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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**December 5, 2014**

**2014 NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST  
WOMEN MARKED BY COMING INTO FORCE OF HARMFUL BILL C-36**

This year, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women will be the day Canada's new prostitution laws come into force, despite the relentless efforts of sex workers and their allies to alert the government to the link between criminalization regimes and prevalence of violence perpetrated against sex workers.

"December 6<sup>th</sup> will be especially sad for sex workers this year," said Emily Symons, Chair of POWER's Board of Directors. "The deeply flawed and misleadingly-named *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act* not only reintroduces laws deemed unconstitutional in a unanimous decision by the Supreme Court only one year ago – it actually makes them worse. These new measures will absolutely put sex workers in Canada at greater risk of violence, and that is totally unacceptable."

"We are deeply saddened that the government has chosen to bring in laws that will increase the vulnerability of all sex workers, particularly the most marginalized among them" added Chris Bruckert, a Criminology professor at the University of Ottawa and a member of POWER. "As we reflect on the pervasiveness of violence against women in Canada, we also recognize that honoring victims means continuing to fight for change. POWER will continue to advocate for the safety, rights and dignity of all women, including women in the sex trade."

As POWER marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Montreal Massacre and remembers the 14 young women who were killed because they were women, we also encourage those commemorating December 6<sup>th</sup> to reflect on how unnecessary criminalization and stigmatization puts women in the sex industry in harm's way. We encourage those attending events commemorating this sad anniversary to consider carrying a red umbrella, a long-standing symbol of solidarity with sex workers, to show their support for the safety and rights of sex workers.

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