Wednesday, January 19th, 2022

Good morning esteemed counsellors, and thank you very much for accepting my written submission on the Strategies and Tools to Enhance Neighbourhood Liveability via the Doing Business in Winnipeg By-law - Problematic Business Activities

Under the current framework of PCEPA, it is technically “legal” to sell sexual services in Canada. And this is why we are here today: to examine proposed changes to legal frameworks surrounding some places of employment.

When this by-law review came up, it seemed like an opportunity to make some headway in retiring some of the draconian security theatre that had been installed, (such as the inability for Body Rub Practitioners to lock their doors), as well as the criminalizing framework of escorts having to provide a client list to the police, (given the current context of PCEPA that criminalizes the purchase of sexual services, there is no feasible reason for escorts to do this unless they want to stop making money).

Depriving people of potential clients in a business that they have decided meets their needs to make money does not make their bills magically disappear. People do what they need to do to survive under capitalism in a white supremacy.

If we truly want to eliminate exploitation of ALL kinds, we must eradicate white supremacy, and we must eliminate the necessity for people to make money.

Failing this, we MUST evaluate the tools that we currently have at our disposal that can alleviate some of the VERY SERIOUS AND REAL harms that can be addressed even in our current context.

One of the ways that we can address some of the harms of exploitation is to recognize that sex workers are human beings and deserve the same rights and protections as other human beings. Things like the ability to define consent, which gets confusing if it is ALL framed as “exploitative”. How can one consent if one is being exploited? It is not possible, which is why the current federal framework doesn’t make any sense.

In a municipal sense, what can be done to address some of these concerns?

These businesses and the workers in them, (many of whom are self-employed people/contractual employees, similar to realtors) have been so heavily negatively stigmatized that they are required to provide a photo to the police in case the need arises to identify their bodies which we as a society would NEVER consider acceptable in any other form of employment. And we should not consider it “acceptable” in the case of sex workers, either. These businesses should be allowed to operate just as any other business/self-employed person operates, and with the ability to operationalize any concerns they have surrounding their workplace safety through labour protection bodies, just like any other workers, such as at the Labour Board. And when we allow for workers to access these protections it creates safety for other workers some of whom may identify as exploited, or who experience violence at their work site, thereby opening up equitable access to such protections.

We need to remove the negative stigma because it creates a climate of criminalization which puts people at HIGHER RISK of violence. Over and over we see that criminalization does not alleviate the harms that sex workers experience. We have the evidence:

https://www.nswp.org/sites/default/files/Remembering%20Bedford%2C%20Pitts%20-%202016.pdf

We see that when sex workers can define an “unsafe working environment” for themselves or for others, and they have the tools to address it, they do:

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/14/new-zealand-sex-worker-wins-six-figure-sexual-harassment-payout

We see that when we take an anti-trafficking approach to this issue, we generally take the ability away for some of the most marginalized workers to define consent/sexual violence for themselves:

https://www.hivlegalnetwork.ca/site/caught-in-the-carceral-web-anti-trafficking-laws-and-policies-and-their-impact-on-migrant-sex-workers/?lang=en

https://www.swanvancouver.ca/_files/ugd/3a120f_8cf163d66eb345d385b254eb91d72cd2.pdf

What people need is low barriers to accessing safety.

https://medium.com/pulpmag/not-a-real-survivor-the-price-of-opinions-in-the-anti-trafficking-movement-557ce3e32e26

https://lauralemoon.medium.com/three-myths-of-the-end-demand-model-that-hurt-people-in-the-sex-industry-4ead6bf189da

Please, as city counsellors, we would like you to acknowledge this for what it is which is a labour rights issue, and use the powers that you have to make this city a better and safer place for everyone, including people who sell and trade sexual services, who are sometimes also victims of sexual violence, because sexual violence is so far-reaching in our society, NOT because it is “part of the job” in sex work.

