

If enacted by voters, Proposition K will force San Francisco to become a welcome mat for pimps and sexual predators. Prop. K is a terrible proposal that runs counter to our values as compassionate San Franciscans.

Prop. K is based on the harmful myth that prostitution is a victimless crime. Repeated studies document that often prostituted women and children have been victims of abuse, violence or molestation. Many have been coerced into participating in commercial sex. Prostitution arrests have unearthed evidence of human trafficking, which is nothing more than the modern-day enslavement of poor and immigrant women and girls.

If Prop. K passes, San Francisco's justice system will be forced to turn a blind eye to victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Prop. K effectively prohibits the investigation of human-trafficking crimes by the Police Department and the prosecution of these cases by the District Attorney's Office.

In 2004, we formed a citywide Human Trafficking Task Force. We secured grant funds to educate firefighters, paramedics, building inspectors and health officials on the signs and symptoms of human trafficking. Our task force has inspected more than 180 establishments and shut the doors of more than 30 brothels and illegal massage parlors. Inspectors have uncovered evidence of human trafficking such as chained doors, women trapped inside 24 hours a day and the absence of any massage tables in a "massage" parlor. Girls as young as 9 and 10 years old have been found. If Prop. K passes, these life-saving trainings and inspections will be hampered.

Prop. K will also effectively eliminate undercover law enforcement operations aimed at arresting johns, pimps and human traffickers. These operations have been highly successful in finding young runaways who have been targeted and abused by pimps and forced out on the street to work as prostitutes. These operations also have succeeded in identifying child molesters and bringing them to justice. Eliminating these operations is inhumane and irresponsible.

Prop. K ignores the experiences of communities that are being impacted by prostitution. Prostitution is a crime that can lead to other violent crimes. The neighborhoods populated by pimps, prostitutes and johns are home to families whose quality of life has been degraded by this illegal activity. Families report fighting, noise, used condoms in the streets, drug dealing and even shootings. We cannot allow entire swaths of our city to become dumping grounds for prostitution-related crimes.

Prop. K will also shut down programs and services that help trafficking victims escape violence and help women who want to leave prostitution rebuild their lives, such as the First Offender Prostitution Program. This award-winning national model has proven to reduce demand for prostitution and assisted many in transitioning out of the commercial sex trade.

Prop. K is a sham. We are not talking about “Pretty Woman.” Commercial sexual exploitation is dangerous, inhumane and a very real threat to public safety in San Francisco. We cannot afford to ignore violent-crime rings that profit from sexual exploitation and child molestation, or invite more neighborhood degradation into our city.

Prop. K is opposed by the San Francisco Labor Council, National Women’s Political Caucus San Francisco, Democratic Women’s Forum, Asian Pacific Democratic Club and Chinese American Democratic Club, just to name a few. It’s bad for victims, bad for public safety and bad for The City. That is why we oppose it. Don’t turn your back on victims of exploitation. Stand up for human rights and safe neighborhoods. Join us in rejecting Prop. K.

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