

To:  
The Joint Multi-Party Women's Caucus  
Chair: Hon RMS Morutoa  
Attention:  
Bryan Mantyi  
Tel: 021 403 3796  
Per Email: [bmantyi@parliament.gov.za](mailto:bmantyi@parliament.gov.za)

RE: Response to the South African Law Reform Commission's Report on 'Sexual Offences: Adult Prostitution'

I am writing on behalf of Stripperoke, an event in Cape Town that is run as a collective by a number of Cape Town based women and queer sex workers. Our event is based on destigmatization of sex work through performance art and audience participation. My name is Alexandra Watkins and I am one of the main organizers and founder of Stripperoke. The Stripperoke team also works closely with sex workers from all demographics to give them space in our parties to voice their experiences. Stripperoke fully supports the full and unequivocal decriminalization of sex work in order to keep sex workers safe and able to maintain their means of subsistence without fearing being thrown in prison or facing police harassment. Stripperoke received the 2017 Asijiki award for Solidarity & Hard Work to a Sex Worker Ally for our commitment to the decrim cause.

On a personal note, I have lived in the United States and Canada before this where I did sex work activism. At the time I lived in Canada, the country was dealing with the same question surround whether to adopt decriminalization or the Nordic model (partial criminalization). In Bill C-36, Canada chose to adopt the Nordic model to the dismay of many sex work activists. With this model, many knew they would remain surveilled and although the bill sought to criminalize only those who were "exploiting" sex workers, it effectively continued the cause of abolition and put sex workers at greater risk. As many in the industry know, clients have to be present for the act of sex work to take place, and criminalizing clients simply made them seek darker and more discreet places and disallowed sex workers from gathering in groups to work together. This model also continued to criminalize brothels and spaces where sex workers could work together in order to stay safe.

Stripperoke as a team recognizes how spaces are needed in order to keep sex workers safe and, although we host events every two months, many sex workers come in to have a sense of safety and community. These destigmatized spaces are important, but it would be even better if we were able to exist free of stigma and criminalization in all areas of life.

In conclusion, we support the following:

1. The sex worker sector, made up of service providers, rights organisations and the sexworker movement, continue to support the Multi Party Women's Caucus' position and the ANC policy decision that supports the full decriminalisation of sex work.
2. The Department of Justice sets aside the Report due to its poor quality.
3. The Department of Justice provides clarity on the law reform process going forward as well as a timeline for this process.
4. Government take sex worker voices seriously in the drafting of legislation.

I and other members of the Stripperoke team would like the opportunity to address the committee in person on March 5th.

Thank you,  
Alexandra Watkins and the Stripperoke Team  
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Stripperoke Cape Town  
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