**Virtual Press Conference**

For Immediate Release: Wednesday May 6, 2020

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**WHAT:** Sex Workers Call for Suspension of Prostitution Arrests /Prosecutions During Pandemic

**WHO:** Sex worker organizations including ESPLERP (Erotic Service Providers Legal Education Research Project), Maxine Doogan 415-265-3302, info@esplerp.org,

SWOP Sacramento (Sex Workers Outreach Project), 916-390-7107 sacramentoswop@yahoo.com

US PROStitutes Collective 415-640-4250

**WHEN:** Wednesday May 6, 2020 10:30am

**WHERE:** Conference call - 1+605-468-8000, passcode 829606#

 **Sex Workers Call for Suspension of Prostitution Arrests /Prosecutions During Pandemic**

SAN FRANCISCO — The Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education and Research Project (ESPLERP), US PROStitutes Collective and Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP) Sacramento are holding a virtual press conference to urge the Governor of California , Gavin Newsom, to suspend arrests and prosecutions for prostitution offences during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

During the Pandemic sex workers have had limted access to the social safety net provided by the Federal Government and the State of California. They want to shelter in place, but without any source of income, many face a stark choice between working or starving and or lose their homes all while arrests and prosecutions are still being enforced.

“Police in jurisdictions like LA are wasting precious public resources to do prostitution stings - money that could be going to help sex workers stay safe in place”, said Maxine Doogan, President of Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education and Research Project. “We want the Governor to stop all prostitution arrests and prosecutions as to allow folks to not have to risk finding themselves unsheltered in the middle of a pandemic.”

“We want the Governor of Californa to stop police forces spending money prosecuting prostitution offences - and instead spend that money on the social safety net, which needs serious bolstering right now”, said Rachel West of US PROStitutes Collective, a San Francisco sex worker activist group. “The Governor should stop the enforcement of solicitation and loitering with intent offenses which are disproportionately being used against trans, Black, immigrant and other women of color. Sex workers, many of whom are mothers trying to ensure that their children don’t go hungry, need support not criminalization.”

“Many sex workers continue to work out of hotels, cars, and their own dwelling during the shelter in place”, said Kristen Di Angelo of Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP) Sacramento. “Without income or relief, what else can they do? I observed a Judge in Placer County on March 3, 2020 state to those charged with prostituion would receive 12 days minimum jail sentence for their first 647(b) charge (prostitution) with longer sentences for those with second time convictions. In the middle of the Pandemic, the police are still mounting prostitution stings, still busting sex workers and their clients, and still sending people to jail - which is a literally a death sentence.”

*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.*

*SWOP Sacramento and USPROs*

Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education and Research Project (ESPLERP)

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esplerp.org, decriminalizesexwork.com

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