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To: Ms. Leslie Guy, Committee Secretary
Select Committee re Statutes Amendment (Decriminalization of Sex Work) Bill
Email: Leslie.Guy@parliament.sa.gov.au
C/- Parliament House, GPO Box 572, Adelaide 5001, Australia

Dear Committee Members;

PROSTITUTION: A CONNECTION TO NON-STATE TORTURE, HUMAN TRAFFICKING, AND ORGANIZED CRIME. We write to express our professional knowledge that women who are in prostitution can have suffered sexualized non-State torture beginning for some when they were tiny little girls within the context of family, at the same time suffering sexualized human trafficking and exploited into prostitution, as well as victimized in adult-child pedophilic crime scene pornography. For other women not prostituted by family members, non-State torture victimization is perpetrated by pimps, buyers, groups that perpetrate gang rapes, and organized criminal gangs. For detailed information on non-State torture we suggest reading this our [Fact Sheet: Non-State Torture in the Private Sphere](#).

Australian researchers from Flinders University in your own city of Adelaide identified that Australian “bikie gangs” perpetrated violent acts against women, which children witnessed, that were acts of torture.¹ These bikie gangs were involved in organized crime. It is a global fact that trafficking in persons for sexualized exploitation—for prostitution—is predominately of women and girls, and often facilitated by organized criminal groups.²

For over 22 years we have worked specifically addressing non-State torture victimization of women. Although we are based in Canada, we have been contacted by numerous Australian women who report suffering family-based organized non-State torture victimization, being trafficked and suffering sexualized exploitation. Other women, as adults, speak of being tortured by pimps and buyers. Their comments reflect a lack of Australian non-State torture-informed resources, that there is no access to legal justice when subjected to torture by non-

State actors as non-State torture is not nationally criminalized, thus there is a federal failure to uphold their human right not to be subjected to torture as defined in articles 2 and 5 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Women so harmed risk being pathologized, disbelieved, and marginalized, and meet with discrimination, stigmatization, and social exclusion when they try to disclose. In addition, we have been consulted by Australian professionals who needed support when confronted with the complex traumatic responses of women who have survived various forms of multi-victimizations.

WILL THE SELECT COMMITTEE RE STATUTES AMENDMENT (DECRIMINALIZATION OF SEX WORK) BILL BE BUILDING A WORLD OF EQUALITY FIT FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS OF ALL AGES?

There ought to be no question that misnaming sexualized exploitation of women and girls in prostitution as the work of women and girls is about human right gender inequality. Just several weeks ago, when presenting at this [Choices](#) Conference, we had the opportunity to listen to Jonas Henriksson, Detective Sergeant Region Stockholm, Metro/Serious Crime/Prostitution Unit, Sweden, say that in the unit's years of arresting buyers they have yet to arrest a woman for "buying sex". In his presentation he confirmed that on a week day in Stockholm they may have about five women in prostitution; during the week-end 10 to 12. By decreasing demand Detective Sergeant Henriksson stated they decrease the environment in which organized human trafficking criminals operate. When there is no demand there is no money to be made by selling the 'product'—the product being women or girls.

Women's poverty is a common theme used to justify or normalize prostitution as work—as "sex work"—and a necessity of women to feed their children versus speaking the truth that the root theme is abuse of male financial privilege. Are societies also agreeing that it is an acceptable norm for men to spend family income on buying women or girls who are in or forcedly prostituted? Children are also men's responsibility. Using their wealth to improve the health and wellness of their children may be promoting new thinking—this concept can be taught. Presently, this does not appear to be the case; men with children and families are buyers of women in prostitution. Research shows that paying women more and men less in regular jobs would harness the power of "womenomics" and benefit a whole country.³ It could help women out of poverty and improve their safety which is so often spoken of as a rationale for legalizing all aspects of prostitution. This social condition of women is true in Australia where "the national gender pay gap is currently 17.9% and has hovered between 15% and 19% for the past two decades".⁴

