafficking organizations' revenues go to "creating awareness". What that translates into is using [fabricated stories](#) and [thoroughly discredited statistics](#) to whip up hysteria about trafficking - which then helps the organizations get further rounds of funding. This self-perpetuating cycle is completely fact-free. All that counts is the end-effect - more funding.

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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