# -Resolved: The United States ought to legalize adult sex work.

## Intro –

Cheryl Overs is a sex worker rights activist from Australia where she founded the Prostitutes Collective of Victoria and the national sex workers network, Scarlet Alliance in the early eighties. Cheryl migrated to Europe and established the Network of Sex Work Projects in 1992 which has since grown into a strong global alliance of sex workers. 08/02/2017 excerpts from “Sex work and the law – it’s complicated” <https://theconversation.com/sex-work-and-the-law-its-complicated-81316>

Although sex work has been around for centuries, it has still been criminalized all over the world. Without workers rights and a criminalization of the occupation it harms workers and stigmatizes the sex work industry. Also creating a negative outlook on sex work overall.

Countries such as Nepal and Sri Lanka prohibit all aspects of sex work by defining it as human trafficking, even where the sex worker consents.

In some Muslim countries, sharia laws on adultery render all prostitution activities illegal.

In countries like Russia, Malawi, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Guyana, only selling and organizing prostitution are illegal.

In other places, such as Argentina, Ukraine and Algeria, selling sex is only illegal if it involves public solicitation or – as is the case in Senegal, Madagascar and Chile – failing to submit to medical examination. Historically, buying sex has not been illegal. But France, Sweden, Canada and some parts of the US have recently criminalized the buyer.

Organizing and profiting from prostitution are the most common prohibited offences. These activities are illegal in most countries. However, in countries such as Colombia, Cambodia, Indonesia and the US, it is legal to operate sex businesses if licensed. Reforms to sex work law, for example in Romania and Latvia, have removed some offences to reduce harms associated with criminalization of female sex workers. Only a few jurisdictions, including New Zealand, New South Wales in Australia, Switzerland and Uruguay, have also removed third-party offences. Sex workers refer to this system as “decriminalization”.

Most law reforms have, instead, replaced repealed criminal provisions with regulations requiring licensing, mandatory condom use or medical screening, or restrictions on freedom of movement or association. Sex workers call this “legalization”. It is the approach taken in Germany, Hungary and parts of Australia other than NSW.

As well as sex-work-specific criminal law, sex workers worldwide are subject to many non-specific laws. These include laws that tackle vagrancy, obscenity, child protection, immigration, human trafficking, HIV transmission, drugs, public nuisance and expressions of gender transgression. Lacking civil rights also means sex workers may be unable to complain about crimes against them. They may also be unable to enforce contracts, claim welfare, borrow money, or make civil claims in family and property matters in courts. This leaves many without redress against violence or exploitation.

This is most obvious where commercial sex is highly criminalized. But it is also true in “legal” systems. To understand sex work law, we must consider accounts of both the “law on the books” and the “law on the street”. These frequently diverge.

Although reliable primary data about law enforcement are scarce, there is strong evidence that where the rule of law is weak, sex workers are subject to arbitrary, corrupt and abusive enforcement.

### Resources

The global map of sex work laws - <https://www.nswp.org/sex-work-laws-map>

(this website has many resources on the bottom of the page)

Brief explanation of sex work - <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/understanding-sex-work-open-society>

The difference between sex work and human trafficking-

<https://humantraffickingsearch.org/2017725sex-trafficking-vs-sex-work-what-you-need-to-know/>

Understanding why sex work is real work- <https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbt-rights/sex-work-is-real-work-and-its-time-to-treat-it-that-way/>

How the pandemic affects sex wokers - <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-fragile-existence-of-sex-workers-during-the-pandemic>

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/24/us/sex-workers-coronavirus-intl/index.html>

<https://www.nst.com.my/world/world/2020/04/583125/us-sex-workers-continue-plying-trade-despite-covid-19-risks>

Sex Work and Hiv criminalization -

<https://www.hivlawandpolicy.org/sites/default/files/Sex%20Work%20HIV%20Toolkit%20FINAL%20R2_0.pdf>

<https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-social-issues/key-affected-populations/sex-workers>

History of sex work in America -

<https://libertarianinstitute.org/articles/brief-history-prostitution-us/>

legalization vs decriminalization

<https://prostitution.procon.org/questions/what-is-the-difference-between-the-decriminalization-and-legalization-of-prostitution/>

# 1AC

### Framework

#### Value quality of life

Jenkinson 2020

Crispin Jenkinson is the deputy director of the Health Services Research Unit, University of Oxford. 05/06/2020 Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. “Quality of Life” https://www.britannica.com/topic/quality-of-life

Quality of life, the degree to which an individual is healthy, comfortable, and able to participate in or enjoy life events. The term quality of life is inherently ambiguous, as it can refer both to the experience an individual has of his or her own life and to the living conditions in which individuals find themselves. Hence, quality of life is highly subjective. Whereas one person may define quality of life according to wealth or satisfaction with life, another person may define it in terms of capabilities (e.g., having the ability to live a good life in terms of emotional and physical well-being). A disabled person may report a high quality of life, whereas a healthy person who recently lost a job may report a low quality of life. Within the arena of health care, quality of life is viewed as multidimensional, encompassing emotional, physical, material, and social well-being.

#### Criterion consequentialism

Britannica 2009

Britannica consist of legitimate science or are evidence based through the use of credible scientific sourcing.3/04/2009 Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. “Consequentialism”

Consequentialism, In ethics, the doctrine that actions should be judged right or wrong on the basis of their consequences. The simplest form of consequentialism is classical (or hedonistic) utilitarianism, which asserts that an action is right or wrong according to whether it maximizes the net balance of pleasure over pain in the universe. The consequentialism of G.E. Moore, known as “ideal utilitarianism,” recognizes beauty and friendship, as well as pleasure, as intrinsic goods that one’s actions should aim to maximize. According to the “preference utilitarianism” of R.M. Hare (1919–2002), actions are right if they maximize the satisfaction of preferences or desires, no matter what the preferences may be for. Consequentialists also differ over whether each individual action should be judged on the basis of its consequences or whether instead general rules of conduct should be judged in this way and individual actions judged only by whether they accord with a general rule.