MISOGYNY, SEXISM, AND PROSTITUTION. "Men who buy sex have less empathy for women in prostitution than men who don't buy sex . . . and view them as intrinsically different from other women", which led researchers to ask, "whether prostitution is a job or sexual abuse". Their research findings supported "the view that prostitution is more like sexual abuse" and a

“predatory crime”.⁵ Both groups of men in the research study—those that buy women in prostitution and those that do not—suggested that “jail time and public exposure are the most effective deterrents”.⁶ These men were from Boston area. It is probably reasonable to suggest that Australian men’s attitudes would be similar. And, at one time, I, Jeanne, worked in communicable disease control with STIs in Arctic Canada, far from Boston. The attitudes repeatedly witnessed were that women, young and old, who were vulnerable to sexualized exploitation, were objectified. Considering the position of both groups of men in the above study, women would be safer if men who buy women’s bodies are identified publically and jailed and women were offered supportive exiting strategies, which appears to be the majority of women in prostitution. Patriarchal biases continue to let men “have their way”. This must stop if the human equality of women and girls of all ages is ever to be achieved.

MISOPEDIA AND PROSTITUTION: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE SERIOUS RISKS SUPPLY AND DEMAND RAISES FOR CHILDREN. In Canada we have just enacted a new law entitled, *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*. It is a made in Canada Nordic Model. We gave expert [verbal testimony](#) and submitted briefs to both the [House of Commons](#) and [Senate](#) Standing Committees, reflecting that Canadian women, some as children, report non-State torture, human trafficking victimization, and being prostituted. They spoke of the demand for children who could withstand sexualized non-State torture and who could be ‘used’ in pedophilic crime scene pornography. Australian women repeat what Canadian women have told us.

We posed six questions with answers to our Minister of Justice and other Members of Parliament concerning the risk that occur to children when the supply and demand for women in prostitution is normalized as “sex work”. This provides an environment for pimps to function as business managers, as brothel managers. We pose these same questions and answers to you, the Select Committee:

1. Question: Does legalizing the prostitution of women protect the young from the buyers?

No, it does not. A slippery slope occurs in places where prostitution and legal brothels exist. For example, in the state of Victoria, Australia, where prostitution was legalized in 1984, Victoria is reported to have the largest child prostitution trade in comparison to other Australian states which have not legalized prostitution. Children so victimized can be younger than 10 years of age, and a legal brothel owner was jailed for perpetrating sexualized violence against a child.⁷ European countries—The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Greece, Hungary, and Latvia—where prostitution is legal and supposedly regulated, insights suggest that girls, not only women, are criminally trafficked into these countries for prostitution.⁸ The Netherlands has become a source country for “sex tourists” seeking to inflict sexualized

violence against children who can be controlled by pimps, madams, and small networks.⁹ In Greece the suggested common age of child victims was 12 and many are controlled by organised criminal networks.¹⁰ Organized crime related to the infliction of prostitution of children exists in all the other countries mentioned. In New Zealand, decriminalization of prostitution laws occurred in 2003; in 2004 a brothel owner was charged for exploiting underage girls in her brothel.¹¹ Media reports suggests New Zealand communities are now attempting to deal with attitudes and behaviours associated with the acceptance of prostitution, with police “turning a blind eye” to illegal underage exploitation and to parents who prostitute or pimp their children.¹² And, to how New Zealand’s legalization breaks down the barriers that can prevent a youth from entering prostitution, is stated by Lilly who declared, “I would never have entered prostitution if it was illegal”.¹³ When the New Zealand government asked ECPAT to study the sexualized prostitution of children, their ages began at 10 years, with 59 percent stating they had suffered prior sexualized abuse; in the Maori their rate of prior sexualized abuse was 74 percent.¹⁴ In other words, legalizing prostitution and brothels has not made children safe from sexualized prostituted exploitation; it can be stated that legalizing prostitution and brothels increases child prostitution, for instance, in an analysis of 150 countries that on average prostitution was/is legal there was an increase in exploitative prostituted human trafficking.¹⁵

