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Sex Workers Condemn Oakland Car Forfeiture

Proposed Oakland Legislation Would Allow Police To Seize Vehicles Of Clients Suspected Of Prostitution

San Francisco, CA - Today, the Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education and Research Project (ESPLERP), a national sex worker rights organization, condemned proposed legislation by City of Oakland Council Member Abel Guillen that would allow police to tow and remove the cars of sex workers' clients.

Ironically the proposed Oakland statute is based on California Vehicle Code Section 22659.6 which was chaptered into law last fall (the Assembly Bill No. 1206), and sponsored by Assemblyman Raul Bocanegra who resigned amid sexual harassment allegations a month after the bill was signed into law - <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article186689213.html>

Oakland has a history of targeting sex workers rights. For example, in 2014, it passed an ordinance whereby landlords are *required* to evict suspected sex workers from their homes, even where the individuals haven't been convicted of any crimes - <https://reason.com/blog/2014/10/24/oakland-landlords-can-evict-sex-workers>

Oakland also has a long history of police corruption and racist policing. Police regularly shake down sex workers - <https://reason.com/blog/2017/07/13/oakland-police-corruption-comes-out> They also target men of color for arrest in low income communities where prostitution stings take place - <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/03/oakland-police-reform-115552> And this new legislation gives police even more power over black and brown bodies.

"These anti-prostitution laws play a major role in the gentrification process, where Oakland is pushing women, young people, trans people and people of color into poverty and homelessness" said Maxine Doogan, President of ESPLERP. "1 in 6 people in California are going hungry. 1 in 25 families in the US live on less than 2 dollars a day. For many, prostitution often becomes the only way to meet their daily needs. So by targeting prospective clients of sexworkers, this bad law would disproportionately affect mothers struggling to keep a roof over their children's heads in one of most expensive parts of the country with no safety net. This bad law is based on the usual false and misleading information that conflates sex work and forced labor by legislators who only wish to further their own political careers on our backs. Oakland should be putting resources into supporting their residents - not passing repressive policing laws."

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. Contributions to support us can be submitted through our crowd fundraiser - www.litigatetoemancipate.com.

esplerp.org, decriminalizessexwork.com

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