### Contention 1 :Access to health care promotes quality of life

#### Sex workers don’t have access to health care

Sunderland 2017

Mitchell Sunderland was a past writer for Vice media. 07/23/2017 Vice Media “The Sex Workers Fighting for Better Health Care” <https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/j5q9q4/the-sex-workers-fighting-for-better-health-care> - VL

American healthcare is in limbo. Senator Mitch McConnell's senate bill collapsed, but the Senate majority leader has vowed to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. Across the United States, sex workers and porn stars remain concerned about the future of their health care, because they've been battling insurance issues already for years—many of which will be familiar to basically every freelancer in the country. "Getting your own insurance when you're self-employed is a bitch," says Joanna Angel, who is a porn star and founder of BurningAngel.com, and does not identify as a sex worker. "Some performers try and give up because it's a pain in the ass. My husband was one of them but I stepped in and did it for him." "This one particular bill is dead, but we don't know what will be next," explains Alice Little, a prostitute in rural Nevada. "We aren't 100 percent sure what way they'll be taking things." Throughout the summer, Little and other Bunny Ranch employees organized protests against Trumpcare. Her group Hookers for Healthcare rallied at the state capitol and held phone drives, bombarding the lines of Republican Senator Dean Heller. They worried about still pending potential Medicaid cuts that could end coverage for many prostitutes' children. "One of the big issues is right now you can't live between two states to receive coverage in that location," Little points out. "A lot of the ladies, they travel for their jobs. They need to be able to get medical care where they need it. They still need to be able to go to the ER in an emergency." As the marketing of sex work has gravitated more and more to websites and message boards, health care has become more vital to workers. " writer Tara Burns. "Sex workers working under criminalization often don't feel safe sharing their profession and actual risks with their doctors, and this can mean they don't get the same level of education and testing they should." Burns ties the healthcare battle to other movements, like prison reform. "There is the criminalization of HIV that in many states makes prostitution a felony," Burns explains. "We have people doing 10-plus years in the US for the crime of being an HIV positive sex worker, and the health care and nutrition they receive is often really bad." She highlights organizations like HIPS, PERSIST, and the Saint James Infirmary, which help sex workers find insurance coverage. Since sex work is only legal in rural Nevada, workers' unique health care obstacles often stem from prostitution bans. "Sex work should be decriminalized and sex workers should have the right to negotiate for our own labor and safe work conditions," Burns says. "We should be fully enfranchised in the same systems of health insurance, public health, and workplace protections as other workers.” Over the past decade, Burns has seen girls rely on various forms of healthcare, from Social Security Disability to coverage obtained through a part-time job at the Olive Garden. But she notes, "Many sex workers are uninsured and pay out of pocket for healthcare, often relying on harm reduction projects, public health funding, or sliding scale clinics." Few, if any, sex workers receive insurance through employers. One time, Burns broke her hand, and went the DIY route for a solution. "I didn't want to pay $3,000 for treatment so I watched a bunch of YouTube videos and made a cast out of moose hide and then plaster," she recalls. People in other fields have gone to similar measures. Experts worry about the rise of people crowdfunding funds for medical procedures. "[Sex workers' problems are] not any more difficult than any other self-employed person," Burns admits. Angel agrees, "I have lots of other friends outside the porn industry with freelance jobs who share the same issues." "For the most part it's on us to get our health insurance," remarks Kayden Kross, a porn performer based in Los Angeles. "Any advocacy we'd be doing would really be for a better healthcare system as a whole in this country." Correction: This story originally said Broadly spoke to sex workers. This post has been updated to reflect that Broadly spoke to both porn performers and sex workers.

#### Legalizing sex work gives access and protects sex workers

Forestiere 2019

Annamarie Forestiere is a Harvard Law student studying discrepancies in political power between majority and minority groups. Interested in how changes in the law affect social policy, cultural practices, and group ideologies. 10/01/2019 “To Protect Women, Legalize Prostitution” <https://harvardcrcl.org/to-protect-women-legalize-prostitution/> -VL

Prostitution is a sensitive subject in the United States. Frequently, arguments against prostitution center around concern for the health and safety of women, and those concerns are not unfounded. Prostitution is an incredibly dangerous profession for the (mostly) women involved; sexual assault, forced drug addiction, physical abuse, and death are common in the industry. For the women who work in this field, it is often very difficult to get help or get out. Many sex workers were sold into sex trafficking at a very young age and have no resources with which to escape their forced prostitution, or started out as sex workers by choice only to fall victim to sex trafficking later on. Moreover, since prostitution is illegal in most places in the United States, there are few legal protections in place for prostitutes; many fear that seeking help will only lead to arrest, and many who do seek help are arrested and then have to battle the stigma of a criminal record while they try to reintegrate into society. So why is the response to such a dangerous industry to drive it further underground, away from societal resources and legal protections? When people argue prostitution should be illegal, in many cases their concern comes from a place of morality, presented as concern for the health and safety of women. People believe that legalizing prostitution will only lead to the abuse of more women, will make it harder for prostitutes to get out of the industry, or will teach young women that their bodies exist for the sole purpose of sexual exploitation by men. However, legalizing prostitution has had positive benefits for sex workers across Europe. The most well-known country to have legalized prostitution is the Netherlands, where sex work has been legal for almost twenty years. Bringing the industry out of the black market and imposing strict regulations has improved the safety of sex workers. Brothels are required to obtain and renew safety and hygiene licenses in order to operate, and street prostitution is legal and heavily regulated in places like the Red Light District. Not only does sex work become safer when it is regulated, but legalization also works to weed out the black market that exists for prostitution, thereby making women safer overall. Also, sex workers are not branded as criminals, so they have better access to the legal system and are encouraged to report behaviors that are a danger to themselves and other women in the industry. Finally, legalizing sex work will provide many other positive externalities, including tax revenue, reduction in sexually transmitted diseases, and reallocation of law enforcement resources. It’s true that current efforts by various European countries to legalize prostitution have been far from perfect. In the Netherlands, certain components of the legislation, such as requiring sex workers to register and setting the minimum age for prostitution at 21, could drive more sex workers to illegal markets. Not only that, but studies indicate that legalizing prostitution can increase human trafficking. However, even those who are critical about legalizing prostitution can recognize the benefits that legislation can have on working conditions for sex workers. If countries with legislation in place spend more time listening to current sex workers, the results of decriminalizing prostitution include bringing safety, security, and respect to a demographic that has traditionally been denied such things. The underlying reason that people are uncomfortable listening to sex workers about legalizing prostitution has nothing to do with concern for the health and safety of women. If that were the genuine concern, prostitution would be legal in the United States by now. The underlying reason people disagree with legalizing prostitution is that prostitution is viewed as amoral because it involves (mostly) women selling their bodies for financial gain. However, telling women what they can and cannot do with their bodies does not come from a place of morality: that comes from a place of control. People, especially women, sell their bodies for financial gain in legalized fashions on a daily basis. Pornography is legal, and so is exotic dancing. It’s common for people to have sexual relationships with richer partners so as to benefit from their wealth, whether this is through seeking out wealthy life partners or through the less formal but increasingly prevalent phenomenon known as sugar-dating. It’s also common for people to remain in unhappy relationships because they do not want to lose financial stability or spend money on a divorce. So, what’s the difference? Why are these examples socially acceptable, even encouraged, but prostitution is seen as so appalling? The difference is that in all of these other situations, it is easy for people to pretend that the women involved are not actually selling their bodies directly. It’s easy to pretend that the pornography actors are just people having consensual sex that the viewing public just happens to be privy to observing. It’s easy to pretend that exotic dancers are not actually selling their bodies because they are not directly engaging in the act of sex. It’s easy to pretend that people who enter into or remain in sexual relationships with wealthy partners could be there for reasons other than financial gain or security. Prostitution does not allow the general public to have the benefit of these pretenses. Rather, the industry is honest about how sex and money are directly related. And for many individuals, this is an uncomfortable notion. It is even more uncomfortable for some people to believe that women should be allowed to have the control over their bodies that would permit them to engage in prostitution voluntarily; they cannot allow themselves to believe that women would choose such a profession. Yet rather than recognize this reality, those who oppose the legalization of prostitution march forth with arguments about concern for the safety of women. They fail to realize that criminalizing prostitution does not help sex workers, and their arguments lead to legislation that harms women while operating under the morally-driven guise of wanting to protect them. Instead of forcing sex workers to conduct their business in unregulated black markets where their lives are in danger, all for a mislabeled purpose of “saving” women, take actual action to save women. Legalize prostitution, impose strict regulations, and construct comprehensive support systems that allow sex workers to do their jobs safely. The desire to protect women from sexual abuse will always be valid, and if anything is a desire that should be more widespread in the United States. What is disingenuous is opposing legalized sex work for reasons that purport to be women’s safety, but that are actually coming from a place of discomfort over women openly engaging in sexual interactions for financial gain. If you are uncomfortable with the idea of women having sex for money, then you should also have a problem with pornography, exotic dancing, and people dating for money. If you do not have a problem with all of these socially accepted practices but have a problem with prostitution because it is “morally questionable,” then you have lost your right to any forum where decisions about the safety and rights of women are being made.

