

Dear _____ MP

DATE: _____

I write with regard to the recent decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal in *Bedford v. Canada (Attorney General)*. I strongly urge you, as my representative in Ottawa, to work with your colleagues to enact new laws addressing prostitution based on the legal and social framework of the Nordic model of law implemented in Sweden in 1999.

This model of law, often called the Nordic Model, is based on the recognition that prostitution is a form of sexual exploitation and violence. It penalizes the buying of sex (johns, pimps) , while decriminalizing those who are being sold. We ask you to follow the lead of Sweden, Norway and Iceland (nations with stable democratic traditions) who have put legislation into place that follows this model. Each country has seen a reduction in prostitution and sex trafficking and an increase in the stigma of buying and selling of people for sexual acts since enacting this legislation.

The Ontario court decision is based on a misguided notion that allowing for bawdy houses will provide protection to prostitutes. Rather, we must take a firm stand against the demand for paid sexual access.

Countries that have legalized or decriminalized prostitution (New Zealand, Australia, Netherlands, etc.) have seen an increase in human trafficking, illegal brothels and organized criminal activity. The former mayor of Amsterdam called the experiment with legalization “an abysmal failure” due to the increase in organized crime, human trafficking and drug trafficking. The city of Amsterdam has already closed one third of the Red Light Districts in hopes of curbing criminal activity. In New Zealand the Legal Brothel Owners Association has complained of Chinese women being trafficked into the country, undercutting their prices, and being coerced to offer riskier sex acts. These are just two current examples that demonstrate the fact that any time prostitution has been legalized there is an expansion of both the legal and illegal industry, an increase in human trafficking and a normalization of sexual exploitation.

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Prostitution is a form of systemic violence against women and a major deterrent to women’s equality. Canada has the opportunity to be a world leader in sexual equality through clearly naming prostitution as a violation of women and children’s right to safety. The Government of Canada must rewrite our laws to reflect this fact.

In the vast majority of cases, prostitution cannot be viewed as a choice but rather a lack of choice due to systemic abuse and exploitation. The laws of Canada must protect victims of exploitation. Aboriginal women and children are disproportionately overrepresented in street prostitution as a result of far reaching systemic injustice. National and local Aboriginal women’s groups loudly oppose the Ontario Court of Appeal ruling.

As a constituent, I strongly urge you to speak out and act to protect the vulnerable (especially women and children) by rewriting the Criminal Code to criminalize the purchasing of sex and decriminalize the person being sold. Please advise me as to the action you commit to take in bringing this to pass.

Signature:

Address: