

# Stop Trafficking!

## Awareness Advocacy Action

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FOCUS: This issue explores the victimization of people in the sex trade.

*Jei is 22 and lives in a poor, rural village in Kenya. She was married at 16 and now has 5 children. Her husband was killed in a tribal war and she needs to provide for herself and her children. She does not have an education and cannot find a job. Reluctantly, Jei leaves her children with a neighbor and travels to the city to sell herself for sex. She sends the small income she receives to her children. She is ashamed but does not see any other way to provide for her children.*

*Maria lives in a poor, rural village in El Salvador and is uneducated. An uncle visits from the city and says he can get her a job in a hotel in the city. She leaves her family, promising to send money home to them. Her uncle sells her to a brothel where she is forced to have sex with 15-20 men each day. Her family never hears from her again.*

*Both Jei and Maria are sex workers. But their situation is not the same.*



## Prostitution and Human Trafficking: Each day millions of people worldwide are sexually exploited in the sex trade

Some people may perceive sex trafficking and prostitution as two separate and unrelated issues. They see trafficking as being forced and prostitution as freely chosen. However, the two are intrinsically connected. The demand for prostitution fuels sex trafficking. Both are part of a system of gender-based domination that makes violence against women and girls profitable.

It is estimated that the global sex trade is a 150-billion-dollar industry. In many regions in the United States and other countries, the sex trade has become a profitable enterprise for gangs and other organized criminal enterprises.

Many women, especially in impoverished areas, turn to prostitution because they have few economic opportunities. An uneducated woman may be under pressure to provide for her family, and sex work allows her to make money fast. If she lives in a country that generally accepts the sex industry, prostitution quickly looks like the only option.

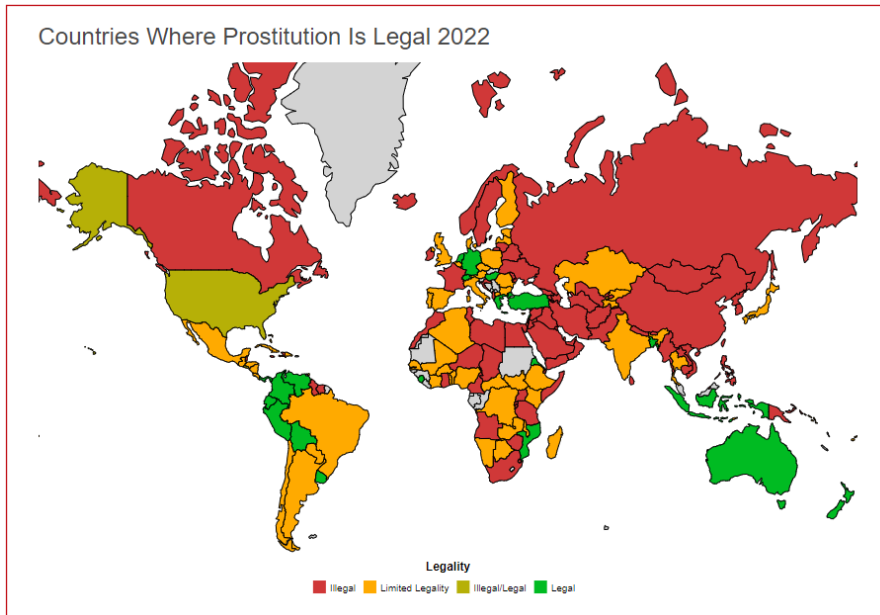


Those in the sex trade tend to be women and girls who endured childhood physical or sexual abuse or neglect, are economically marginalized, have been involved in the foster care system, or ran away as children. The vast majority of those in the sex trade entered before their 15th birthday.

Efforts to disconnect trafficking from prostitution legitimize the sex industry and protect its growth and profitability. Click [here](#) to learn more.

# Awareness

## Global Views of Prostitution: Countries worldwide take various legal stances on prostitution



In countries that practice decriminalization, such as New Zealand and Belgium, the selling, buying, organizing, and solicitation of sex are all legal or not addressed and are subject to minimal or no special regulations. Decriminalization of sex buying normalizes the practice, which leads to increased demand. Those who advocate for decriminalizing sex work argue that sex workers deserve the same legal protections and should be able to maintain their livelihood without fear of violence or arrest and access health care and other services without discrimination.

Meanwhile, in countries that practice legalization, selling, buying, and some forms of organizing, typically brothels, and soliciting sex are legal. But they are also regulated, such as requiring prostitutes to register or only allowing prostitution in certain districts. In addition, in countries where legalization has been implemented, the state can profit from the sale of women and girls through the tax code.

Countries where prostitution is legal experience more significant inflows of victims of human trafficking.