### Contention 2: Other countries have already taken steps

#### Sex work is legalized in Germany giving over 150,000 sex workers health care

Tampep 1999

TAMPEP is the European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers. TAMPEP is an international networking and intervention project operating in 25 countries in Europe which aims to act as an observatory in relation to the dynamics of migrant prostitution across Europe. 1999 an excerpt from “Policies on sex work and health” -VL

In Germany, approximately 50,000 sex workers are registered and seen regularly by the

health services, as required by law. However, according to recent estimates, a further 150,000

people work in prostitution. Registered sex workers often complain about the impersonal

attitude and approach of health care workers, which undermines confidence and, with it, good

medical care. Previous experience in the fight against other sexually transmitted infections has

adequately illustrated the limits of compulsory health screening. HIV infected sex workers Legal measures have been introduced in some countries to prevent HIV infected people from working in the sex industry. In the same way as mandatory testing, these measures can create problems by encouraging sex workers to hide from the authorities if they think they may be infected. If HIV infected sex workers continue to work, there is only a small risk of transmission to a client providing a condom is used. This highlights the importance of health promotion: HIV prevention projects advocate a non-judgmental approach in which sex workers who continue to work can discuss openly safety at work, including alternatives to prostitution that may be preferable for health reasons. Health promotion with clients is also important so that they too take responsibility for risk reduction.

### Contention 3: Deaths could be prevented with legalization

#### HIV and STI rates are exponentially higher for sex workers

Hallmore 2016

Alexis Hallmore has more than 2 years of epidemiology and public health experience, including HIV and other infectious diseases expertise, strong analytical skills, research reporting, and research grant writing. 04/19/2016 IQ Solutions an excerpt from“SEX WORKERS AND STIS: THE IGNORED EPIDEMIC” <https://www.iqsolutions.com/section/ideas/sex-workers-and-stis-ignored-epidemic#:~:text=The%20rates%20of%20STIs%20are,workers%20than%20in%20general%20populations.&text=In%20addition%20to%20higher%20rates,with%20HIV%20and%20other%20STIs.> -VL

As a sex worker, the risk of acquiring HIV and other STIs is significantly greater by engaging in unsafe sexual activity, having multiple sexual partners, and/or substance use. The rates of STIs are from 5 to 60 times higher among sex workers than in general populations.11 In addition to higher rates of STIs, sex workers are often unaware of their infection status, further endangering their own health risks and increasing the risk of infecting others with HIV and other STIs. Surveys of female sex workers showed that 35 to 55 percent of them had engaged in unprotected commercial sex, and 10 to 35 percent never use condoms while engaging in commercial sex.12 Alarmingly, studies have shown that only 47% of female prostitutes are aware of their HIV status, less than 50% of these women had a health screening in the previous year, and on average had 17 sex partners per week.13 Although the latter statistics primarily focus on women, men too engage in prostitution and/or other sex work.

#### Without access to health care, STI”s can become deadly and have harmful affects

World health organization 2019

The World health organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health. The WHO Constitution, which establishes the agency's governing structure and principles, states its main objective as "the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health."06/14/2019 WHO “Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)” <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sexually-transmitted-infections-(stis)> -VL

STIs have a profound impact on sexual and reproductive health worldwide. More than 1 million STIs are acquired every day. In 2016, WHO estimated 376 million new infections with 1 of 4 STIs: chlamydia (127 million), gonorrhoea (87 million), syphilis (6.3 million) and trichomoniasis (156 million). More than 500 million people are living with genital HSV (herpes) infection and an estimated 300 million women have an HPV infection, the primary cause of cervical cancer. An estimated 240 million people are living with chronic hepatitis B globally. Both HPV and hepatitis B infections are preventable with vaccination. STIs can have serious consequences beyond the immediate impact of the infection itself. STIs like herpes and syphilis can increase the risk of HIV acquisition three-fold or more. Mother-to-child transmission of STIs can result in stillbirth, neonatal death, low-birth-weight and prematurity, sepsis, pneumonia, neonatal conjunctivitis, and congenital deformities. Approximately 1 million pregnant women were estimated to have active syphilis in 2016, resulting in over 350 000 adverse birth outcomes of which 200 000 occurred as stillbirth or neonatal death (5). HPV infection causes 570 000 cases of cervical cancer and over 300 000 cervical cancer deaths each year (6). STIs such as gonorrhoea and chlamydia are major causes of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and infertility in women.

