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Sex Workers Applaud Vote By California Assembly For Passing SB233

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 - 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 Assembly today with a vote. It will now go before the senate before going to the governor’s desk.

SB 233 has picked up several more endorsements including the Los Angeles County District Attorney and the City of Berkeley Police Review Commission who added their voices to what is now best practice and policy that came from the San Francisco Police Department and the District Attorney’s office. SB233 picked up additional sponsorships during the Assembly Public Safety Committee hearing June 11, Member Wick and Kamlager-Dove. Assembly Public Safety Committee Member Tom Lackey also provided the first bi partisan vote to support.

“It was clear to the Assembly Public Safety Committee Members that the law enforcement need to prioritize public safety and public health and stop their current practise of taking condoms of evidence of prostitution,” said Maxine Doogan, “but to also take reports when we’re victims and witnesses to crime by granting immunity to us from prostitution arrests when we’re victims and witnesses to crime.”

SB233 requried and recieved the 2/3rd vote from the Assembly 54-13 to pass as altering the evidencary code to now remove condoms as evidence of prostitution, a misdemeanor. Video here. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5j_bmeM2uFs

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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