



Prostitutes of Ottawa/Gatineau Work, Educate and Resist | Prostitu  es d'Ottawa/Gatineau travaillent,  duquent et r sistent

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 16, 2013

OTTAWA-AREA SEX WORKERS MARK INTERNATIONAL DAY TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST SEX WORKERS

SUPREME COURT RULING IMMINENT

On Tuesday December 17th 2013, Ottawa-area sex workers and their allies will stand in solidarity with sex workers around the world to call for an end to violence against sex workers. The annual *International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers* highlights the global epidemic of violence against sex workers. "On December 17," said **Fr d rique Chabot, Vice-Chair of Prostitutes of Ottawa-Gatineau Work, Educate and Resist (POWER)** "we bear witness to the ongoing violence against sex workers everywhere, celebrate those who dare to resist oppression and add our voices to many calling for an end to violence against sex workers."

This year's event takes place a few days before the Supreme Court of Canada's expected release of a final decision in the *Bedford* challenge to Canada's prostitution laws on December 20, 2013. **Emily Symons, Chair of POWER's Board of Directors** said "At each hearing of this case, judges have ruled that the prostitution laws violate sex workers' rights to liberty and security of person. Forcing sex workers choose between the risk of arrest and the risk of violence is unacceptable. We are optimistic that the Supreme Court of Canada will finally deliver justice to sex workers on Friday."

POWER, Families of Sisters in Spirit and the Native Youth Sexual Health Network will host a December 17th event to remember and honour sex workers who have experienced violence and to call for an end to systemic exclusion, discrimination and laws that render sex workers more vulnerable to violence. This event, entitled "*Decolonizing Sex Work Struggles: Ending Interpersonal and State Violence Against Folks in the Sex Trade,*" will highlight the voices and lived experiences of Indigenous women and two-spirit persons.

"Criminalization of sex work constructs sex workers as being unlawful and unworthy of being in society," noted **Colleen Cardinal of Families of Sisters in Spirit**. "Combined with the persistent view that Indigenous women are disposable human beings, this mentality causes great harm to Indigenous women and fosters violence against Indigenous sex workers. Racist and sexist stereotypes, stigmatizing laws, and ongoing colonial government policy are responsible for Indigenous women going missing and being murdered with impunity - NOT sex work. We stand in solidarity with our sisters in the sex industry."

Join us on December 17th to call for an end to violence against sex workers

Centretown Community Health Centre, 420 Cooper Street, Room 208, 6 p.m.

Panel discussion and film screening followed by a moment of silence.

Media are requested not to film or take photos of speakers or participants without their permission

- 30 -

For more information please contact

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