

What is SESTA/FOSTA?

- *HR 1875*
- *Signed into law April 2018*
- Created an **expansive new civil liability** for those websites with vague and undefined language.
- Created a **new federal crime** of operating a platform hosting third-party content which “facilitate prostitution,” which could include communities collecting and distributing information about violence, connecting with clients for the ability to screen or workers directly sharing safety techniques.

• Since FOSTA/SESTA has passed, sex workers have reported •

Lowering Safety Standards

“I had to see clients who have assaulted me in the past and have definitely had to relax my screening policies.”

Economic Insecurity and Homelessness

“I became homeless after Craigslist shut down their personals section... I was unable to pay my rent for the first month.”

Impacts on Mental Health

In the week since the bill’s passage, TransLifeline, a suicide-prevention hotline, saw a 97% increase in calls.

Predatory Third Parties

“We’ve had multiple reports on the community support line and through our community networks of predatory and exploitive people coming out of the woodwork trying to reestablish old relationships or build new ones in order to take advantage of the vulnerable position that many sex workers are in.”

Increased street-based work

Outreach workers in San Francisco, Washington DC and Seattle have reported increases in 3-4 times the number of sex workers on the street.

Shifting Power Dynamics with Clients

“(Clients are) way more pushy, trying to get me to do things I’m uncomfortable with.”

What is the impact of SESTA/FOSTA?

Survivors Against SESTA

<http://www.survivorsagainstsesta.org>

In a survey on the impact of SESTA and the closure of Backpage.com:

25%

Reported being unable to support themselves or their dependents due to lost income

Respondents who stopped screening or lowered safety standards with clients

30%

75%

of respondents are supporting 1 - 3 dependents

(COYOTE-RI, coyoteri.org)

The harms of violence, exploitation and compromises to health are not inherent to trading sex. Vulnerabilities to all of them are increased with increased policing, criminalization and isolation of the sex trade. While sex workers are the experts in the sex trade, they were overwhelmingly ignored during the passage of SESTA/FOSTA. We urge policy makers to increase dialogue with sex workers to speak about their experience and inform the policies which directly impact their lives.

Organizations that opposed SESTA/FOSTA

Adult Performer Advocacy Committee • ACLU • Advocates for Youth • Advocating Opportunity • AIDS United • APLA Health • Best Practices Policy Project • Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100) • Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) • Chicago Taskforce on Violence Against Women & Girls • Collective Action for Safe Spaces • Department of Justice • Desiree Alliance • Equality California • Equality North Carolina • Family Equality Council • Free Speech Coalition • Freedom Network USA • Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance (GLAA) • Harm Reduction Coalition • HIPS • HIV Modernization Movement • Howard Brown Health Center • In Our Own Voices, Inc. • International Women's Health Coalition • Los Angeles LGBT Center • Lysistrata • MASWAN • National Black Justice Coalition • National Center for Lesbian Rights • National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs • National LGBTQ Task Force • New York Harm Reduction Educators • PFLAG National • Positive Women's Network -USA • Pride Action Tank • Rad Care • RAD Remedy • Reframe Health and Justice • Sex Law and Policy Center • Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center • Support Ho(s)e • SWOP -USA • SWOP Behind Bars • SWOP Orlando • The Anti Exploitation Project at the Legal Aid Society • Transgender Law Center • Treatment Action Group • Unity Fellowship Church • Washington Heights CORNER Project • Whitman-Walker Health • Woodhull Freedom Foundation

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