



Sex  
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## The Sex Workers Project of the Urban Justice Center Stop EARN IT, Again!

The Sex Workers Project of the Urban Justice Center strongly opposes the [Eliminating Abusive and Rampant Neglect of Interactive Technologies Act of 2022](#), also known as the EARN IT Act of 2022 (S.3538). Despite being premised on the critically important goal of combatting sexual exploitation of children online, this bill would in fact make protecting children from such abuse more challenging. EARN IT would diminish privacy online and hinder access to information and resources relied upon by communities both within the US and globally. Many experts and organizations warned of the dire risks presented by EARN IT when originally introduced in US Congress in 2020, these risks persist in the current bill.

Digital rights advocacy group and SWP partner organization, [Fight for the Future](#), deemed EARN IT “one of the worst pieces of internet legislation we have ever seen.” EARN IT has also been widely condemned by LGBTQ+ and human rights organizations including the [American Civil Liberties Union](#), [Amnesty International USA](#), [Hacking//Husting](#), [LGBT Tech](#), [Electronic Frontier Foundation](#), [Access Now](#), [Surveillance Technology Oversight Project](#), and [Human Rights Watch](#), among others. **This deeply flawed bill failed to pass in 2020 and must be stopped in its current form.**

Our lives increasingly play out on the internet, a trend hastened by the COVID-19 pandemic which saw many services and jobs moved online. By broadening the US government’s surveillance capabilities of websites, social media, and messaging applications, EARN IT would hinder safe and secure access to critical digital spaces. For many marginalized communities, this would exacerbate the harm already being inflicted upon them under the disastrous FOSTA-SESTA. Like EARN IT, FOSTA-SESTA purported to be about one thing – in that case, stopping trafficking in the sex trades – but was ineffective in realizing its alleged goal and instead has led to widespread harms against people who engage in consensual, transactional sex utilizing online platforms. Due to systemic discrimination, this is a population disproportionately made up of LGBTQ individuals, particularly transgender women of color.

Let us be clear. EARN IT is, at its heart, not about protecting children from harm but about enhancing censorship and undermining free speech online as protected by Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, also known as the First Amendment of the internet. By potentially restricting access to online community building, reproductive and sexual health education, and other online health and safety tools used by sex workers, LGBTQ youth, and other marginalized communities, **EARN IT undermines civil and human rights**. It would infringe on people’s first amendment right to free speech and fourth amendment right against unreasonable searches and seizures, and threaten human rights to bodily autonomy, health, and even life itself.

Here at the Sex Workers Project, we unequivocally support efforts to end the sexual abuse of children through sincere and evidence-informed methods that are human rights based. EARN IT, as it currently stands, is misguided, and will not accomplish these aims. Instead of EARN IT, we support these [critical](#)



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[recommendations to protect online spaces for all](#). This includes funding social services and community-based programs that work to prevent abuse in the first place, passing the soon to be reintroduced [SAFE SEX Workers Study Act](#) which would assess the consequences of FOSTA-SESTA on the health and safety of people engaged in transactional sex, and engaging sex workers and other affected communities in policy making that directly impacts them/us, their lives, and their well-being. **EARN IT is not the solution to ending child abuse; children deserve better, all survivors of sexual abuse deserve better.**

What you can do to help stop EARN IT:

- [Educate yourself](#) about the EARN IT Act.
- [Keep up to date](#) on the bill's progress through Congress.
- Let your Senators and Representatives in Congress know that you oppose EARN IT:
  - [Find Your Senator](#)
  - [Find Your Representative](#)
- Write letters to the editor, blog, and post on your social media. Make your opposition known!
- Email SWP Direct of Research and Advocacy, Mariah Grant, [MGrant@urbanjustice.org](mailto:MGrant@urbanjustice.org) to learn more about joining efforts to stop EARN IT.

This statement was written by SWP Research and Advocacy Intern, Lance Michael Nelson.