

How Abolition gets Trafficked

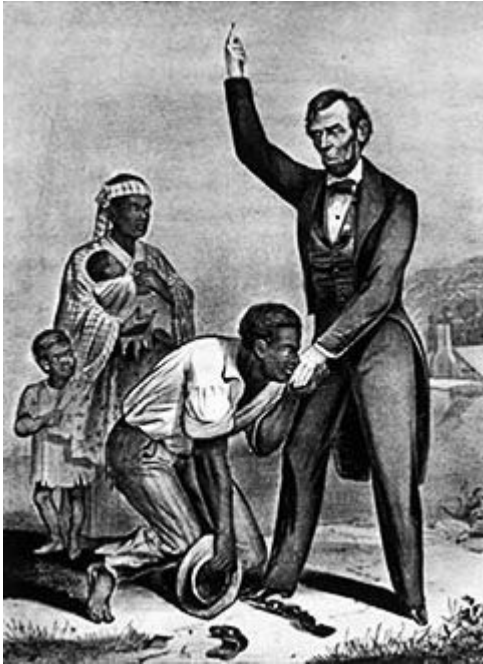
**Xenophobia,
Anti-Trafficking, and Sex
Work in the United States**

COYOTE-RI: Call Off Your Tired Old Ethics

- A group of sex workers, former sex workers, trafficking victims and allies advocating for the safety and protection for people involved in the sex industry
- Impacting litigation, policy statements, and voicing concerns in political arenas
- Education/outreach
- Evaluating/outputting research



Abolition in the U.S. Conscious



- Most people think of abolition of slavery
 - Whitewashing of movement
 - Idea that “Lincoln freed the slaves”
 - Not centering the narratives of enslaved
 - Lots of sex trafficking/sex work abolitionists compare it to ending enslavement of African Americans
 - False comparison
 - Continues to whitewash and classwash
 - Still ignore voices of those affected
 - In both cases actually about white social control
-

Chinese Exclusion

- Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882
- Page Act of 1885
- First major legislation limiting immigration in the U.S.
- Similar to “Muslim ban” today

Mann Act

- AKA the “White Slave Traffic Act”
- Moral panic about white women’s sexuality
- Makes anything related to the sex trade across state lines illegal
- Now more and more falls under this because of how supply chains have become more complex



History of anti-trafficking legislation in the US

- The passing of FOSTA (Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act 2018) rests on history of abolitionist attempts to pass legislation that restrict sex work
- Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000: provides protection for “victims” but few visas are granted
- Law outlines that globally no US funding can go to organizations that “promote, support, or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution
- Consequences of the anti-prostitution clause have included ending services for sex workers who are at-risk for HIV
- Brazil has refused to accept funding from UNAIDS, fear of TVPA ramifications

What is the anti-trafficking industrial complex?

- **Anti-trafficking industrial complex**, organizations who receive funding to combat trafficking based on faulty statistics and overstatements on sex trafficking prevalence.
- The **50 most prominent** anti-trafficking organizations in the United States share around **\$686 million**
- Three pillars from Milivojevic et al. (2012):
 - 1) Sex trafficking as a **moral crusade against women's sexuality**
 - 2) Anti-migrant narratives that portray **traffickers as non-white foreigners** intent on harming the West through “invasive” immigration
 - 3) Fear of **organized crime networks** prompted by media

Sex work and trafficking: understanding conflation

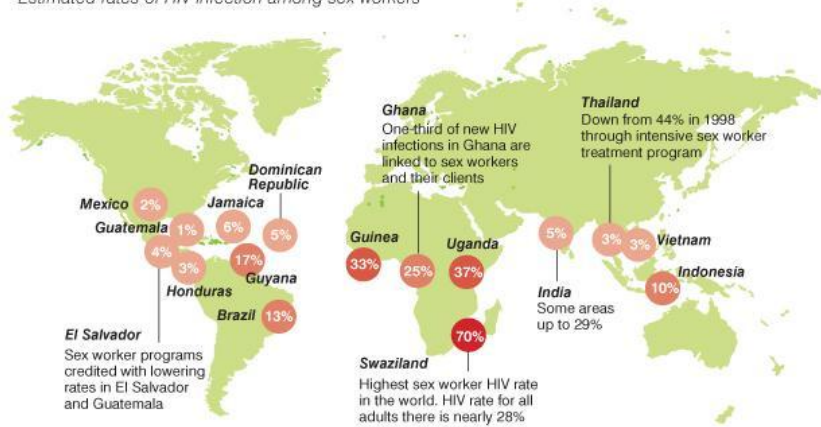
- Trafficked women racialized as trafficked as the migrant “other” who are stripped of their agency and must be saved
- Statistics 1) based in moralism and 2) anecdotal
- Workers’ demographics and reasons for pursuing sex work vary



