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Sex Workers Applaud Passage of California Senate Bill 233

SB 233 prohibits the arrest for prostitution of people who witness or are a victim of specified violent and serious crimes, and prohibits the use of condoms as evidence of sex work.

San Francisco, CA - A sex worker activist group, the Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project (ESPLERP), today applauded the passage of California Senate Bill 233 - Senator Scott Wiener's (D-San Francisco) legislation to protect people from arrest for prostitution offences when reporting serious crimes, such as rape. The bill also prohibits police from using possession of condoms as evidence of prostitution. The bill passed out of the Senate yesterday with a 28-10 vote. It will now head to the Assembly where it will be set for a hearing in the coming months.

"When a sex worker is scared to come forward and report a crime, the sex worker is less safe, and we are all less safe as a community," said Senator Weiner. "And carrying condoms to protect one's health should never be criminalized. I am grateful to my colleagues for acting to protect sex workers' health and safety."

"The immunity approach taken in SB 233 was passed into law in Alaska a few short years ago and now we see the best practice and policy in the San Francisco Police Department and the District Attorney's office to also include precluding condom possession as means to make prostitution cases" said Maxine Doogan of ESPLERP. "Sex work is not going away. And Police Departments have a straightforward choice - they can mount a futile 'war on sex' to try and drive sex work into the shadows - or they can work with sex workers and the community to improve public safety and health."

"San Francisco and Oakland have already passed resolutions of support for SB 233," said Claire Alwyne of ESPLERP. "And similar resolutions of support are working their way through the cities of Berkeley. That reflects a huge groundswell of political and community support for a key social justice issue. Sex workers are just trying to make a living in a very unequal social system - and deserve to be safe."

Law enforcement should not be wasting time (and taxpayers money) arresting adults engaged in consensual sex. ESPLERP calls on legislators in all 50 states to decriminalize sex work immediately.

SB 233 is supported by St. James Infirmary, US Prostitutes Collective, Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project (ESPLERP), and the Sex Worker Outreach Project of Sacramento and a number of other LGBTQ, public health, and social justice organizations. It is co-authored by Assembly Members Bill Quirk (D-Hayward), Wendy Carrillo (D-Los Angeles) and Laura Freidman (D-Glendale). Full text of the legislation can be found [here](#).

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 our advocacy can be made at www.litigatetoemancipate.com.

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