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Contact: Claire Alwyne

415-275-3642, info@esplerp.org

New Hampshire Legislators Propose Decriminalization of Prostitution

The Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project commends New Hampshire legislators for proposing legislation (NH House Bill 1614) to decriminalize prostitution

San Francisco, CA - The Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project (ESPLERP) today commended New Hampshire representatives Elizabeth Edwards, Amanda Bouldin, and Carol McGuire, who introduced House Bill 1614 that seeks to decriminalize prostitution in New Hampshire.

On Thursday January 28 there was a hearing on the Bill at the New Hampshire Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. Rachel West of the [US PROStitutes](#) Collective and Bella Robinson of [COYOTERI](#) were present alongside representative Elizabeth Edwards to launch House Bill 1614 and answer press questions.

Interestingly, representative Dick Marston (Republican) was quoted as saying: "This bill can't be supported by women because my wife would hate this bill." This despite the fact that all three of House Bill 1614's sponsors are women, and that a series of women spoke in support of the Bill at the press conference.

"This is groundbreaking", said Maxine Doogan, President of the Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project. "The criminalization of prostitution is a failed policy. The "War on Sex" hasn't stopped anyone from buying or selling sex, but it has caused a lot of collateral damage, to poor women, women of color, and trans women. It's about time that the government stopped intervening in what consenting adults do in private."

New Zealand decriminalized prostitution in 2003 and a review showed positive results: no rise in prostitution; women able to report violence without fear of arrest; attacks cleared up more quickly; sex workers more able to leave prostitution as convictions are cleared from their records. ESPLERP welcomes New Hampshire's initiative to achieve the same results.

In March 2015, the Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project (ESPLERP) filed a historic legal challenge in Federal Court in Oakland, ESPLERP v Gascon, arguing that [California's statute against prostitution, 647\(b\), is unconstitutional](#) - to "challenge California's intrusion upon their fundamental liberty interest in deciding how to conduct their private lives in matters pertaining to sex."

"Sex worker rights are human rights" said Claire Alwyne, board member of the Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project. "Whether we get our rights in the courts or through the legislatures, it's time the state stopped the War on Sex. It's time the state recognized that paid sex between consenting adults, just like same-sex marriage, is protected by the 14th Amendment".

The Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education and Research Project (ESPLERP) is a diverse community-based coalition advancing sexual privacy rights through litigation, education, and research.

Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education and Research Project
2261 Market St. #548 San Francisco, CA 94114
esplerp.org, decriminalizesexwork.com

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