

# The Women's Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Equality-seeking Women's Groups will continue to demand a change in the laws on prostitution**

(Vancouver) March 26<sup>th</sup> 2012 - The Women's Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution, a pan-Canadian coalition of equality-seeking women's groups received the Ontario Court of Appeal decision today regarding the prostitution laws with mixed feelings.

We are critical of the upholding of the communication provision with no differentiation between the women in prostitution and the men who are buying sexual services. As interveners we argued to the court that women in prostitution should not be criminalized. We know that the majority of women enter prostitution due to conditions of economic, social and racial inequality. As Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, President of the Native Women's Association of Canada stated in our presentation to the Court: "Aboriginal women are overrepresented and victimized in the sex industry, which testifies to the link between racism and misogyny in prostitution."

We are relieved that the court upheld the living off the avails provisions in relation to exploitation but are very troubled by the striking down of the bawdy house provisions. It gives men permission now to buy women in in-door prostitution.

The Court of Appeal of Ontario has clearly recognized what the Women's Coalition has been arguing: prostitution is inherently dangerous in virtually any circumstances. We concur with the Court, that a modern, comprehensive legislative scheme could reflect the values of dignity and equality.

Hilla Kerner for The Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centers: "We are calling on the Canadian parliament to follow Sweden and other countries by bringing forward legislation that in one hand prevent men from buying sexual services and on the other hand provide economic security to women to protect them from resorting to prostitution".

### **The members of the Women's Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution:**

CASAC/ACCCACS – Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres/ Association canadienne des centres contre le viol

NWAC – Native Women's Association of Canada

CAEFS – Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies

RQCALACS - Regroupement québécois des centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel

CLES – Concertation des luttes contre l'exploitation sexuelle

Vancouver Rape Relief & Women's Shelter

AOcVF - Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes

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