US Policy on Sex Workers Jeopardizes Global AIDS Fight

Female sex workers are 13.5 times more likely to be living with HIV than other women. Prevention among all sex workers is key to stopping the AIDS epidemic for many countries, according to the World Health Organization. But a US anti-prostitution policy is causing global aid organizations to deny help to sex workers.

Estimated rates of HIV infection among sex workers

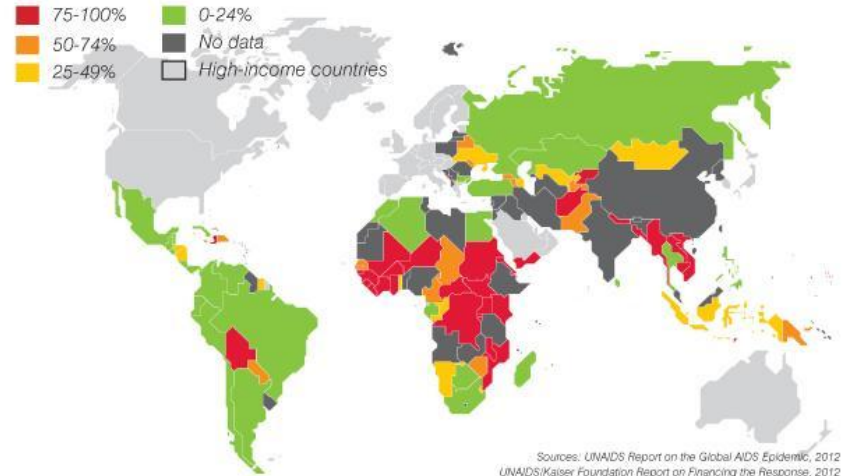


Source: UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, 2010 and 2012
Graphic: Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn

Who Depends Most on US Funds to Fight AIDS Epidemic?

The US provides nearly 60 percent of the global funds—\$7.6 billion—to fight the AIDS epidemic. In low- and moderate-income countries, cutting off this funding could have catastrophic consequences.

Percent share of HIV treatment coming from international assistance, 2007-2011



Sources: UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, 2012
UNAIDS/Kaiser Foundation Report on Financing the Response, 2012
Graphic: Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn

TVPA and FOSTA: the global effects

- U.S. policy requires all organizations that receive HIV/AIDS funding to explicitly oppose prostitution
- Brazil refuses \$40 million to fight AIDS because of fears of the anti-prostitution pledge
- 2015: anti-prostitution pledge is struck down as unconstitutional
 - First Amendment applies “beyond borders”
- Brazil and the World Cup: fear over trafficking at sporting events

Survey Results Overview

Results as of 5/26/2018
(rolling survey)

The national survey results cited in this presentation were gathered by COYOTE-RI, a sex worker advocacy group located in Rhode Island.

The purpose of this survey is to assess the immediate impact of congressional bills FOSTA and SESTA on the safety of people in the sex trade. This survey also examines the effect of the FBI seizure of Backpage.com on people in the sex trade.

This data was collected from 4/14 - 5/25 2018. The survey is rolling, but we're focusing on data from this timespan.

People surveyed: **262**

Freedom Network – Letter of Opposition:

FOSTA expands the criminalization of consensual commercial sex workers under the guise of addressing sex trafficking. This squanders limited federal resources and puts sex workers at risk of prosecution for the very strategies that keep them safe. Consensual commercial sex workers use harm reduction tools such as online forums to screen clients, avoid high risk activities, share resources, and protect each other.

Further criminalizing consensual commercial sex work, where there is no force, fraud or coercion, is no way to protect victims.

The Freedom Network is the LARGEST network of anti-trafficking agencies in the United States.