### Extra cards –

#### Fear of arrest prevents sex workers from seeking health care

Bacchi 2018

Umberto Bacchi Journalist at Thomson Reuters Foundation 12/11/2018 Reuters “Legalizing prostitution lowers violence and disease, report says” <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-global-women-prostitution/legalizing-prostitution-lowers-violence-and-disease-report-says-> idUSKBN1OA28N -VL

Sex workers in countries where selling or buying sex is illegal are more likely to face violence, not use condoms and contract HIV, researchers said on Tuesday, calling for prostitution to be decriminalized. Nations have been divided over the best way to deal with prostitution. Many outlaw it; some, including Canada and Sweden, punish clients and others, like Germany and New Zealand, legalized it or decriminalized it entirely. Now an international team of researchers have analyzed the effects of different laws on sex workers, in what they say was the first review of its kind, and found repressive polices increased health and safety risks. “Where some or all aspects of sex work were criminalized, concerns about their own or their clients’ arrest meant that sex workers often had to rush screening clients,” said Lucy Platt, the lead author of the university-led study. Fear of police meant sex workers had little time to negotiate services and tended to work in isolated areas, added Platt, an associate professor in public health epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). This increased their vulnerability to theft and violence, she said. The research, published in journal PLOS Medicine, reviewed data from more than 130 studies on 33 countries - from Britain to Uganda - published in scientific journals between 1990 to 2018. It found sex workers who had been exposed to repressive policing like arrest or prison were three times more likely to experience sexual or physical violence by clients, partners and other people. Those who had not been exposed to such practices were instead half as likely to contract HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases and 30 percent less prone to have sex without a condom. “Decriminalization of sex work is urgently needed,” said study co-author Pippa Grenfell, an assistant professor of public health sociology at LSHTM. The English Collective of Prostitutes, a pro-legalization group said the study confirmed sex workers’ experience. “Those of us who work on the street are running from the police, pushed into more isolated areas because clients are fearful of arrest,” Niki Adams a spokeswoman for the group told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. It is legal to buy and sell sex in England and Wales, but related activities such as soliciting and kerb crawling - drivers cruising the streets for prostitutes - are illegal. “We hear from sex workers in France and Ireland that attacks have gone up since clients were criminalized there,” said Adams. But Tsitsi Matekaire, of women’s rights group Equality Now, said it was wrong to look at prostitution solely as a health issue, adding decriminalization was not the best way to protect women. “Prostitution in itself is inherently violent,” she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, adding that laws aimed at curbing demand by punishing clients without criminalizing those who have been driven into prostitution were a better solution.

#### Without legalization sex workers cannot receive federal aid during the pandemic as seen globally

Berger 2020

Miriam Berger is a staff writer with The Washington Post's foreign news desk in Washington, D.C. 04/28/2020 Washington Post “Sex workers are falling through the cracks in coronavirus assistance programs around the world” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/04/28/sex-workers-are-falling-through-cracks-coronavirus-assistance-programs-around-world/> -VL

Beth Reid’s financial prospects are bleak. Her work is banned under Sydney’s shutdown. Her limited savings are dwindling as bills accumulate. The 36-year-old is preparing to apply for Australian unemployment benefits, which have increased in response to the coronavirus pandemic. It’s a familiar story. But Reid faces an added obstacle: While her line of work — as a dominatrix — is legal where she lives, it remains highly stigmatized. To receive benefits, she would have to register as a sex worker with the federal government, creating a record that could have implications for her future. Still, she knows she’s among the lucky ones: In all but a handful of countries, the sex industry is illegal. That means millions of sex workers, mostly women, are excluded from government programs meant to address widespread unemployment and economic hardship as the coronavirus continues to spread. Even in Australia, where sex work is legal in some states, Reid said she has seen an increase in “precarious housing situations, and also super precarious mental health” among colleagues left out of the system. “There are loads of sex workers who don’t have access to either of the welfare measures,” she said, referring to the federal government’s two unemployment programs, “like migrant workers or those who don’t have a fixed address.” Sex workers in Australia and around the world, she said, are in dire need of the same support that other people are set to receive for loss of income, health care and housing. “Many sex workers come from communities that already face high levels of marginalization and social exclusion including people living in poverty, migrants and refugees, trans people and drug users,” the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) said in a statement. “Sex workers who are the primary earners in their families, or who don’t have alternative means of support, are at risk of being forced into more precarious and dangerous situations to survive.” Workers without recourse Tens of millions of people work in the sex industry, according to some estimates — in brothels, strip clubs and massage parlors, or through escort agencies and on the Internet. Only New Zealand and two states in Australia have completely decriminalized sex work, meaning there are no specific criminal penalties for engaging in it. Other Australian states, as well as a few countries such as Germany and the Netherlands, have legalized it, meaning the state regulates sex work and permits it only in certain state-sanctioned ways, with more parameters and policing. The World Health Organization has advocated for the decriminalization of sex work. The question of decriminalization and legalization, however, is polarizing: Critics see laws that allow sex work as a cover for human trafficking and sexual exploitation, while advocates say it’s a valid profession in need of protections, not policing. The countries that permit sex work follow a few different models, such as regulating brothels or allowing the selling of sex but not buying. Even in the few places where sex work is allowed, applying for unemployment benefits is unlikely to be straightforward. Many sex workers lack the paperwork to document their employment status. In Germany, migrant workers from countries including Bulgaria, China, Nigeria and Romania make up about 80 percent of the sector, according to Luca Stevenson, coordinator of ICRSE. These groups have been particularly hard hit by the closing of brothels where many lived, and many have been stranded by border closures. Some are now homeless and without access to assistance. In the Netherlands, recently unemployed independent workers are eligible for only about $1,000 a month — those in sex work included, said Nadia van der Linde, coordinator of the Netherlands-based Red Umbrella Fund, which supports sex workers worldwide. Not all sex workers, though, will receive that money. Many people in Amsterdam’s red-light district are migrants who are undocumented or from elsewhere in Europe. Even some Dutch sex workers chose not to register, as the process is complicated and the designation carries stigma, van der Linde said. A sex worker sits in front of a Mexico City hotel, as seen in a reflection, on April 10 after the government shuttered a hotel where she lived and worked, as a measure to contain the spread of the coronavirus. A sex worker sits in front of a Mexico City hotel, as seen in a reflection, on April 10 after the government shuttered a hotel where she lived and worked, as a measure to contain the spread of the coronavirus. (Edgard Garrido/Reuters) Demands for inclusion Sex workers are used to being excluded from government services, said Reid, who has been in the industry for 17 years. To compensate, they have built tight support networks that are springing into action to set up emergency funds for assistance, in the forms of cash, food and health care. In some countries, the coronavirus crisis has created a new impetus to look out for sex workers. In Bangladesh, Thailand and Japan, countries where most sex work remains criminalized, although forms of it are regulated, governments have made efforts to include the sector in aid programs. Bangladesh shut down legal brothels on March 20 along with most other businesses in the country, leaving destitute residents with no income. After workers appealed, the government agreed to provide cash, rice and a rent freeze to women and families living in 12 brothels, Reuters reported. A few weeks later, when Japan announced a new subsidy program to help with child care during the outbreak, the country’s labor minister expressly excluded the adult entertainment and sex industry. Two days later, on April 9, the government reversed course in the face of criticism. Determining eligibility for financial aid remains convoluted, CNN reported. In Thailand, adult entertainment venues employ an estimated 300,000 people and bring in around $6.4 billion a year, according to Empower Foundation, a Thai sex workers advocacy group. The government ordered these venues closed on March 18. Days later, it announced an emergency relief, including $150 monthly for the newly unemployed. Most Thai workers who lost their jobs in entertainment venues qualified. Those who made money selling sex cannot apply, as that remains illegal, but workers such as dancers in bars were included. Even those without a contract could apply as a freelancer, said Liz Hilton, a member of Empower. Still, only about 60 percent of Empower’s several thousand clients have applied, according to Hilton, who attributed the gap in part to the industry’s high density of ineligible migrant workers. In Mexico, the coronavirus-related closure of hotels meant many sex workers suddenly lost their homes and income. Left with nowhere to go but the street, they were offered by Mexico City’s government temporary shelters and cards with 1,000 pesos, or around $42, for emergency food and medicine. In Bolivia, France, South Africa and elsewhere, advocacy groups have been lobbying governments for similar measures, so far without much success. “Very few governments are actually taking positive steps to ensure the inclusion of sex workers in emergency steps that they are taking,” said Ruth Morgan Thomas, global coordinator of the Edinburgh, Scotland-based Global Network of Sex Work Projects. “Nobody in this world can survive if they can’t find an alternative way of feeding themselves or their families.”

