



PROSTITUTION

Prostitution is always and everywhere a form of sexual exploitation.

While some claim that the exchange of sex for money is just another occupation and should be decriminalized or legalized, it is harmful in all sorts of ways.

- **Prostitution dehumanizes women and commodifies sex by treating women and girls as objects for sexual satisfaction, rather than human beings with inherent dignity.** This affects not just the individuals engaged in prostitution, but all women and girls.
- **Prostitution generates demand that leads to an increase in sex trafficking.** Jurisdictions that have legalized prostitution see higher rates of sex trafficking to meet an increased demand for sexual services.
- **Prostitution is violent and unhealthy.** Women and girls who have formerly been trapped in prostitution report regular instances of violence and experience many psychological problems that last for years after they escape.

Canada's current prostitution law, the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act* (PCEPA), rightly recognizes that exploitation is inherent in prostitution. International law also deems prostitution to be a form of exploitation, discrimination, and sex trafficking against women and calls on countries to commit to combatting this social evil.

In response, Canada has adopted the Nordic Model to regulate prostitution, a model that aims to suppress demand for prostitution while enabling victims of prostitution to escape. It aims to accomplish this dual goal by criminalizing exploiters and purchasers rather than prostituted women and girls. This model has been demonstrated to effectively reduce the incidence of prostitution and human trafficking and reshape cultural attitudes towards prostitution.

While Canada has the right law to combat prostitution, much more must be done to protect women and girls from sexual exploitation. We recommend that federal and provincial governments:

- Increase enforcement of the current laws,
- Partner with survivor-led exit groups by renewing the Measures to Address Prostitution Initiative,
- Increase public awareness on the illegality and harms of prostitution, and
- Enact a permanent National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking.

We hope that you will join us in these efforts.

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