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THE WHOLE (LEGAL) TRUTH: BILL C-36 WILL HAVE FAR-REACHING IMPLICATIONS FOR CANADIAN COMMUNITIES *New resource on proposed sex work legislation paints grim, dangerous picture*

TORONTO, June 25, 2014 — As the Justice Committee of the House of Commons prepares to hold hearings on Bill C-36, the so-called Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act, sex workers and their allies are releasing an important resource about this ill-considered legislation. Aptly titled *Reckless Endangerment*, this collaborative public education effort by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Pivot Legal Society and Stella, l'amie de Maimie, clearly lays out the extensive legal ramifications of Bill C-36, which threaten not only sex workers and their clients, but also their loved ones and broader communities.

Simply put, Bill C-36 is far more expansive and its consequences will be felt much more widely than the government suggests. The legislation criminalizes sex workers, clients, and many of those who live and work with sex workers. It will reproduce all the harms that the Supreme Court of Canada found unconstitutional in *Canada v. Bedford*, and does nothing to protect sex workers from violence and exploitation.

But *Reckless Endangerment* goes even further to explain the numerous legal traps that may catch Canadians from all walks of life. Should Bill C-36 be passed:

- any client who purchases consensual sexual services from an adult commits a crime;
- any client who communicates with anyone, anywhere and at any time, for the purpose of purchasing sexual services commits a crime;
- any sex worker/third party who communicates an offer of sexual services in any “public place” that is, or is next to, a place where minors can reasonably be expected to be present commits a crime;
- third parties who benefit from sex work, including those who enhance sex workers’ safety such as security and reception workers, are likely to be criminalized;
- any party, other than sex workers themselves, who carry sex work advertisements (including newspapers, websites, ISP providers, etc.) commits a crime; and
- any indoor venue providing sexual services, even though these locations are known to be much safer for sex workers, is unlikely to be able to operate legally.

“As concerned organizations, we feel strongly that Canadians do not have the full picture on Bill C-36, which is a dangerous piece of proposed legislation that will ultimately result in more missing and murdered sex workers if passed into law,” notes Sandra Ka Hon Chu, Co-director of Research and Advocacy at the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and primary author of *Reckless Endangerment*. “Sex workers are part of our shared community. But this bill does nothing to protect communities, at the expense of sex workers’ health and safety. Law can be a complicated instrument, open to misuse, and Canadians deserve to know the truth.”

You can access *Reckless Endangerment* at <http://bit.ly/1pO6qiU>.

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