Essentially, legitimizing and normalizing the sex industry leads to a rise in trafficking, as women must be brought in to meet increased demand. Legalizing the sex trade gives greater power to the pimps and organized gangs and makes things worse for women.

Germany, which legalized sex buying in 2002, reports that Berlin, the nation's capital, has over 500 brothels

and 150,000 people in prostitution.

In addition, Germany has been a destination country for many Ukrainian women trafficked since the beginning of the war.

Abolitionism, where selling sex and buying sex are both legal, is the most prevalent approach worldwide. However, to prevent exploitation of the sex worker, public solicitation, the operation of brothels; and forms of "organization" such as pimping, procuring, and forced prostitution are all usually prohibited.

Countries that take a stance of neo-abolitionism consider prostitution to be violence against women. Selling sex is technically legal, but buying, organizing, and soliciting sex are all illegal.

Prostitutes are legally blameless when caught in the act, but their clients and pimps are prosecuted. This "reverse loophole" is designed to suppress demand.

Sometimes called the Equality or Nordic Model, partial decriminalization was developed by listening to sex trade survivors. At the heart of this model, prostituted or trafficked persons are victims of a crime, not criminals themselves. It holds accountable sex buyers as well as third-party exploiters, including pimps and brothel owners. Advocates for the Equality Model believe that providing much-needed social services and embracing policies that promote economic justice are necessary to help those who seek to exit the sex trade stay out of the sex trade. Countries adopting this model - Canada, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Iceland, France, Israel, and Norway - see a decrease in women and children trafficking victims.

Prostitution is illegal across the board in countries that practice prohibitionism. Selling, buying, organizing (via brothels, pimps, etc.), and soliciting sex for money are all against the law. All forms of pornography are also usually outlawed.

In some countries, such as Australia and the United States, state and local governments may have different laws regarding prostitution. Therefore, it is essential to note that a country's laws often fail to accurately depict prostitution in that country.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

*United States Catholic Sisters  
Against Human Trafficking supports  
the Equality Model  
approach to prostitution.*

World  
Without  
Exploitation  
The movement to end human  
trafficking and sexual exploitation

## Men Who Buy Sex in the United States

Because prostitution is illegal in most areas of the United States, data from men who buy sex are usually from those coming to the attention of law enforcement. Many buyers do not admit to purchasing sex, especially in areas of the world where prostitution is illegal.

Buyers are found across all income groups. However, those who purchase sex frequently are upper income.

Most men admit to first buying sex as a juvenile and many while in the military. Men who repeatedly buy sex admit to purchasing pornography. Those who purchase sex online tend to be older, more highly educated, and have a higher income than those who buy on the street.

In a report by Equality Without Exploitation, nearly half of sex buyers admit to paying for sex with women they knew were under the control of a pimp or trafficker and recognized the youth of some women that are prostituted. In addition, the men stated that the risk of arrest would impact their probability of purchasing sex.

Online, many men expressed disdain for prostituted women and girls, referring to them as “Merchandise,” and admitted to being violent toward the women.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

## Advocacy

## The Problem of Demand

In any marketplace, there are products sold by sellers to the consumer. So, too, in the sex work industry. The products are those engaged in sex work, often trafficking victims.

The sellers are often traffickers or pimps, and the consumers are primarily men. Basic economics holds that demand for a product is fundamental for market survival. Without demand, there would be no market for victims of sex trafficking. Demand is created by those who seek to purchase sex or sexual entertainment.

When the demand to buy sex is high, then traffickers must increase the supply of victims. One example is that law enforcement report that during large sporting events, traffickers move victims into the city in response to the expected increased demand, resulting in a higher incidence rate of adults and minors arrested for prostitution in that city.

In the United States, buyers, who tend to be primarily white, middle-aged males, use various methods to access the commercial sex market ranging from the Internet to telephoning escort services, to inquiring about close confidantes. In the United States, there also exist ethnic brothels that service only members of a particular ethnicity.

Buyers will also travel abroad to countries where penalties for commercial sex, particularly with children, are lax or non-existent, and their anonymity can be preserved.

Buyers of sexual services in urban Tokyo, where prostitution is illegal, include Japanese males, white-collar workers, college students, and foreign businessmen who often rationalize their behavior as a form of economic assistance to the victim, a



# Advocacy

rationale heard by buyers in several countries. In many instances, the trafficker or pimp collects the money, with the victim receiving nothing.

Countries such as the Netherlands, where commercial sex is legal, have freed men from the stigma of buying commercial sexual services. This increases the demand for commercial sex. However, the number of women voluntarily entering the officially de-stigmatized commercial sex market is not increased, thus creating a demand for sex trafficking victims. In the United States, the perception that prostitution is legal in Las Vegas, Nevada, is widespread and leads to a demand for commercial sexual services despite the illegality. The result is the trafficking of women and, increasingly, children to Las Vegas to be used in the commercial sex industry to satisfy the sizable demand. Click [here](#) to learn more.

