



Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network tells committee that Parliament should repeal Criminal Code provisions on prostitution

Toronto, 15 March 2005 – Extensive reform of the federal law on prostitution is needed to protect the rights and health of sex workers in Canada, said the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network in a presentation today to the House of Commons committee reviewing Canada’s criminal laws on prostitution.

“The prostitution-related offences in the Criminal Code contribute to sex worker’s risk of facing violence and their risk of HIV infection,” said Glenn Betteridge, Senior Policy Analyst. “Any law that results in more harm than good should be repealed.”

Based on Canada’s human rights obligations and the evidence of the harms caused by the Criminal Code provisions relating to prostitution, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network calls upon the Subcommittee to recommend that:

1. Parliament repeals the bawdy-house section of the Criminal Code (section 210 and 211).
2. Parliament repeals the communicating section of the Criminal Code (section 213).
3. Parliament repeals those subsections of the procuring section of the Criminal Code (section 212) that do not respect the rights of sex workers, or do not offer sex workers real protection from violence and exploitation.
4. The government initiates a process to determine which federal, provincial and municipal laws should apply to the organization and practice of prostitution.
5. The government ensures sufficient funding to allow sex workers to participate in future decision-making. In particular, sex workers must have a say in determining what laws should apply to prostitution and sex workers. The participation of sex workers is essential to ensuring that such laws protect their health and human rights.

Later this year, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network will release a complete report on sex work, criminal law and HIV/AIDS in Canada.

For more information on the Legal Network’s work on sex work, including the complete text of today’s presentation to the subcommittee, go to:

<http://www.aidslaw.ca/Maincontent/issues/sexwork.htm>