



Should Prostitution Be Illegal?



Proponents of legalizing prostitution claim it would reduce crime, improve public health, increase tax revenue, get prostitutes off the streets, and allow consenting adults to make their own choices. Above all, they contend that **prostitution is a victimless crime** – and, as such, arguably a crime at all. By contrast, opponents claim that legalizing prostitution would increase sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS, global human trafficking, rapes and murders. They contend that prostitution is inherently immoral, commercially exploitative, empowering of the criminal underworld, and a means of enforcement for women's subjection. Among all of the contentions, though, there lies a fact that few can argue with: in countries **where sex work is treated as criminal conduct**, sex workers cannot rely on either support or **protection from the police**. Accordingly, for many sex workers reporting crimes experienced during the course of their work means putting themselves at risk of criminalization. As a result, sex workers are frequently unable to seek redress for crimes committed against them, thereby granting **impunity to perpetrators** and indirectly **encouraging pimping** – with **violence** and **human trafficking** tagging along. By contrast, when they are not threatened by criminalization, sex workers can collaborate with law enforcement to identify perpetrators of violence and abuse, including human trafficking. On top of that, sex workers can be viewed as providers of **socially useful services** – in Denmark, for example, the disabled are encouraged to make monthly visits to prostitutes funded by taxpayers with a view to improving the quality of their life by decreasing sexual frustration.

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