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### Framework

#### Value societal welfare/wellbeing

Crisp 2017

Roger Crisp is a moral philosophy professor at the university of oxford. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 3/21/17 “Well-Being”<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/well-being/>.

Well-being is most commonly used in philosophy to describe what is non-instrumentally or ultimately good for a person. The question of what well-being consists in is of independent interest, but it is of great importance in moral philosophy, especially in the case of utilitarianism, according to which the only moral requirement is that well-being be maximized. Significant challenges to the very notion have been mounted, in particular by G.E. Moore and T.M. Scanlon. It has become standard to distinguish theories of well-being as either hedonist theories, desire theories, or objective list theories. According to the view known as welfarism, well-being is the only value. Also important in ethics is the question of how a person’s moral character and actions relate to their well-being.

#### Criterion pragmatism

Cambridge University updated 2020

Cambridge university no date. Updated 8/12/20 https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/pragmatism

the quality of dealing with a problem in a sensible way that suits the conditions that really exist, rather than following fixed theories, ideas, or rules:

### Contention 1: Decriminalizing the sex work industry

#### Sex workers are demanding sex work be decriminalized now

Shure 2019

Natalie Shure is a TV producer and writer whose work has appeared in the Atlantic, Slate, Pacific Standard, and elsewhere. 05/01/2019 Jacobin “Sex Workers’ Rights Are Workers’ Rights” <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/05/sex-workers-rights-are-workers-rights> -VL

