



Sex
Workers
Project

The Sex Workers Project of the Urban Justice Center

California Lawmakers Must Pass SB-357

California lawmakers must pass [SB-357](#) to repeal [penal code 653.22](#), a harmful law that hurts some of the state's most marginalized community members. This bill, introduced by Senator Scott Wiener (District 11), would repeal the state's archaic "loitering for the purpose of engaging in a prostitution offense." This law leads to police harassment and arrest of both sex workers and people profiled as sex workers. In practice, we see that Black cisgender and transgender women along with individuals within the LGBTQ community are disproportionately targeted and charged under this law, regardless of their involvement in sex work.

Under the current system, individuals involved in or suspected of involvement in the sex trades are endangered by this law, whether their involvement is through choice, economic necessity, or the range of abuses identified as human trafficking. The loitering law that must be repealed gives police undue power to surveil communities of color and saddle individuals with a criminal record. The experience of arrest is traumatic and living with a criminal record compounds systemic barriers to employment along with access to housing, education, and medical care. These barriers most often target BIPOC, LGBTQ, migrant, and low-income communities, denying them the enjoyment of their human rights.

With the laws as they are, these communities are under constant threat of harmful and potentially deadly police interactions. And while a few opponents of this effort to make these communities safer argue that the current laws must remain to address human trafficking, the exact opposite is true. In fact, groups in California at the forefront of anti-trafficking work, including [CAST \(Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking\)](#), are supporters of SB 357. Such discriminatory laws and arrests of people in the sex trades or people profiled as such, increases vulnerability to exploitation and trafficking, a reality agreed upon by local, national, and international human rights organizations, including Positive Women's Network – USA, St. James Infirmary, Sex Workers Outreach Project-LA, Trans Latin@ Coalition, Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach, Equality California, ACLU California, Freedom Network USA, the Sex Workers Project of the Urban Justice Center, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, the World Health Organization, and UNAIDS, to name just a few. Pass SB-357 and make California a safer state for all.

To learn more about SWP's support of SB-357 and the local groups leading the campaign in California, contact Mariah Grant, Director of Research and Advocacy: MGrant@urbanjustice.org.