## Deterring Demand

The issue of demand as a primary driver of sex trafficking has led to research and investigation into educational ways to reduce the demand, thereby reducing the trafficking. Buyers of commercial sex acknowledge that prosecution would be a solid deterrent to engaging in prostitution. However, most receive little or no punishment, including those who buy sex with children. Meanwhile, many victims, including child victims, are arrested and charged with the crime committed against them.

Laws allowing for confiscating assets from those who purchase sex from victims of trafficking should be enacted. Legal ramifications for the buyer would not only deter many men from buying sex, but it would also send a message to the community that the crime will not be tolerated.

A gap in some anti-trafficking legislation is the ability to assert a defense of the mistake of age. Legislation enacted in some states closed this loophole by adding the crime of commercial sex abuse of a minor to the list of crimes that do not permit a defense for a mistake of age.

In London, where prostitution is legal, men stated that the actions that would deter them from using women in prostitution included the threat of being added to a sex offender registry, imprisonment, or public exposure such as a billboard announcement, newspaper notice, an Internet webpage, or through a letter to their family or employer. In addition, the interviewees cited higher fines, more significant criminal penalties, and suspension of driver's

license or car impoundment as deterrents if laws and penalties would actually be enforced.

Another deterrent is a diversion program in which men arrested for buying commercial sex can choose to participate in Johns Schools aimed at educating the buyers of commercial sex on the trauma and victimization suffered by the girls providing the commercial sexual services. These programs are a community-based response to addressing the demand of local buyers. Although the Johns Schools are a post-victimization response and a secondary deterrent as the criminal sexual exploitation is already committed, the schools provide an opportunity for the victims to be heard and may influence the recidivism of offenders. If effective in reducing demand for prostitution overall, Johns Schools will lessen the demand for commercial sex with minors and adult victims of force, fraud, or coercion.

Awareness and prevention initiatives led by men and directed to men as the primary buyers in commercial sex markets should be bolstered and encouraged, such as Shared Hope International's project, The Defenders USA, which educates men on the realities and harms of the commercial sex industry and its specific links to sex trafficking.

In addition, regulation of the Internet to help prevent facilitation through technology should be implemented, including stricter rules on unsolicited pornographic advertising. Click [here](#) to learn more.

## Legislation in the United States

In the United States, sex workers became more vulnerable to abuse from clients after passing two bills in 2018, the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act and the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (SESTA/FOSTA). SESTA/FOSTA banned many online platforms for sex workers, including client screening services like Redbook, which allowed sex workers to share information about abusive and dangerous customers and build communities to protect themselves. Unfortunately, the law also pushed more sex workers offline and into the streets, where they had to work in isolated areas to avoid arrest and deal with clients without background checks. Click [here](#) to learn more.

## Expungement of Criminal Prostitution Records

Most criminal record relief laws for trafficking victims only cover prostitution or sex-related crimes, but victims are also commonly arrested for drug possession and theft while being trafficked.

Many state lawmakers have passed criminal record relief laws in the United States that allow human trafficking victims to have convictions connected to their trafficking sealed or expunged.

However, in some states, the laws are so restrictive that no trafficking victims are eligible for expungement or are willing to go through the states' cumbersome record relief process.

Survivors report that getting their criminal record expunged can be a traumatizing process because they have to write out in great detail what had happened for every charge that they want to get expunged, causing them to relive their trafficking experience. Moreover, in some states, the only offenses that their laws cover are prostitution or sex-related crimes.

In 2019, Polaris released a report that graded states' criminal record relief laws based on several factors, including the level of relief provided, the offenses covered for relief, and the amount of discretion judges are given to grant relief.

New Hampshire enacted legislation to expand the non-criminalization of trafficking victims in their 2022 legislative session. New Hampshire previously passed Safe Harbor for non-violent misdemeanors and non-violent felonies but allowed juveniles to be proceeded upon on status offenses. The new legislation amends the Code to prohibit a victim of human trafficking from being prosecuted for any crime committed as a direct result of being trafficked that did not involve an act of violence or threat of violence for both adults and juveniles. Additionally, the bill expands a survivor's ability to vacate convictions or adjudication of delinquency related to their trafficking. HB1577 was signed by the Governor and becomes effective on January 1, 2023. Click [here](#) to learn more.

**50%** Approximate reduction in job callbacks due to a criminal record of victims of human trafficking. This significantly limits earning potential.