The gathering in Manhattan’s Washington Square Park on June 2, 2018 felt like a watershed moment: hundreds of sex workers and their allies showed up to commemorate the first International Whore’s Day since the passage of FOSTA/SESTA, a federal law that many sex workers say makes them less safe. It was the largest sex workers’ rights demonstration Kaytlin Bailey, director of communications for Decriminalize Sex Work, had ever seen: “There were hundreds of people there instead of dozens,” she recalled. “Just to see the energy and the mass of people coming together in public space to declare themselves either out as sex workers or as their allies felt like a transformative moment. And it was caused, I think, by the immediate impact of FOSTA/SESTA.” FOSTA/SESTA allows the government to hold online platforms liable for facilitating illegal sex trade, incentivizing websites to crack down on a broad range of users’ erotic content. Passed under the guise of halting sex-trafficking, critics say the law endangers sex workers by preventing them from finding and screening clients, as well as maintaining critical networks with colleagues that share resources, warnings, and other forms of support in an often perilous industry. As Bailey explained, unlike localized brothel raids or policing of street-based sex work, FOSTA/SESTA targeted all forms of sex work at once — inadvertently binding sex workers together by making visible their shared struggle. For Bailey, the solidarity on display in Washington Square Park last year evoked the events in 1975 that later gave International Whore’s Day its name and which activists pinpoint as the advent of the modern movement for sex workers’ rights. Hundreds of sex workers in Lyon, France occupied a network of churches to demand an end to the brutal criminalization of their livelihoods, railing against police harassment, anti-pimping statutes, and hotel closures that made it all but impossible to build stable, dignified lives. For eight days, sex workers across the country went on strike. That the sex worker-led actions in both 1975 and 2018 erupted as fierce protests against criminalization is no surprise, and as authors, activists, and sex workers Juno Mac and Molly Smith lay out in their new book Revolting Prostitutes: The Fight for Sex Workers’ Rights, decriminalizing the sex trade is an essential demand made by people who sell sex throughout the world. Not only are carceral measures ineffective, they argue, but oppressive, further marginalizing and impoverishing the very people they pretend to protect. Justice won’t be found in locking up sex workers, ending demand for commercial sex, or “exiting” sex workers into low-wage jobs in sweat shops. It will come from these workers themselves building power to gain control over their working conditions, and challenging the broader political context that pushes many of them to sell sex in the first place. Mac and Smith provide a robust economic analysis of the sex trade, arguing that people sell sex for a very simple reason: they need money or resources, and sex work is the best option they have for getting it. If that sounds familiar, it should — it’s the same reason that anyone sells their labor to survive under capitalism. For higher-status workers, sex work is unlikely to be the most attractive professional option (although those for whom it is tend to advance the bourgeois “I choose to be an escort because it’s empowering!” argument that Mac and Smith skillfully push back against). Genuinely loving one’s job is a rare privilege, and most people do not. Instead, those who sell sex typically do so because the alternatives are worse. The hours and pay may be better than minimum wage jobs or more suitable for family obligations, the wages come quicker and in cash, and the money can be a lifeline for those likely to face formal hiring discrimination, including unauthorized immigrants, drug users, the formerly incarcerated, the disabled, or the LGBTQ-identifying. In other words, the people most likely to sell sex are often already on the margins of society, and their material needs don’t suddenly disappear when sex work is criminalized. In fact, bringing in the police exacerbates things by pushing their trade underground and exposing them to greater violence and exploitation. As Mac and Smith illustrate, this dynamic plays out across a number of different legal regimes. In countries like the United States, Kenya, and South Africa, where buying, selling, or otherwise supporting commercial sex is illegal, prostitution-related rap sheets leave sex workers even less employable or saddle them with fines they may struggle to pay. Criminal records and periods of incarceration can threaten sex workers’ access to housing or custody of their children. These consequences grow ever harsher for repeat “offenses,” sparking a vicious cycle where selling more sex is necessary. The need to evade the police creates a powerful incentive for sex workers to work alone and in isolated areas, where they are subject to theft and violence with little recourse. This drives some to seek the protection of a manager, against whom they’re unable to contest wage theft, sexual harassment, or other forms of workplace exploitation. Finally, criminalization heightens the abuses of police, who can easily leverage the threat of criminal charges or deportation to coerce sex workers into sex or bribes. Similar dynamics play out in countries with other legal frameworks. The so-called “Nordic model,” which ostensibly decriminalizes selling sex but criminalizes buying and otherwise abetting its sale, has been hailed by some as a compassionate feminist alternative to full-scale criminalization. But Mac and Smith burst that bubble, arguing that the model replicates many of the harmful attributes of more punitive regimes. Clients may be hesitant to provide personal information for screening purposes, or expect to meet in secluded, dangerous areas to minimize the risk of being caught. Sex workers may worry about being evicted by landlords who don’t want to face charges of harboring brothels, making it more difficult to work together (and more safely) at home. Even in legalized and regulated jurisdictions like parts of the Netherlands and Nevada, harsh criminal penalties threaten those who work outside the sanctioned confines of legalized sex work, impacting those ineligible for work within legal brothels, such as people with criminal records, drug dependency, or HIV. Finally, immigration and border enforcement creates a situation where undocumented migrants incur large debts traveling abroad, are shut out of most workplaces, and face severe risks including detention and deportation. This power imbalance means not only that sex work is among the few limited options for undocumented migrants, but that they pay an extraordinarily high price when they’re snatched up the police. As such, these workers are particularly vulnerable to abuses by handlers, clients, and law enforcement. In short, the sex trade is disproportionately comprised of poor and marginalized people, and they’re made ever more so by criminalization. In making their case, Mac and Smith counter the talking points of organizations in the so-called “rescue industry” that try to save people from sex work, as well as carceral feminists who call for “ending demand” or broader implementation of the Nordic model. Interventions that attempt to legally punish the sex trade out of existence, or to whisk individuals out of it by retraining them for other low-paid jobs, do nothing to challenge the lack of social and economic power that nudges people into sex work in the first place. As Bailey put it, “if you have a problem with someone doing something they otherwise wouldn’t for money, you don’t have a problem with sex work — you have a problem with capitalism.” Of course, that’s a perfectly reasonable thing to have a problem with. But the way to address it isn’t by prohibiting society’s most stigmatized trades — it’s by building workers’ power to dictate the terms of their labor. By organizing in solidarity with one another, sex workers could live safer, more stable, and more dignified lives. They could fight back against the harms of clients and extractive managers, and fight to win resources that confer real agency over their lives by broadening their range of choices beyond “sell sex or die.” But decriminalization of sex work is a precondition for any of that, and must be centralized as a fundamental socialist demand. It’s a demand sex workers themselves have been making for a long time. They deserve some solidarity.

#### The Pandemic has only increased the demand to decriminalize sex work

Posteraro 2020

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In a landmark building just a stroll away from Glasgow Central Station, all offices are listed on a board in the entrance hall – except for one, which is on the fifth floor. This space is used by a support organisation for sex workers called Umbrella Lane. It is crowded with boxes, condoms, and history books about prostitution. Kathryn Jarvinen, a community outreach officer, greets me in the same friendly manner she uses to welcome sex workers who visit here. Umbrella Lane was set up in 2015 with the aim of providing a holistic approach to sex work support. From open discussions about negative client encounters, to free condom and lube supplies, Umbrella Lane is an open door to everyone. Former sex workers are on hand to inform newcomers of their rights. Those who attend its drop-ins and weekly socials – which include painting sessions and film nights – have all sorts of backgrounds. The majority of attendees are women. Some are “full-service” workers, who provide in-person sexual services working either from their own flats or in hotels. Others are cam girls (someone who performs via webcam) and strip club dancers. Some women split time between online and real life sex work, usually indoors. In Jarvinen’s first year of work at Umbrella Lane she noticed a steady increase in the number of people accessing the service. The support offered goes as far as providing mental health assistance and letting workers have a friendly chat in the common room. Jarvinen is enthusiastic about the organisation’s next steps: “We are doing some outreach to street-based workers, migrant women, drug-using workers, and more marginalized communities other than indoor workers.” Sex work is legal in Scotland if people work alone and indoors. But soliciting, loitering on the streets, and brothel keeping are criminal offences. Workers are prevented from being together in the same flat, even for personal safety. Often called the “Nordic model” as it originated in Sweden, Scotland’s framework implies that buying sex or selling sex, especially in public or in a shared space, is still an offence. Scot-PEP, a sex worker-led charity, claims this unfairly affects workers. “Rolling back punitive austerity measures is the best way to prevent people from entering sex work, rather than punishing sex workers by removing their income,” the charity says. Before the coronavirus pandemic there were already many challenges for those working in the industry. Unreliable incomes, risk of violence, and discrimination are just a few. But as cases of Covid-19 escalated in Scotland back in March, so too did the health risks associated with sex work. Emergency legislation associated with lockdown exacerbated the situation for sex workers, whose earning ability has been decimated. Claiming the emergency funding offered by the UK Government to the self-employed is not straightforward. The scheme is open to those with a trading profit of less than £50,000 in 2018-19 or an average trading profit of less than £50,000 from 2016-17 onwards. More than half of the income in that period must come from self-employment. Sex workers who registered as freelancers in the months leading to the pandemic do not qualify for grants. Getting benefits hasn’t been easy either. 1.2 million people requested Universal Credit between March and April, leaving claims unanswered or unfinished. Physical distancing rules have left many workers close to destitution. “I was lucky to get on Universal Credit just before the lockdown,” one anonymous worker says. “I’m able to live on that with some restraint, so I’d rather leave other funds to people who cannot access it or have kids.” Umbrella Lane decided to mobilise when Covid-19 hit. An online crowdfunding campaign raised £10,000, allowing it to pay sex workers a monthly hardship grant. But by early June the charity announced that funds were running so low that new payments would be paused until July.

