



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Rally To Stop the Re-Criminalization of Loitering

“California Sex Workers and Harm Reduction Groups Call Foul On Three Bills Seeking to Again Let Police Target People for intent to Commit Prostitution”

SACRAMENTO — California sex workers and a statewide harm reduction coalition are calling foul on three bills currently before the California state legislature which seek to reinstate the criminalization of loitering in a public place with the intent to commit prostitution.

The anti-loitering law in question, also known as the ‘walking while trans’ law was repealed in 2022 and the repeal went into effect at the beginning of 2023. The reform was a response to widespread concerns about how the law, like similarly controversial “stop and frisk” legislation, was being misused by law enforcement.

Supporters of the new bills repeat the same old trope; that police need this ‘crucial tool to combat human trafficking’. But as Maxine Doogan of the Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project (ESPLERP) pointed out to Courthouse News, “There is absolutely no evidence that the repeal of the loitering law facilitated forced labor in the sex trade. There is no data whatsoever showing that those arrested for loitering were ever victims of forced labor.”

[\(https://www.courthousenews.com/pointing-to-human-trafficking-some-california-lawmakers-hope-to-reinstate-prostitution-loitering-law/\)](https://www.courthousenews.com/pointing-to-human-trafficking-some-california-lawmakers-hope-to-reinstate-prostitution-loitering-law/)

“Police are not mind readers”, added Starchild, a mononymous sex worker who chairs the Libertarian Party of San Francisco. “Intent’ is a dangerously vague standard that can easily be used as an evidence-free justification to harass, detain, or arrest people, prostitutes or not, for literally doing nothing.”

Sex workers in California have cited ways in which the repealed law violated the Racial Justice Act and disproportionately affected women and ethnic minorities as they're over represented in enforcement. It also discouraged actual sex workers from carrying and using condoms, undermining the state's zero infection goal to end the HIV epidemic.

The new bills have already met with strong opposition in the state legislature. The sponsors of both AB 2034 and AB 2646 have withdrawn them from the Assembly Public Safety Committee. SB 1219 was heard in the Senate Public Safety Committee, but remains stalled there after receiving a strong rebuke by Senator Scott Wiener.

Sex workers and a coalition of harm reduction advocates will join together to raise awareness about the harms of AB 2034, AB 2646 and SB1219 on the North West Steps of the State Capital Building between 10th and 11th. We want to give journalists and members of the public a chance to talk with us and learn the truth about this bad legislation.

WHAT: Rally Against Re-Criminalizing Loitering With Intent to Commit Prostitution

WHO:

- Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education and Research Project
- The Sidewalk Project
- USPROSTITUTES Collective
- Strippers United
- Stoptheraids.org

DecrimSexWorkCA

WHEN: 10:30 to 11:30am, Tuesday, April 23, 2024

WHERE: Northwest steps of the California State Capitol building, between 10th and 11th streets, Sacramento, CA 95814

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