2. Question: How young are the young at risk in the supply and demand chain of the prostituted?

It starts with infants. Infants who are victims of sexualized exploitation can be so young as to still have their umbilical cord clamps attached.¹⁶ In 2011, U.S. law enforcement officials turned over 22 million exploitative sexualized crime scene images known as “child pornography” to the International Center for Missing and Exploited Children; in their work 76 percent involved prepubescent children and one in 10 were infants or toddlers.¹⁷ In Canada, we have similar evidence. Between September 26, 2002, and March 31, 2009, Cybertip.ca examined websites hosting child exploitative sexualized crime scene images, of the 4,110 images 82.1 percent were of pre-pubescent children under 12 years old, with the extreme sexualized violence inflicted against children under eight years old, 83 percent of the images were of the girl child, and images included infants and toddlers.¹⁸ In the U.K., Internet Watch Foundation reporting on 13,182 websites that contained child sexualized victimization images, 76 percent were of the girl child, 81 percent of the victimized children were aged 10 years or under, with three percent under aged two; 51 percent of the images were of rape or sexualized torture.¹⁹ In the New Zealand ECPAT study mentioned earlier, one girl stated her father prostituted her when she was in primary school.²⁰ Northern Canadian aboriginal women, including Inuit women and children, who identified surviving sexualized exploitation, report family members, boyfriends,

and friends as the exploiters.²¹ In the Canadian province of Manitoba, children as young as nine years are identified as suffering sexualized exploitative prostitution; the average age when adults were first exploited was stated to be 13 to 14 years.²² This means children were only in grades three to seven when prostituted! As previously stated, the women who share their non-State torture stories with us disclose being subjected to child pornography, to being exploited from toddlerhood, and describe surviving sexualized torture beginning from their earliest of memories—this includes Australian women.

3. Question: Is there a demand for sexualized torture of the young?

Yes, there is. To answer this question we again draw on the supply and demand evidence exposed in child exploitative sexualized crime scene images of child pornography which is commonly associated with the prostitution of children. It involves both exploiters and buyers who victimize children. Concern that there is an ever-increasing supply and demand is evidence, for example, in Germany where there was a 72 percent increase between 2000 and 2001, and where the prostitution of girls remains a serious reality.²³ Some of these crime scene images involve torture including pedophilic sadistic snuff which means the child is murdered on film which is then sold.^{24,25} A Canadian research report on internet child exploitation identified images of pedophilic necrophilic violence.²⁶ Twenty-two years of listening to women has exposed how they endured many acts of sexualized torture such as electric shocking in their vagina, being raped with guns, knives, and many other objects, being group/gang raped, being burnt, cut, tied down, impregnated and forcedly aborted, caged, whipped, beaten, and as children being taken to pedophilic “torture parties”; some also report being exposed to snuff. The list of atrocities inflicted was/is only limited by the ‘creative’ brutalities of the torturers, some who had “trained” their own children “to withstand torture” as one woman stated. The women speak of how they suffered being pimped, trafficked, prostituted and exploited in their homes. It must not be assumed that in-house prostitution makes life or living safer—homes are known to be one of the most unsafe places for women and children of all ages.

4. Question: Who are the suppliers that meet the demand for the exploited prostituted young?

They are the known and the unknown. They can be parent(s), other intergenerational relatives, boyfriends, others known or trusted, pimps, pornographers, human traffickers, drug dealers, gangs or rings, people in authority. They gather benefits including financially from exploiting the very young. A recent study in Kentucky revealed family were the predominate exploiters of their children into prostitution and pornography.²⁷ Recorded are tragic accounts of, for example, a young woman who at age five years was rented out by her mother for drug money and who at 11 years ran away from home into the control of a pimp;²⁸ or, as previously

