



## **ESPLERP 2023 Year End Report**

In our traditional spirit of transparency and accountability, we'd like to share with you the highlights from the Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project (ESPLERP) activities in 2023.

### **Stop The Raids - Super Bowl LVII**

In conjunction with the Stop The Raids coalition we mounted a major campaign for Super Bowl LVII in Phoenix AZ on Sunday February 12 2023.

Every Super Bowl law enforcement and the media promote a fake panic about "sex trafficking" to justify harmful, dangerous raids on sex workers and our clients.

But, year after year, these Super Bowl raids have failed to identify few, if any actual trafficking victims. Instead, they disrupt and destroy the lives of sex workers and our clients, who are subsequently forced through the criminal justice system for a law enforcement publicity stunt / fundraising scam.

For example, a report from the USC Gould School of Law's International Human Rights Clinic strongly advocates against these raids, calling them "ineffective" against trafficking and "traumatizing" to sex workers, predominantly women of color.

As part of the Stop The Raids effort, we aim to expand the capacity of local sex workers, sex worker organizations, and coalition partners. Part of that is to disseminate a Media Kit to media organizations - coaching them on how to engage with what law enforcement says versus what they actually do - and encouraging them to ask pointed questions about charges and arrests when law enforcement do press announcements about their (imagined) "success" in stopping "trafficking". See

<https://stoptheraids.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/MEDIA-ADVISORY-Stoptheraids-2023.pdf>

We also mounted a Day Of Action event at the Super Bowl venue.



### **Coyote RI Report on Prostitution**

We worked with Coyote RI to produce and promote a substantial report looking at prostitution and prostitution related charges in Rhode Island from 2000 to the present. The report's main findings were:

- After the re-criminalization of indoor prostitution, and again over the last six years, there has been a sharp increase in arrests of Asian spa workers. In 2021, Asian spa workers made up 13 of Rhode Island's 16 total prostitution related arrests. Police target Asian spa workers for re-arrest, sometimes arresting them within a couple weeks of their previous arrest.
- The state financially benefits from the repeated fines levied in these arrests and police and prosecutors were awarded \$650,000 in prostitution earnings in one spa case.
- Since 2000 there have been 11 federal sex trafficking cases with minor victims in Rhode Island.
- Since 2016 there have been 5 state sex trafficking cases with minor victims in Rhode Island's commercial sex industry, and 2 additional cases with minor victims who were not involved in the commercial sex industry.
- Asian women, trafficking survivors, and drug users were overrepresented in cases involving law enforcement sexual contact.
- Of the 2,189 misdemeanor cases tracked, 288 people had more than one arrest, 29 people had 10 or more arrests, and at least 123 had between 3 and 9 charges. Two women had 25 prostitution charges.

You can read the full report at

<https://coyoteri.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Prostitution-and-Prostitution-Related-Charges-in-Rhode-Island-2000-Present.pdf>

## The Report: How The War On Sex Work Is Stripping Your Privacy Rights

With a grant from the Rose Foundation, we carried out a research project looking at the technologies police use in their surveillance of sex workers and their clients. As part of that work, we conducted public records requests in all 58 counties in California.

Based on the (incomplete responses from law enforcement) we learned that we are just the canaries in the coal mine. The police are watching all of us, even you.

You can read our report “How The War On Sex Work Is Stripping Your Privacy Rights” at <https://esplerp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Consumer-Privacy-Final.pdf>

After the publication of the Report, We were featured talking about it on the Doug Henwood’s show “Behind the News” - <https://kpfa.org/episode/behind-the-news-mar-23-2023/>

ESPLERP Board President Maxine and other sexworkers met with CA legislators and staffers to educate them on the findings in the Report. So far she has had very positive meetings with over 50 percent of the legislature. Most of the legislators and staffers were grateful to hear from our community as many had never from ‘our side’ before. They were also very familiar with the bad actors that consistently don’t comply with the California Public Records Requests.

Check out and share this interactive website about the report -<https://ca4privacy.org/>  
The report is available in Spanish too.



## International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers - #IDEVASW

On December 17th 2023, Maxine co-hosted an International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers event (#IDEVASW) event with Bella Robinson of COYOTE RI - <https://coyoteri.org/>

The event was a resounding success. The link to the online event is here  
<https://youtu.be/ak3xuTb6FMI?feature=shared>

### **Stop The Raids Die-In at Los Angeles City Hall**

On December 18th, 2023, the Stop The Raids Coalition's Los Angeles branch and local sex worker groups mounted a 'Die-In' demonstration at Los Angeles City Hall.

This was to call attention to the policies of City Attorney Hydeec Feldstein Soto, where under the guise of combating sex trafficking, the city administration has been criminalizing and harassing sex workers and their clients, using the outdated Red Light Abatement Act of 1913. This has led to the shutdown of motels where sex workers had been able to work safely indoors

Check out this super awesome video of the well attended at Los Angeles City Hall -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53OSrLFhMZA> !!!



