

Whorenation which is made up of sex workers who belong to several USA Sex Worker Rights Organizations, OPPOSES programs like LEAD because they are not aligned with reducing violence, stigma or the decriminalization of sex workers. We OPPOSE programs who target sex workers who are being coerced under threat of arrest into deferment programs. LEAD does not recognize Sex Work as work and US Sex Workers need support in securing safe work conditions, and access to public services that do not require them to exit their occupation. Approaching women who are about to be arrested and forcing them to speak to a social worker, and admit to being a sex worker, without having access to an attorney is a human rights violation. Police officers can force a sex worker to have sex under the threat of deferment programs just like threat of arrest. Evidence based research has shown programs like LEAD fail to reduce harm to sex workers and in reality they cause the police to do more prostitution stings. A example of this was Mrs Love who was arrested for prostitution in NYC, and even though she was innocent the deferment programs did not support her in fighting a bogus arrest and yet [she was found innocent and sued NYPD for 15K.](#)

US Sex Workers, meaning those who currently engage in prostitution and are the ones at risk of arrest have some suggestions. We recognize some sex workers are more empowered than others, some are trying to escape extreme poverty, some have substance abuse or mental health issues and some are the only ones bringing in money to their households, while some stay in abusive relationships under the threat of being outed. Others are well adjusted strong independent women who make several hundred dollars a hour which makes it possible for them to provide for their children without any government assistance and without being shackled up with a man.

Taxpayer money would be better spent opening drop in centers that would have social workers to refer people to services and nobody should be required to exit sex work to access services. Both the UN and the Obama administration stated "no person involved in prostitution will be denied public services". Lead gets funding from the US government which makes their services PUBLIC yet they are only offered with contingencies.

Anyone providing services to sex workers should send a letter to all US attorney general's, DOJ and local law enforcement stating they will have no part in working with people who are coerced under criminalization and or threat of arrest. Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion violates human rights and rights to due process. When sex workers are need of services, we should be able to access them without fear of persecution and without violation of our privacy. Organizations that support sex workers or provide services to our community should make a stand and refuse to be a part of the prison industrial complex and refuse to profit off the criminalization of marginalized communities.

Since LEAD works closely with the police and trafficking task force who targets consensual adult sex workers, maybe they are complicit with police violence and abuse to sex workers by the police It would be in the best interest of the public to create a system that would allow sex workers to report violence without fearing arrest or persecution. Public policy should support the health and safety of sex workers and we should propose legislation that would reduce harm to sex worker, like [Alaska's recent senate bill 21.](#)

To ensure the health and safety of sex workers, our right to equal protection under the law needs to be recognized. We should [publically endorse ESPLER v GASCON](#), the first constitutional challenge on prostitution law since the 1979 Coyote v Roberts case. Those concerned should support the organizing of Sex Workers and should be developing labor training for them. They should also recognize that SWOP

does not make up even 1% of US Sex Workers and they are not the mouthpiece or policy advisors for #whorenation . Only those who currently work as sex workers should be on committees and these are the people who should be developing policies and harm reduction programs. US Sex Worker Rights Organizations need to center worker organizing so workers can implement their own programs. Our government should agree that nobody should profit off the criminalization of Sex Workers. #WHORENATION supported [NH HB1614 in 2016](#) which was the first US bill calling to decriminalize consensual adult sex workers.

The services sex workers need are, subsidized housing, jobs that pay a living wage, a higher education without debt, child care, legal service for those fighting custody battles and prostitution charges. What sex workers don't need is another referral agency that only directs them to public shelters, where they are told to take jobs that do not even pay enough to cover the cost of housing. These fake services can be accessed by dialing 211.

Sex workers also do not need to be stigmatized by your language. The phrase “drug user and sex worker” should never be used in the same sentence because it promotes stigma and only about 5% of US sex workers have substance abuse issues.

The government’s need to continue to promote stigma, violence and criminalization and forced deferment programs has led #whorenation to take to crowdfunding to take legal action. [3 Sex Workers are currently suing A & E](#) over the “8 minutes show” over their fake deferment program where services never materialized.

I have spoken to dozens of US sex workers who have been arrested and even these who have had their record expunged can still find their information online tagged to their arrest. Dozens of other sex workers like myself who have endured many violent arrests and police who wave gun in their face state that they rather sit in jail, or bond out and fight their charges than agree to a forced deferment program that has no respect for them or their personal decision to do sex work.

In Solidarity with #Whorenation

Bella Robinson, Sex Worker, executive director of the Rhode Island Chapter of [Coyote](#).

Cristine Sardina, President of [Desiree Alliance](#)

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International Organizations

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