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PRESS RELEASE

SEX WORKERS AND ALLIES RALLY ON PARLIAMENT HILL AS THE SENATE COMMITTEE HEARINGS ON BILL C36 BEGIN

Ottawa, September 9th 2014 – This week, sex workers, sex worker rights organizations and allies of sex workers will be appearing as witnesses before the Senate’s Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee to speak to Bill C36: *The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*. That said, the vast majority of witnesses who will appear in front of the committee are in support of the criminalization of sex work.

“The way that they’ve been framing the debate has been unfair to the issue”, pointed out Naomi Sayers, a member of POWER. “The process has certainly not facilitated the meaningful consultation of those who will be primarily affected by any new prostitution law, those the Government purports they want to protect”.

We at POWER have grave concerns about the recently tabled Bill C-36 and about the lack of representation in the review process from sex workers and allied communities who are opposed to the approach of Bill C36. We strongly believe, as the evidence suggests, that criminalizing any aspect of prostitution – including the purchase and the selling of sex – will reproduce the same human rights abuses that were deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada in December 2013.

“It is troubling that the proposed provisions of Bill C-36, as well as the Bill’s preamble, construct us as victims in need of state rescue”, said Emily Symons, Chair of POWER’s board of directors. “In doing so, it further justifies a lack of dialogue and consultation about what would enhance the safety of sex workers”.

“The sex industry is diverse, as are sex workers. That said, it is noteworthy that we at POWER join all other sex worker-led organizations in the country in calling on the government to reject Bill C-36 in its entirety”, added Caroline Newcastle, member of POWER.

POWER calls on the Government of Canada to ensure legislation regulating sex work is evidence-based and prioritizes the health and well being of sex workers. In support of this call, we are asking our allies and supporters to come stand in solidarity with those most affected by the criminalization, stigmatization and marginalization of sex work. A short rally will be held on Parliament Hill at noon on

Tuesday, September 9th.

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For further information:

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