*Theresa's mother left her at a hospital in Connecticut after she was born and did not reappear until more than five years later. That was when her mother, a drug addict, regained custody of her and started selling her to men for sex. As a result, she was trafficked by three different men over 20 years. While she was being trafficked, her trafficker would have her hold onto his drugs, and she would be the one to get arrested for drug possession. Once, she was arrested and convicted of theft for being a passenger in a stolen car with her trafficker.*

*By the time Theresa escaped trafficking, she had 44 convictions for offenses including prostitution, theft, and drug possession and had served more than ten years in prison. When she tried to rebuild her life, it was almost impossible because her criminal records prevented her from getting a decent-paying job. Click [here](#) to learn more.*

## Impact of Prostitution on Survivors

Survivors of prostitution, including those in countries that have legalized prostitution, often suffer long-term mental health impacts, including severe PTSD and suicidal ideation.

Survivors report feeling socially ostracized and morally inferior. Society does not recognize the violence inflicted on victims of trafficking and prostitution. Moreover, many victims of prostitution are also victims of child sexual abuse. Many also suffered from homelessness and became involved in prostitution to obtain shelter or food. A study done among Native American women in Minnesota found that 98% of prostituted women were currently or formerly homeless.

The use of drugs or alcohol is often the result of involvement in prostitution or a result of involvement.

Being arrested for prostitution has profoundly negative consequences on victims. A prostitution conviction is just like any other misdemeanor. It will go on your record and may prevent you from obtaining a job and a residence. Click [here](#) to learn more.



# Action

**= ≠ EQUAL NOT EXPLOITED**

## The Equality Model

Get the Facts: Click [here](#) to dig into the Equality Model from World Without Exploitation.

## Visa and Mastercard

have completely demonetized and defunded Pornhub and all MindGeek porn tube sites. These sites have been responsible for the criminal exploitation of countless victims who have had videos of their rape and abuse distributed and monetized on the sites worldwide. Thank you to all who signed action alerts around this issue.



## Renting Lacy

Learn more about child sex trafficking in America by ordering your copy of *Renting Lacy: A Story of America's Prostituted Children* today. This riveting account exposes the dark underworld of the trafficking industry through the stories of those who live there. Click [here](#) to order.

## Effective Strategies to Reduce Sex Buying

Sex trafficking ends when buying ends. In the past decade, many strategies have been employed to discover what works to reduce sex buying. This YouTube video discusses models used nationally to deter sex buying: click [here](#) to view.



## Justice Restoration Center Legal and Anti-Human Trafficking Advocacy

The Justice Restoration Center helps human trafficking victims get their criminal records expunged in Florida. They also assist with safe-release arrangements and post-release connections to safe restorative services.



## The Life Story:

What it means to be exploited in the U.S. Please click [here](#) to view this short video.



In 2014, Timothy Gravens, a 52-year-old South Dakota man, pled guilty to soliciting sex with a child...

## Buyers Beware: Mobilizing to End Demand.

Please click [here](#) to view this brief video by Shared Hope International.



Are you disturbed by the mainstreaming of pornography and recent trends that have seen students and even school-children being sold the idea that prostitution is a normal job and a good way of making loads of money? “Sex work is real work” they say. But is this really true? Who benefits from this ideology? Who pays the price?

What does being paid to have sex with men you don’t fancy really feel like? Why do so many women get trapped in the sex industry and find it so hard to get out?

What does it mean for men, if “sex work is real work”? Is buying “sex” really no different from getting your hair cut? Where does that leave the understanding of sexual consent?

Come along to hear about these issues and how we can resist. Click [here](#) to register.

## Take Action! End the criminalization of child sex trafficking survivors!

Tragically, 19 states in the nation can still arrest and charge youth survivors of sex trafficking with the crime of prostitution, the very crime committed against them.

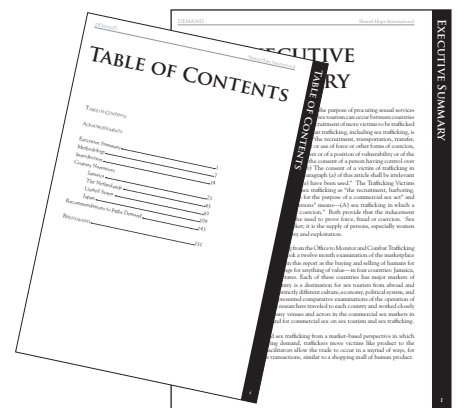
Shared Hope’s Stop the Injustice Campaign is dedicated to fighting this injustice by ending the criminalization of child sex trafficking survivors and ensuring that all survivors have access to comprehensive, trauma-informed services, instead of jail time. Please click [here](#) to sign.



# DEMAND.

## A COMPARATIVE EXAMINATION OF SEX TOURISM AND TRAFFICKING IN JAMAICA, JAPAN, THE NETHERLANDS, AND THE UNITED STATES

Please click [here](#) to access DEMAND.





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