### Contention 2: Sex workers are a volatile population

#### Decriminalization allows for sex workers to report violent crimes and other abuses

The open society foundation 2015

The Open Society Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. Working with local communities in more than 100 countries, the Open Society Foundations support justice and human rights, freedom of expression, and access to public health and education 04/2015 The Open Society Foundation “10 reasons to decriminalize sex work” <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/ten-reasons-decriminalize-sex-work> -VL

Laws that criminalize sex work cause sex workers to feel unsafe reporting crimes—including violent crimes and other abuses—because they fear prosecution, police surveillance, stigma, and discrimination.20 In both Norway and Sweden, for instance, many sex workers report that the thresholds at which they will report crimes to the police are high as a result of laws that criminalize sex work.21 Decriminalization removes these kinds of barriers. After New Zealand reformed its laws in 2003, many sex workers reported that they could turn to the police and courts for help without fear of prosecution for the first time in their lives.22 In 2014, for example, a sex worker in Wellington was awarded NZD 25,000 after a brothel operator repeatedly harassed her, violating her rights under the country’s Human Rights Act.23

#### Sex workers are more susceptible to abuse and risk

The open society foundation 2015

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Sex work is not inherently violent; it is criminalization that places sex workers at greatest risk. The need to avoid arrest— of both sex workers and their clients—means that street-based sex workers must often move to more isolated areas that are less visible to law enforcement, and where violence is more prevalent.8 Fear of arrest and police abuse limits the time and methods that sex workers can use to conduct safety screenings of clients without detection by police.9 For sex workers who are not street-based, authorities have even shut down online sex work forums, like Redbook, which have offered sex workers more detailed client screening possibilities and thus greater security.10 These factors, plus real or perceived impunity for perpetrators of violence against sex workers, place sex workers at heightened risk. For example, after Scotland instituted laws criminalizing solicitation in 2007, groups recorded a doubling in reported rapes and assaults.11 In jurisdictions that have decriminalized sex work such as New Zealand, sex workers have an increased ability to screen clients, work in safe areas with better access to security services, and refer to police in cases of violence.

#### Sex workers have one of the highest rates of assault

Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault last accessed 08/05/2020

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault is the federally recognized state sexual assault coalition. Received from the MCSA Fact Sheet last accessed 08/05/2020 -VL

In a 2002 study of female sex workers who had been jailed, it was found that 82% had been physically assaulted, 83% had been threatened with a weapon, and 84% experienced current or past homelessness. Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, “Unlocking Options for Women: A Survey of Women in Cook Co. Jail”. 24% of adult rape survivors indicated that they had engaged in post-assault sex work. The most commonly cited reason they gave for engaging in sex work was that it allowed them to regain control of their lives and bodies after their sexual assault. Violence and Victims, “The Relationship Between Adult Sexual Assault and Prostitution: An Exploratory Analysis,” R. Campbell, et al., 2003.  A study of 130 sex workers living in San Francisco found that: o 75% reported a history of childhood sexual abuse, by an average of 3 perpetrators o 68% had reported being raped since becoming sex workers o 48% had been raped more than five times o 46% of those who reported rapes stated that they had been raped by customers o 49% reported that pornography was made of them o 68% of respondents from the study met criteria for a PTSD diagnosis

### Extra Cards

#### Americans are supporting sex work more now than ever

Wheeler 2020

Skye Wheeler is an emergencies researcher for the Women’s Rights Division, Skye Wheeler monitors and documents women’s rights abuses during human rights crises including situations of armed conflict and attacks on civilians, mass displacement and crisis following disasters. 01/30/2020 Human Rights Watch “More Americans Favor Decriminalizing Sex Work” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/01/30/more-americans-favor-decriminalizing-sex-work> -VL

A new report published today by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the National Center for Transgender Equality, and 22 other United States-based human rights organizations finds that 52 percent of Americans and two-thirds of voters age 18 to 44 years support decriminalizing sex work. Decriminalizing sex work means ending laws that make it illegal to sell and buy consensual, adult sex or related activities like advertising sex work or renting a room to a sex worker. Actual criminal behavior such as child prostitution or sex trafficking would, of course, remain illegal. Decriminalization campaigns in Washington, DC and New York have both gained traction in recent months after decades of efforts by sex worker activists. Congresswoman Ayana Pressley (D-MA) has called for decriminalization as part of her effort against mass incarceration in the US. She has noted that criminalization especially harms Black women and trans people who turn to sex work because of poverty and discrimination. Criminalizing their work only worsens their situation. But Pressley is still in a minority. Candidates running in US state and national elections this year should support decriminalizing the voluntary sale and purchase of sex and ending the violence criminalization encourages against women and gay, bisexual, and transgender people. Today’s report includes testimony from sex workers about the abuses they experience at the hands of police, including coercive sex in exchange for no arrest, stalking, and discriminatory profiling. “One time, I was walking and holding hands with my boyfriend and the police arrested me,” said Bianey Garcia, a trans sex worker from New York. She has been arrested four times but only once while performing sex work. She believes each other arrest resulted from her being trans. Human Rights Watch has researched the effects of criminalization in several places including China, Tanzania, South Africa, and in several cities in the US. These reports show that when faced with arrest or police abuse, sex workers are less likely to report crimes committed against them or the trafficking of others, ultimately making them more unsafe. We all have a human right to autonomy over our bodies. Arresting and fining or imprisoning people for consensual sex doesn’t make any sense and makes some of the most vulnerable Americans even more so. Elected officials should listen to voters and begin decriminalizing sex work in the US.