Freedom Network USA

SUMMARY OF IMPACT

DECREASES IN:

- Income for sex workers
- Available clients
- Screening practices
- Worker bargaining power



INCREASE IN:

- Risk taking by sex workers
- Contact from "pimps"
- Predators preying on desperation
- Demands for cheaper services

Sex Work as Sole Source of Income

Was Sex Work your only means of income before FOSTA passed?

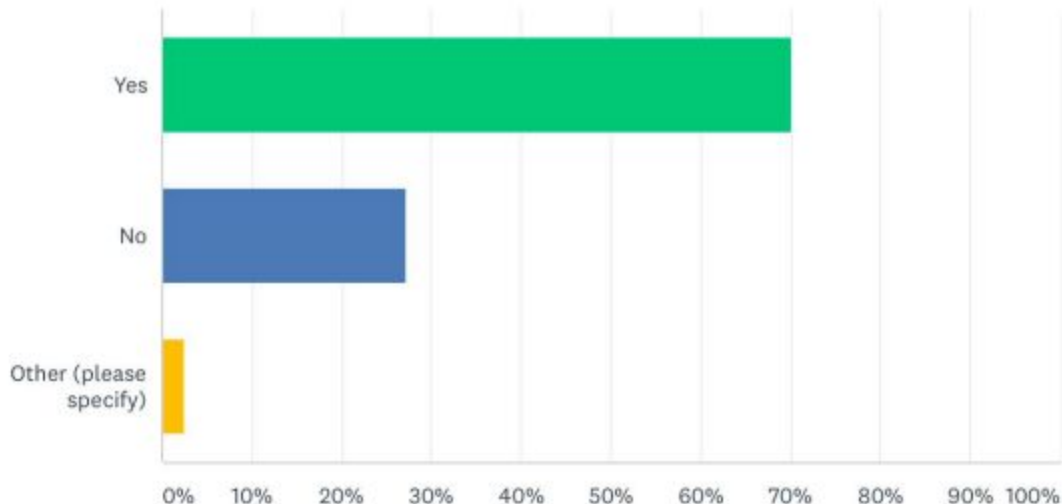
70% of participants (188 people) cited sex work as their sole form of income, before FOSTA passed.

Testimonials:

"Being disabled it provided enough money to cover bills that my disability checks could not"

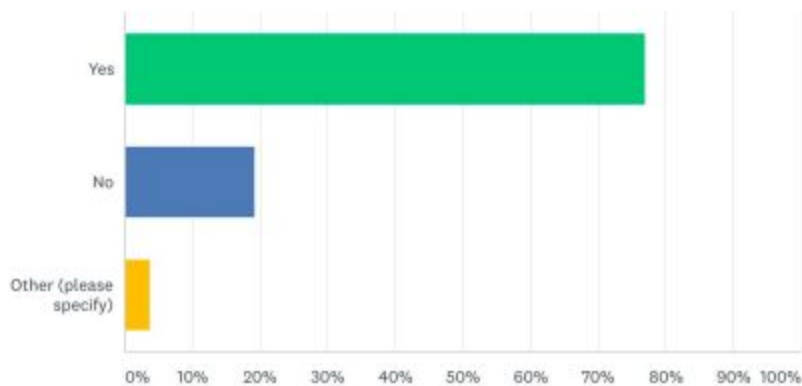
"I have other side hustles but sex work pays my rent and bills"

"I have always had mental and physical disabilities. Suicide is much more tempting now that my income and choice of profession is threatened."



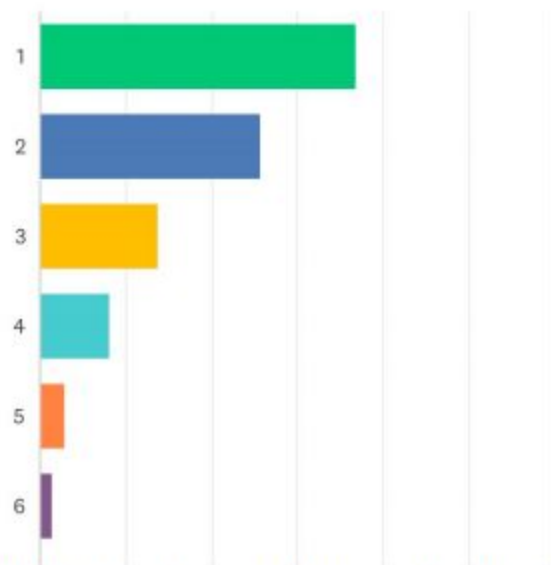
Sex Worker as a Breadwinner

Are you the sole provider for your family?