And here are many more links full of evidence that will explain even better what I have discussed above:

- https://brightthemag.com/no-nurse-my-health-issues-arent-all-rooted-in-my-sex-work-e18a9c3d0bcc
- https://nowtoronto.com/i-was-honest-w-police
- http://ihttps://www.butterflysw.org/
- https://www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/exploitation-1.5160860
- https://thebigstorypodcast.ca/*2020/02/12*/sex-work-laws-canada/
- https://thefeministwire.com/2015/09/blacksexworkerslivesmatter-white-washed-anti-slavery-and-the-appropriation-of-black-suffering/
- https://omny.fm/shows/680-cjob/fight-exploitation-not-sex-workers
- https://omny.fm/shows/680-cjob/fight-exploitation-not-sex-workers
- sexsovereignty.tumblr.com/
- https://www.facebook.com/MMIWG/videos/244613076401381/
- https://www.cbc.ca/listen/cbc-podcasts/437-the-village
- https://www.canadaland.com/podcast/694-war-on-porn/
- https://teaandbannock.com/2019/05/17/bouncing-blueberries-and-bannock-bun-jacq-pelland-guest-blogger/
- https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/sexual-sovereignty

- https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/xmlui/handle/1993/34801
- sexsovereignty.tumblr.com/
- https://www.ubcpress.ca/asset/9473/1/9780774824484.pdf
- https://www.antiviolenceproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Hunt_Selling-Sex.pdf
- https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/29553201/HUNT_Alliance_News_July_2010.pdf?1350495870=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DColonial_Roots_Contemporary_Risk_Factors.pdf&Expires=1630516722&Signature=W~sCMiFDOLYGdzyAeYJYYa1tOpjhGC3H2rn2agPhkWOSoZamPyS4oN1xOVD3I1g50dqLeUUNxq4q3i6-oFK2Kn3JQ2kylDeBNFPAi4xq5b-MiWvN1KbD4ZQIWxFAwn5aGGAHxa8xzK1AhpM8sl7YUbJIS5am0Zqa0BFRxMyhIEY~A9GY1pVkziKfNUcLwSHIbSfbvepnVYpFcn6kVJVXTMhmqPMeR8tCsZXrYelv-NZlwHy7EDvJIJHCpUMavpYWmPgD-fy8UnlOXWeezGvGRLlNb57~dVarnN6SFsReAZbO9CNcgRqbV1cYCE8mROK0WK2V87fYm4fkWoAPO21WSw__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA
- https://journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlantis/article/view/3041/pdf_38
- https://journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlantis/article/view/3042
- https://swwacsummit.com/
- https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/how-we-got-here-story-palermo-protocol-trafficking/?utm_source=tw
- https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/john-school-takes-repressive-approach-to-sex-420691923.html
- https://www.stitcher.com/show/youre-wrong-about/episode/wayfair-and-human-trafficking-statistics-76840958
- https://www.liesjournal.net/volume1-14-prostitution.html
- https://the-toast.net/2015/09/14/whats-missing-from-the-conversation-on-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women/
- https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/john-school-takes-repressive-approach-to-sex-420691923.html
- https://www.stitcher.com/show/youre-wrong-about/episode/wayfair-and-human-trafficking-statistics-76840958
- https://www.liesjournal.net/volume1-14-prostitution.html
- https://winnipegpolicecauseharm.org/blog/john-schools-101/
- https://winnipegpolicecauseharm.org/blog/policing-sex-work-in-winnipeg-q-a-with-swwac/
- https://www.midnightsunmag.ca/changing-everything-on-the-prairies/
- https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/08/07/why-sex-work-should-be-decriminalized

Blogs:

- Kwe Today
- Tits and Sass

Important Articles:

- Vice lessons: A survey of prostitution offenders enrolled in the Toronto John School Diversion Program
- Centering the Voices of People who Trade or Sell Sex in Indigenous Anti-violence Organizing (Indigenous Sex Sovereignty Collective)
- What's Missing from the Conversation On Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (The Toast)

- Naomi Sayers: MMIW inquiry needs to look at sex work (Ottawa Citizen)
- Indigenous Voices on Cindy Gladue: A Reading List (Elle Beaver)

Books:

- Ferris, S. (2015). Street Sex Work and Canadian Cities: Resisting a Dangerous Order. University of Alberta Press
- Grant, M. G. (2014). Playing the Whore. The Work of Sex Work. Verso.
- Gray, J. (1971). Red Lights on the Prairies. The New American Library of Canada.
- Parent, C. et al. (2014). Sex Work: Rethinking the Job, Respecting the Workers. UBC Press.

Videos

- What do sex workers want? – Juno Mac
- Someone you love could be a sex worker – Valerie Scott (TEDx Toronto)
- The red umbrella – sex work, stigma and the law – Maggie de Vries
- Sex Work, Rights and Stigma – Claudyne Chevrier (for the Winnipeg Working Group) (TEDx UW)