mentioned the New Zealand little girl who was groomed and exploited by her father. A RCMP report suggests that in Canada exploitation is often linked to organized criminal activities and internet recruitment of underage girls.²⁹ It appears the families of the women who speak to us of non-State torture, trafficking, and of prostitution have not drawn the attention of police—why not? A detective in a Toronto sex crime unit stated that 90 percent of the adult-child crime scene pornography recovered is made in the U.K., U.S., Canada, and first-world countries and is inter-familial.³⁰ Our experience suggests that such violent family systems hold attitudes and behaviours that are misogynistically discriminatory, oppressive, and objectify and commodify girls while teaching little boys to be violent, forcing them to sexually rape female siblings or other young children. Children forced to sexually violate each other is revealed in the Canadian cybertip!ca report.³¹ Developing a socio-legal culture that supports misogynistic attitudes associated with legalizing prostitution and brothels is akin to reinforcing the attitudes of such exploiters, families, gang, or rings, and buyers; such attitudes also reinforces their criminal behaviours.

5. Question: How many exploitative rapes does a child need to suffer?

One rape is supposed to be illegal. If at an average age of 13 years a girl can be forced to endure, in prostitution, repetitive rapes by 10 to 12 men a day this means by the time she reaches the ‘legal’ age of 18 she will have endured 17,800 rapes plus acts of violence that can be manifestations of torture.³² From professional experience working with women tortured since their earliest of childhood, we estimate for a woman who cannot escape until the age 20 of years, she has endured at least over 24,000 torture rapes. These repetitive rapes are a pattern of life-threatening human rights destruction that must not be minimized to sexual assaults or when the girl is of ‘legal’ age be considered that she has chosen to be in prostitution or to be identified as in the job of “sex working”.

6. Question: What social and legal attitudes can develop which normalize exploitive sexualized torture?

Exposing a Canadian perspective: Is it an Australian one? According to a response received from Statistics Canada when asked how they tracked sexualized torture perpetrated by a private individual(s)—non-State actors—their response was to explain that;

It is just *regular torture* [emphasis added] between two individuals and called non-state actor torture. This is usually charged instead as assault (level 2 or 3) with intent, and the torture element often comes out at the trial stage (re: motive) and believe it or not there are all kinds of implications and exceptions for S&M (re: consent to torture); (email communication, July 27, 2009).

In other words, if torture victimization occurs it can be sexualized as sadomasochism (S&M) and normalized or misnamed as an assault. This invisibilizes the life-threatening torture suffered. When asking Statistics Canada what would happen if this same legal perspective was applied to an underage exploited child there was no response. This was and is totally inadequate given the evidence that very young children suffer sexualized torture; that there is a demand for the torture they endure, and that it is described using S&M words such as “bondage”.³³ If this is all a child knows in relational connection with adults, there is ample evidence to acknowledge that many, when of ‘legal’ age, enter prostitution or what is being renamed as “sex work” because it is relationally familiar.

IN CONCLUSION: From our global perspective, willful gender based discrimination exists and is ignored in the discussions and decisions of nations that support legalizing or decriminalizing the supply and demand for adult women in prostitution and brothels. Making such decisions willfully also ignores the significant and destructive impact this can have on the supply and demand for the prostituted young—predominately for the girl child of all ages. Girls of all ages must depend on non-perpetrating adults to create a world—a community of equality—fit for them to grow up in.

We write this letter in support of Australian women whose efforts are to put an end to the national and international prostitution of women’s and girls’ as “work”. They are asking that Australian states utilize a Nordic Model approach as it is the best intervention to date that utilizes the fundamental working principle that supporting prostitution is about supporting women’s and girl’s human inequality. It acknowledges that the fundamental human inequality of women and girls of all ages has made them products that are bought and sold. Women and girls of all ages are not products—they are persons.

Respectfully submitted via email,

Jeanne Sarson and Linda MacDonald

Endnotes

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