

Hello to you all, I am a friend and client of sex workers, and I would like to show my support for RI Immunity Bill H7165 & Loitering Repeal H7452.

I was unable to attend the hearing in person due to previous obligations and preference to speak in a more private forum.

I would like to start with the public and moral hazard of Dark Numbers. These are statistics regarding unreported crime committed against communities who don't feel safe speaking to law enforcement.

Say for example in places where undocumented migrants fear reporting theft of their property for risk of deportation, or more importantly to the subject matter at hand, where sex workers fear arrest when considering whether to report theft, violence, or rape committed against them.

This defacto unpersoning which the law presently condemns the sex worker community to is a danger both to the victims of criminal activity who happen to perform sex work, but also to their communities which see fit to push them out. Any violent actor who happens to only have harmed sex workers is effectively left untouched by the law until they attack someone who the law deems worthy of seeking justice for.

I hope I need not spell out how the law intervening only for those it deems worthy of protection has done immense harm to communities of color and the queer community in the past, to now project those inequalities into the consensual sex work industry is to all but sanction the murder of sex workers of color and queer sex workers under the color of law.

I would additionally seek to raise the matter of the choice to engage in sex work itself. The use of the law to arrest and jail sex workers has proven to be inefficient, ineffective, and inexorably linked to racist and transphobic abuse of communities of color and the queer community, especially those who are impoverished.

Nevermind the cost of any fines levied themselves, consider the cost of lost work hours for a second job they hold in the professional sphere, the cost of securing transport on the days of their litigation, the cost of childcare as many of these workers are caring mothers aiming to provide a dignified standard of living for their families.

To someone for whom a misplaced dollar can be the difference between making that month's rent or not, exactly what help is supposed to be achieved by putting them into even more dire financial straits? The main motivating factor for which most of sex work's most vulnerable providers have chosen to enter into the profession.

If it offends the sensibilities of the assembled legislature to see people choose to engage in sex work to alleviate financial burden, would it not be infinitely more productive both per effort and funds expended, to instead create opportunities for these people to seek professional training in other fields which they can use to find gainful employment outside of sex work?

Thank you for considering these reasons I am advocating my support for RI Immunity Bill H7165 & Loitering Repeal H7452.

-R.C.