

Prostitution

We need better enforcement of the law, more survivor supports, more public education, and better strategies to protect women and girls from prostitution.



Canada has a good law to tackle prostitution...

Canada's current prostitution law, the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA), recognizes that prostitution is inherently exploitative and harmful. The law targets pimps, johns, and other exploiters. It does not criminalize prostitutes. The goal of PCEPA is to abolish prostitution to the greatest extent possible.

⊗ ...but right now it isn't enough.

Law enforcement often isn't interested in enforcing the current law. Survivors of prostitution don't have the supports they need. The public is largely unaware of the evils of prostitution. Canada doesn't have a permanent strategy to address prostitution, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking.

How is prostitution harmful?

- > **Harm #1:** Prostitution dehumanizes people, particularly women and girls. It treats them as objects for sexual satisfaction rather than as human beings with inherent dignity.
- > **Harm #2:** Prostitution commodifies sex, making this intimate act intended for marriage something to be bought and sold.
- > **Harm #3:** Prostitution generates a demand for sex trafficking. This has been well documented in academic literature and recent court decisions.
- > **Harm #4:** Prostitution is violent and unhealthy. Those who have been trapped in prostitution report regular instances of violence and experience many psychological issues.

Profile of Prostituted Women and Girls in Canada

Average age of entry into prostitution	14-19
Current typical age	20-24
Percentage addicted to drugs or alcohol	68%
Percentage needing mental health support	52%
Percentage coerced to provide sexual services	67%
Percentage wanting to leave prostitution	81%



How big is the problem in Canada?

Although we don't often see it, prostitution is a huge problem in Canada.

- > An estimated 21,344 Canadian women are prostituted in any given month.
- > An estimated 3% of Canadian men (468,000 men) have purchased sex within the last year.
- > An estimated 10% of Canadian men (1.56 million men) have purchased sex in their lifetime.
- > Of those who purchase sex, the median number of times that Canadian men have purchased sex is 108.



Questions to ask:

- #1 Do you support Canada's current prostitution law that targets exploiters and purchasers and helps women and girls escape prostitution?
- #2 Did you know that allowing prostitution increases the likelihood of sex trafficking?
- #3 Do you agree that prostitution is exploitative and harmful to women and girls?
- #4 Will you commit to calling for greater enforcement of Canada prostitution laws to protect women from the horrors of prostitution?

For more information on this issue, check out ARPA Canada's policy report on prostitution



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