### **Stop the Raids 2024**

We are experiencing a very strong sense of deja vu in the run up to Super Bowl LVIII in Las Vegas Rally on February 5th, 2024.

It seems this year is the same as every other year. Law enforcement, politicians and the media claim that large sporting events like the Super Bowl are associated with sex trafficking. This

“urban myth” has been comprehensively debunked as FALSE - but is still trotted out every year. See Snopes - <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/super-bowl-prostitution-increase/>

So, the Stop The Raids Coalition of sex workers and activists is mounting yet another major campaign around the Las Vegas Super Bowl. This includes:

- **Ho Down - Sex Trade Workers Training Event**

This training event is Saturday to Monday, Monday, February 3 - 5, 2024, 12-5pm at UNLV (Building/room TBA).

Saturday/Sunday are ONLY for sex workers. The training will cover leadership, anti oppression, media training, cyber security reviews, community based research and rally preparation.

Sign up at

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSduXo83Bfn4ZSpzxr5Jd0NWYrrWNOiUc9Y-ePQp0dRoFYK9yQ/viewfor>

- **Sex Workers Researchers Round Table**

Community based research is an important and often missing component in discussions about the sex trade. We need to center community generated research, data, and statistics. Let's get started with a round table of 3 esteemed sex worker researchers to understand what research is required, how it should be designed, and arm our community and allies to fight back.

Register here -

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Q36kMoyHR76guOgg5\\_uG3A](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Q36kMoyHR76guOgg5_uG3A)

- **Cyber Security Checkup - Stop the Raids 2024**

Daly Barnett from the Electronic Frontier Foundation (eff.org) will lead us through some cyber security steps all sex industry workers can take to protect our digital lives and devices from snoopers, data scrapers and unscrupulous data brokers who collect data on our community members, and then provide it to the police and general public.

Register here -

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_7z6-9WEbR9S3bEXRDCOdbw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_7z6-9WEbR9S3bEXRDCOdbw)

- **Rally**

Join us at the Rally for Stop The Raids - Monday, Feb. 5th at 4pm at Las Vegas' Allegiant Stadium located at 3333 Al Davis Way - Las Vegas, Nevada 89118.

Here's the form to register -

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSduXo83Bfn4ZSpzxr5Jd0NWYrrWNOiUc9Y-ePQp0dRoFYK9yQ/viewform>

**STOP THE RAIDS**  
**FEBRUARY 3 - 5, 2024**  
 STOPTHERAIDS.ORG

**ALL OUR HAPPENINGS @ UNLV**

- SATURDAY, FEB 3 12 - 5PM**  
 SEX WORKER ONLY  
 WORKSHOPS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING  
 LUNCH PROVIDED
- SUNDAY, FEB 4 12 - 5PM**  
 SEX WORKER ONLY  
 WORKSHOPS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING  
 LUNCH PROVIDED
- MONDAY, FEB 5 12 - 3PM / RALLY 5PM**  
 OPEN TO EVERYONE  
 5PM RALLY IN FRONT OF ALLEGIAN STADIUM  
 LUNCH PROVIDED

**ABOUT LAS VEGAS RED UMBRELLA COLLECTIVE**

Las Vegas Red Umbrella Collective is a community grassroots organization led by and for sex workers in Las Vegas offering support through mutual aid, community events, and political activism.

**RSVP**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

## Mailing

Our new MailerLite email software platform is great because it protects everybody's privacy.

You can sign up for future mailings and newsletters at

<https://dashboard.mailerlite.com/forms/393877/85091783637206398/share>

## Legislation

There was quite a lot of action on the legislative front:

- **AB 1726**

California Assembly Member Ash Kalra introduced AB 1726 to fix technical issues with SB 357 (repealed loitering with intent to commit prostitution and created a process to clear the records of persons with past convictions) and SB 239 (decriminalized engaging in prostitution while living with HIV). But SB 357 and SB 239 did not include language that would wipe out the criminal convictions for immigrants.

AB 1726 fixed that problem. But Governor Newsom vetoed it without explanation). We understand that it encountered opposition from a few county district attorney offices who had never actually prosecuted any loitering with intent to commit prostitution cases!

- **SB 14**

We opposed SB14 because it repeats the same old set of unsubstantiated and debunked claims about “trafficking”, and would include young people doing survival sex work (or even providing support to other young people doing survival sex work) under the provisions of the Three Strikes Law, where they are required to register as sex offenders for life. This bill was signed into law.

- **Texas Anti-Porn Law Blocked**

A Texas law, H.B. 1181, designed to put strict controls on access to adult websites was blocked by a federal judge on Thursday, one day before it was to go into effect, in a decision that could prove a bellwether for similar legal challenges now playing out across the country.

<https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/texas-porn-age-verification-law-blocked-first-amendment-1234816200>

- **Strasbourg challenge to French ban on buying sex**

In 2016 France passed a law criminalizing the purchase of sex but not the sale of sex - an example of the so-called “Nordic model”.