#### New ways to criminalize sex workers are happening now

Khafgay 2020

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In May, Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced her war on human trafficking with the creation of the Human Trafficking Bureau. The new group empowers law enforcement to crack down on sex and labor trafficking by prosecuting traffickers and people paying for sex as well as connecting sex workers with resources to “escape” the industry. The new unit will be staffed by a team of assistant district attorneys, social workers, detectives and analysts. Although promoted by Katz as a fulfillment of her campaign promise to end the criminalization of sex work and concentrate her efforts on traffickers, advocates believe the new bureau will continue the cycle of criminalizing sex workers, particularly immigrant and trans sex workers, increasing policing in predominantly immigrant communities as well as pushing the sex industry further into the shadows. “We know the people they will be prosecuting are in our communities and the issue with that is that they will also be surveilling sex workers,” said Mateo Guerrero, an organizer with Make The Road New York, an immigrant advocacy organization. “Even though they are not going to be arresting people who are in the sex trade they are going to be continuing to be surveilled in an attempt to arrest clients.” State Senator Jessica Ramos, who is co-sponsor of a bill that would decriminalize sex work in New York State by allowing the selling of sex between consenting adults while making clear that sex work involving minors, force, intimidation, coercion, and trafficking all remain illegal, opposes Katz’s new task force out of fear that it will increase her constituents’ encounters with law enforcement as well as further harm sex workers. Katz’s plan mirrors the Nordic Model, which attempts to end sex work by eliminating the market for prostitution. This means prosecuting sex traffickers and buyers of sex. Although promoted by anti-sex-trafficking and prostitution abolitionist groups as a way to curtail human trafficking, Amnesty International found in a study published in 2016, that the Nordic Model violated the rights of sex workers by creating an atmosphere of fear built upon surveillance, evictions, and deportations. When Ireland instituted the Nordic Model in 2017, Ugly Mugs, an organization that helps sex workers share information that keeps them safe, found that after the model was made law there was nearly a 50 percent rise in violent crime against sex workers. By criminalizing the purchasers of sex, Ireland’s sex workers lost the ability to safely screen their clients. “This is my worry with the Nordic Model, which is that if you take the sex worker’s right to screen their clients, there is no incentive for their clients to give them their real name or number,” Ramos said. “You’re still perpetuating a clandestine industry that is perpetuating violence because it operates in the dark. The best thing is to do is to have things out in the open and make sure we are addressing any public health care concerns that may arise.” Supporters of decriminalization view any effort to use law enforcement as a tool to combat sex trafficking inherently flawed because it will inevitably put sex workers, especially immigrant sex workers in harm’s way. In a 2016 study, the Urban Institute found that one-quarter of people who were arrested on prostitution charges in New York City between 2015 and 2016 were immigrant Asian women. Two-thirds of which were arrested in Queens. Kate Zen, a former sex worker who co-founded Red Canary Song, a collective organizing Asian massage workers in Flushing, Queens, views Katz’s bureau as putting immigrant sex workers’ legal status in jeopardy. “We don’t have a lot of information yet on how Katz intends to run this unit, but in general we have seen increased encounters with law enforcement has brought harm to the lives of immigrant sex workers,” she said. “Law enforcement has not been careful in protecting their data from ICE which has led to deportations for people who are caught up through these proceedings.” Zen points to the case of 27-year-old transgender woman Layleen Polanco, who, last year, was found dead in her cell on the notoriously inhumane Rikers Island. Polanco was held on Rikers in the first place because she was unable to afford the $500 bail after an arrest for an open bench warrant that she was issued because of a failure to complete the diversion program ordered by Manhattan’s Human Trafficking Intervention Court. To Zen, Polanco’s case should be viewed as a cautionary tale for Katz of the dangers increased policing against sex trafficking in the name of rescuing them, can pose for sex workers. “A lot of women say that the biggest trauma for them is not actually the work of sex work but the trauma of arrest. So we need to be very careful about this approach and understand that encounters with law enforcement are a form of violence, that many people who are believed to be trafficked end up not identifying as trafficking victims.” Katz’s crusade against human trafficking comes at the heels of the Trump Administration’s pledge to spend $70 million to combat trafficking in January, spurred by anti-sex-trafficking advocates’ claims that over 400,000 people are enslaved in the United States. However, that figure is misleading as it’s an estimate from a 2001 University of Pennsylvania report that showed how many youths who are at-risk of commercial sex exploitation not the number of youths who are victims of sex-trafficking. Although, in a press release heralding her office’s new initiative, Katz stated that “the sex trafficking industry is a brutal, degrading and illegal enterprise that far too often profits by forcing women, children, and members of our transgender community into prostitution,” data shows that sex trafficking, especially the trafficking of children, is far less prevalent than many believe it to be. Data collected by the International Labor Organization’s 2012 Global Estimate of Forced Labor report found that three-quarters of forced labor does not involve forced sexual labor at all. In fact, a study funded by the U.S. Department of Justice concluded that the total number of juveniles in the sex trade in the United States was about 9,000 to 10,000, far fewer than what was previously thought. Sex-trafficking activists such as Mateo Guerrero believe law enforcement paternalizes sex workers by conflating all sex workers as victims of trafficking. “People have the idea that anyone who is in the sex trade is being trafficked and that is not true. It really removes the agency of people who chose to engage in consensual trading.” While Senator Ramos agrees with Katz that sex trafficking is an issue in Queens and that more should be done to help victims come forward, she believes when all sex work is viewed from a trafficking lens women are harmed. “What I believe the DA’s office should do is keep everyone safe, so from that lens you can’t think of all sex selling under the same umbrella because yes you have third party agents that must be held responsible, especially when there are minors involved, but when there is a grown person who happens to makes these decisions for themselves, their privacy should not only be respected but empowered, that way they can report any violence against them. The Queens DA’s Office declined to comment for this story. Eventually, some activists hope that the resources that go towards policing sex workers would go towards preventing the conditions that force people into the profession to begin with. “We believe the resources need to be shifted towards those community supports that Katz talks about,” says Zen. “Towards providing housing, providing job training, those are the really affecting ways in attacking the social-economic issues that push people into this kind of work. The more resources are shifted away from law enforcement, we think the more effective it would be.”