



Press Release

Six in Ten Ontarians Oppose Decriminalized Prostitution including Pimps, Brothels and Sex Buying

Three-Quarters of Ontarians Consider Prostitution as Harmful to Women and Girls

London, Ontario, July 12, 2018

In 2014, the Canadian Government passed the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA) which solely decriminalized prostituted persons while criminalizing pimps, brothel owners and sex buyers. The law provides police with a valuable tool that enables them to protect Canadian communities and a vulnerable population of women and girls and is being successfully implemented in a number of cities throughout the Province of Ontario and other provinces in Canada.

However, in April 2018 the Liberal Party of Canada voted in favour of a resolution calling to reverse the PCEPA and to decriminalize prostitution, including pimping, brothel owning and sex buying. This resolution is a major departure from current legislation.

A new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of the London Abused Women's Centre (Ontario, Canada) in collaboration with its international partners Equality Now and the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) reveals the most comprehensive overview ever completed on Ontarians' views of prostitution.

- **58% of Ontarians oppose any changes to the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act that would decriminalize pimps, brothel owners and sex buying**
- **75% of Ontarians think that prostitution is harmful to women and girls**
- **77% of Ontarians feel that most women and girls do not want to have repeated sex with random men**
- **85% of Ontarians would NOT support prostitution as a job for their daughter, sister or family member**
- **78% of Ontarians would NOT support their son, brother, husband or family member purchasing sexual services from a prostituted person**
- **58% of Ontarians do NOT view prostitution as a job like any other**
- **Ontarians do not fully understand the laws around prostitution: 67% falsely believed all aspects of prostitution are illegal with only 13% knowing that only pimps, brothel owners and sex buyers are criminalized. Prostituted persons are immune from criminal prosecution unless soliciting near day care centres, schools or playgrounds**
- **When informed about the details of the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act, 58% of Ontarians support the legislation**

Overview of London Abused Women's Centre, Equality Now and CATW

The London Abused Women's Centre (LAWC) is located in Ontario, Canada. LAWC provides woman-centred, trauma-informed counselling, advocacy and support to women and girls over the age of 12 experiencing abuse, assault, sexual assault, sexual harassment and/or torture by an intimate partner, sex purchaser, trafficker/pimp, and/or in the workplace. The London Abused Women's Centre provides specialized programs for women and girls being prostituted, trafficked and/or sexually exploited.

Equality Now is an international human rights organization that works to protect and promote the rights of women and girls around the world by combining grassroots activism with international, regional and national legal advocacy. Our international network of lawyers, activists, and supporters achieve legal and systemic change by holding governments responsible for enacting and enforcing laws and policies that end legal inequality, sex trafficking, sexual violence, and harmful practices including child marriage and female genital mutilation.

The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) is one of the oldest international organizations dedicated to ending the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls as gender-based violence and discrimination. CATW engages in legal advocacy, public awareness, and education and prevention programs to combat trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and North America.

Quotes

"Two-thirds of all trafficking in Canada originates in Ontario, the largest Province in Canada. Ontarians do not support the proposed Liberal Party of Canada policy to decriminalize pimps, brothel owners and sex buyers. Prime Minister Trudeau must show respect for the views of Ontarians and the rights of women. The Prime Minister must emphatically state the Liberal Government will NOT allow pimps, brothel owners and sex buyers to exploit women."

Megan Walker, London Abused Women's Centre

"At Equality Now we fight for laws to protect the rights of women and girls and criminalize those that exploit them. We seek to end the reality of sex trafficking for women and girls across the world. In 2014, Canada took a brave step in enacting PCEPA, and they must now step up and enforce it fully across the country to protect women and girls across Canada and beyond."

Shelby Quast, Americas Director, Equality Now

"With the passage of the PCEPA, Canada joined a growing number of governments that recognize that women bought and sold in prostitution must not be criminalized for their exploitation. Canada also committed to target the male demand for prostitution, which fuels the multi-billion-dollar sex trade and its engine, sex trafficking. Reversing the PCEPA in favor of decriminalizing pimping and sex buying would be a dark stain on Canada's human rights record and a strike against equality."

Taina Bien-Aimé, Executive Director, CATW

Research Methodology

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between June 25 to 27, 2018. For this survey, a sample of 801 Ontarians and aged 18+ from Ipsos' online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ±4.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Ontarian adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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