

# PROSTITUTION



In 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Canada's prohibitions around prostitution, reasoning that these laws violated the Charter right to security of the person for some engaged in prostitution. In response, Parliament passed a new prohibition on prostitution modeled after Nordic laws, which seeks to reduce demand by criminalizing the buyers of prostitution rather than the prostitutes themselves.

ARPA Canada supports this model. The majority of prostituted women are controlled by pimps and suffer harm - including sexual harassment, abuse, assault, or other forms of physical and emotional coercion. These harms are human rights violations and should not be normalized in any context. Both legalizing and decriminalizing prostitution benefit pimps and commodify the human body. Jurisdictions that have legalized or regulated prostitution have also seen an increase in the sex trade and its connection to organized crime, drug and human trafficking, and the growth of illegal industries. The Nordic model rightly criminalizes the demand for prostitution and helps women to safely exit the sex trade if they choose.

The Nordic model was first implemented in Sweden. A decade after implementation, the Swedish government investigated the effects of the law, and found that street prostitution had been halved, even while prostitution had been increasing in the surrounding Nordic countries. Survivors of prostitution and human trafficking have testified that the Nordic model helped them to get out of sex work and look for supports. Overall, the Nordic model has helped shape attitudes towards the sex industry and increase awareness of the harms caused by it.

The Nordic model is already in place in Canada but should also be effectively enforced. Additionally, Canada must ensure that there are adequate supports available to enable women to leave the sex trade, including access to safe shelter, addiction treatment, and health care.

*For more information about this topic, please refer to our related policy report document. This report can be found on our website at [ARPACanada.ca/publication/prostitution](https://arpacanada.ca/publication/prostitution).*