77% of participants (207 people) reported being The sole providers for their families.

How many family members are you supporting?



89% of participants (239 people) claimed to be supporting between 1-6 dependants.

* 11% (30 people) claimed no dependants.

60%

Percentage of sex workers who said they've had to take on less safe clients, to make ends meet.



65%

Percentage of sex workers who said someone had tried to threaten, exploit, or get freebies from them, recently.



**ONLY RIGHTS CAN
STOP THE WRONGS**

SEX WORKER TESTIMONIALS: INCREASE IN PREDATORS



DANGER

“Men calling themselves gorilla pimps have been trying to access all the girls since this has passed.”

“I have been met with **more folks trying to coerce me into work I don't want to do.**”

“I had a pimp contact me. That's unusual for me.”

“I felt forced to offer discounts to a client in order for him to refer friends.”

“Tried to negotiate my rates - **sniffing for desperation.**”

“Threatened by pimp to work for him.”



DANGER

28% drop in screening

Screening is a method sex workers use to verify the identity or reputation of a client, before agreeing to see them. One of the biggest safety benefits to working online is having the time and ability to screen new clients.



SEX WORKER TESTIMONIALS: CURRENT SCREENING PRACTICES

"It's much harder because **now it's face-to-face.**"

"FOSTA made it hard to find and screen suitable respectful clients."

"I try to, but have moved to "dating" websites that are in denial about sex work. **It's much, much harder to screen since so many sex worker sites went down.**"

"No longer have verifyhim and **am forced to take appointments with no notice or time to screen.**"

"Now it's **face-to-face and within arm's length** of someone and **locations that are not desirable for safety**"

"**I've taken on more new clients without screening.** My best clients and regulars are equally terrified to engage in our consensual time together."

"Not nearly as much.. **when ur desperate u make exceptions.**"

"My standards had to be lowered because I am worried about not having enough clients"

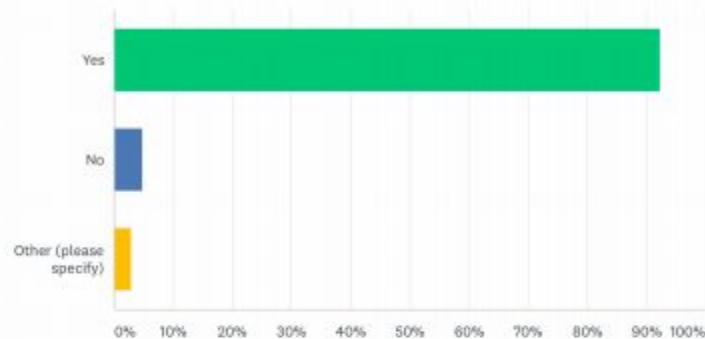
"I try to still screen, but sometimes I just can't because I truly need the money."

"**I can no longer screen without a safe platform.**"



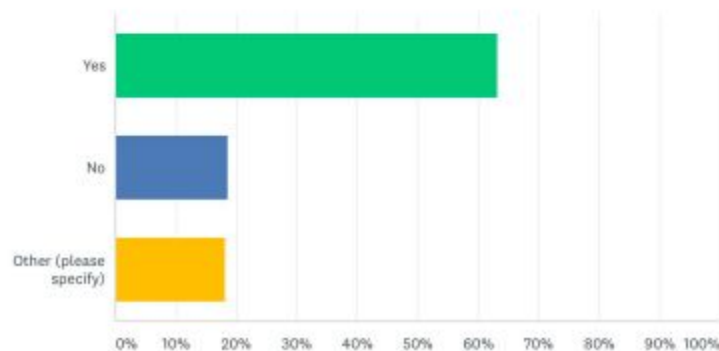
Did you screen your clients before FOSTA passed?

– 92% said YES



Did you still screen your clients after FOSTA passed?

– Only 63% said YES





BARCROFT MEDIA VIA GETTY IMAGES

British sex workers protest on July 4, 2018, against a proposal that would ban sex worker websites in the U.K., citing its similarities to FOSTA-SESTA in the United States.