

Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitted by:



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Queensland Parliament

Submission on Decriminalization of Sex Work

To the Queensland Parliament

As a sex worker and a single parent, I am compelled to address the critical issue of the decriminalization of sex work in Queensland. My personal experiences, coupled with broader observations within the Industry, highlight the urgent need for legislative reform to safeguard the rights, safety and dignity of sex workers.

Economic Empowerment and Social Stigma

Sex work has provided me with essential financial autonomy to support my daughter, especially in the light of the barriers I face securing traditional employment due to my disability. Despite the societal stigmatization and moral judgements surrounding my profession, the financial stability it affords me is indispensable for my family's wellbeing.

Safety Concerns and Criminalization

Operating within an environment where sex work is criminalized exposes to heightened risks and vulnerabilities. The fear of police prosecution and victim blaming attitudes exacerbates these dangers, hindering our ability to seek justice and report crimes committed against us. Furthermore, criminalization perpetuates societal misconceptions and prejudices, fuelling discrimination against sex workers and exacerbating housing instability.

The case for Decriminalization

Decriminalization of sex work is not merely a matter of personal preference but a fundamental human rights issue. It enables sex workers to work safely, access essential services, and assert their rights without

fear of legal repercussions. Contrary to misconceptions, decriminalization does not equate to unregulated or unchecked practices; rather, it fosters a framework that prioritizes safety, consent and autonomy.

Comparative legal models and Real- World implications

Drawing from global experiences, it is evident that criminalization and punitive approaches only serve to heighten risks, perpetuate violence and undermine the agency of sex workers. The Nordic model, often touted as a progressive alternative, fails to protect sex workers, in many instances, exacerbates their vulnerability, particularly concerning housing instability and legal discrimination.

Policy Recommendations

In light of these considerations, I urge the Queensland Parliament to:

1. Decriminalize sex work: Implement legislative reforms that remove criminal penalties associated with consensual adult sex work.
2. Protect Human Rights: Ensure that sex workers are afforded that same rights and protections as workers in other industries, without discrimination or prejudice
3. Enhance Safety Measures: Facilitate the creation of support networks, peer education programs and sex worker friendly policing initiatives to promote safety and accountability within the industry.
4. Address Housing Discrimination: Combat discriminatory practices in housing to provide stable accommodation options for sex workers, safeguarding their well-being and social integration.
5. Promote Public Awareness: Foster informed public discourse that challenges stigmatizing attitudes towards sex work, promoting empathy, understanding and respect for sex workers rights and choices.

Conclusion

Decriminalization of sex work is a crucial step towards upholding the human rights, dignity, and safety of sex workers in Queensland. By embracing evidence – based policies and prioritizing the voices and

experiences of sex workers, the Queensland Parliament has the opportunity to enact meaningful change and create a more just and equitable society for all.

Regards,



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