



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**SEX WORK COMMUNITY DISCOURAGED AS
FLAWED SEX WORK LEGISLATION BECOMES LAW**

Sex workers and their allies in Ottawa and across Canada reacted with sadness and disappointment today as the fundamentally flawed Bill C-36 received Royal Assent.

“Bill C-36 was truly a missed opportunity for this government to work with sex workers and their allies to develop an appropriate legislative response to *Bedford*,” said Emily Symons, Chair of the Board of Directors of POWER. “Instead, they chose to reproduce the harms of previous prostitution laws that we are confident will not stand up to a constitutional challenge.”

POWER reminded law makers that the Supreme Court of Canada made a clear, unanimous statement that the health, safety and lives of sex workers must be prioritized.

“It is deeply disappointing that sex worker voices were clearly not taken into account as part of the legislative review process,” added Caroline Newcastle, a current sex worker and a member of POWER.

Sex workers testified at the committee stage in both the House and the Senate, describing the huge impact this legislation would have on their health and personal security. Sex workers are the experts on the industry and know the importance of keeping themselves and each other safe in their work.

During witness testimonies, sex workers and their allies stressed to parliamentarians that the ironically named *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act* would only re-criminalize their work and drive the sex trade further underground, thereby putting them at greater risk of violence.

POWER and other sex worker organizations across Canada vow to continue advocating for the safety, rights and dignity of all engaged in sex work.

“The passage of this legislation will not be the end of our story.”

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