A group of French sex workers are challenging the law in the European Court of Human Rights, arguing that it pushes those who sell sex into operating in a clandestine manner and in isolation, exposing them to greater risks to their physical integrity and lives, and affecting their freedom to define how they live their private lives.

In a first step, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the challenge is “admissible” - which means that the challenge can proceed to a hearing (at a later date).

<https://www.irishlegal.com/articles/strasbourg-to-consider-challenge-to-french-ban-on-buying-sex>

- **Portugal Decriminalizes Third Parties In Sex Work**

In May, Portugal's Constitutional Court declared the criminalisation of third parties involved in sex work to be unconstitutional.

The impact of the Constitutional Court decision is yet to be seen, but Movimento dxs Trabalhadorxs do Sexo (a Portuguese sex workers organization) believes that it opens the door to a political / legislative approach to full decriminalization.

<https://www.nswp.org/news/sex-workers-portugal-welcome-new-constitutional-court-ruling>

## **Press**

During 2023, ESPLERP was quoted in four (4) online news articles and produced six (6) press releases to educate the media and the public.

## Media Coverage

Rachel West of the US PROStitutes Collective got some good coverage in the SF Standard - <https://sfstandard.com/community/40-years-after-sex-workers-took-over-an-english-church-the-fight-for-justice-picks-up-in-san-francisco/>

## Suggested Reading

- **New Book - Preachers vs. Porn: Exposing Christianity's War on Sexxx**  
Mark Kern's new book is titled "Preachers vs. Porn: Exposing Christianity's War on Sexxx" *"Preachers vs. Porn" is a book about war—specifically the war between Christian religious philosophy and its adherents, and the adult entertainment industry that has been targeted by Christian religious leaders and their supportive politicians. In these pages, author Mark Kernes collects the reports of his investigations into how Christianity has evolved into a political force that supports conservative politics that specifically targets sex and sexual depictions to advance its political aims.*  
You can read more / buy the book at <https://bookshop.org/p/books/preachers-vs-porn-exposing-christianity-s-war-on-sexxx-mark-kernes/19553513>
- **Updated - Sex For Sale: Prostitution, Pornography, and Erotic Dancing**  
Professor Ron Weitzer produced a 3rd Edition of "Sex For Sale: Prostitution, Pornography, and Erotic Dancing", which is packed full of updated research supporting a law change.  
<https://www.amazon.com/Sex-Sale-Prostitution-Pornography-Dancing/dp/1032133155>

## A Word About The Opposition

Equality Model US (<https://www.equalitymodelus.org/>) is yet another well funded 'anti trafficking' (translation: anti sex work) organization. They clearly realize they are losing the argument about decriminalization, so they have now co-opted our language and are promoting a perverted version of decriminalization.

This is really the 'Nordic Model' re-branded - where they want to criminalize our customers, while claiming that it saves us. This despite Amnesty International's report in 2016 (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/policy-on-state-obligations-to-respect-protect-and-fulfil-the-human-rights-of-sex-workers/>) clearly showing that the Nordic Model approach does not change the way in which the State criminalizes sex workers at all.

But all that funding means they can lobby for anti sex work bills in multiple states. See the Texas section in the Legislation summary above.

## Policy Agenda

We find that our Policy Agenda is an invaluable tool when talking to legislators - especially in educating them about protections our community is going to need regardless of our status. The



criminalization of consensual sex creates a system with multiple levels of social and institutional discrimination - which need to be addressed with or without decriminalization.

You can view the 2022 Policy Agenda at - <https://esplerp.org/policy-agenda-2022/>

### **New Board Members**

We need new Board Members! So if you have the time and energy to help, and particularly if you have legal, media or fund-raising skills, please do contact us at [info\(at\)esplerp\(dot\)org](mailto:info@esplerp.org).

### **Finance**

Despite everybody facing substantial economic pressure during 2021, we raised a tad over \$39,000 from grants and individual donors.

We need to raise funds to move forward on additional policy and legal fronts - such as educating legislators and the potential California state court case. Your donations continue to make the difference in having our voices at the table.

- Contribute online at [litigatetoemancipate.com](http://litigatetoemancipate.com)
- Venmo [@decrimnow](https://www.venmo.com/@decrimnow)
- Hit the PayPal button at <http://esplerp.org>
- Mail checks to ESPLERP, 2261 Market Street # 548, San Francisco, CA 94114.

We so appreciate your support - both financially and in spreading the message that sex workers and clients have a right to sexual privacy. This is a bottom-up activist movement and we appreciate any feedback you might have for us. Thank you.

Wishing You All A Happy 2024,  
Maxine, Reada, Claire, Elle and Phil

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or

go to <https://dashboard.mailerlite.com/forms/393877/85091783637206398/share>

To unsubscribe - email [info\(at\)esplerp\(dot\)org](mailto:info@esplerp.org) with 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.

*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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