

**Women's Groups Coalition to Argue in Court:  
The Charter Does Not Guarantee Men a Right to the Buy or Sell Women.**

A pan-Canadian coalition of equality-seeking women's groups will be appearing on June 16, 2011, before the Ontario Court of appeal, in the case between Terri Jean Bedford, Amy Lebovitch, Valerie Scott (Respondents in Appeal) and the Attorney General of Canada (Appellant in Appeal).

The Women's Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution will argue to the court to uphold the laws that forbid men from buying, selling and profiting from women bodies, and to strike down laws that criminalize women who are involved in the sex trade.

The Women's Coalition rejects both the appellants' position of maintaining the status quo and the respondents' position of striking down all three provisions in their entirety.

Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, President of the Native Women's Association of Canada: "Aboriginal women are overrepresented and victimized in the sex industry, which testifies to the link between racism and misogyny in prostitution. Decriminalizing the prostitution industry will only expand the illegal and legal trade of buying and selling women"

"The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies joins other women's groups and equality-seeking groups of women with lived experience in calling for the decriminalization of women who are prostituted, trafficked or otherwise exploited or objectified in and by the sex trade," says Kim Pate, Executive Director of CAEFS. "All women are entitled to basic human rights to freedom from want, including adequate standards of living (either through social assistance or a guaranteed livable income), and the provision of social services, health services and educational options. CAEFS continues to denounce, as criminal, the actions of those who promote and profit from the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children."

"To continue to criminalize those (mostly women and girls) prostituted is to further punish the disadvantaged, the coerced, the exploited, the violated" says Lee Lakeman for The Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centers. "But to refuse to continue to criminalize the johns, pimps and brothel owners is to legitimize exploitation and further entrench inequality". Lakeman for CASAC insists that "Women's rights compel government protection from all forms of sexist violence and sexual exploitation under both criminal and international human rights law. Criminal law is not enough but essential. Tolerance of sexist violence and sexual exploitation of individual women like all other hate crimes affects the dignity and quality of life of all girls and women"

The members of the Women's Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution:

CASAC – Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres

NWAC – Native Women's Association of Canada

CAEFS – Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies

RQCALACS Le Regroupement Québécois des Centres d'Aide et de Lutte contre les Agressions à Caractère Sexuel

la CLES – la Concertation des Luites contre l'Exploitation Sexuelle

Vancouver Rape Relief & Women's Shelter

AOcVF - Action Ontarienne contre la Violence faite aux Femmes

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