

My concerns with the online safety bill

It concerns me that a bill which could have such a serious effect on SWs' ability to safely make a living is in anyway ambiguous. Which this piece of legislation is, without a doubt. As it stands, this bill will put online SWs at the mercy of the decisions of the E – Safety Commissioner i.e. one anonymous person who has a lifetime of their own judgements and biases will have the authority to decide if a SW's content is appropriate or not. And, in turn, whether they can make money.

As a brothel-based SW and someone who has a civilian job, my ability to make an income is far less at risk than many other SWs and sex educators who rely heavily on these online platforms to post their content/services and earn an income. So I am very privileged compared to many. However, many of us (SWs and non-SWs) know that this lack of clarity within the bill will incentivise many platforms to employ a form of algorithmic monitoring/scraping to ensure that they are complying with what is outlined in the bill. And because of his lack of clarity on how to comply (due to ambiguous language) at this point it is highly unlikely these algorithms will be able to detect context or any kind of nuance in the content. That's just not good enough.

If we are to comply with what is outlined in this bill then we (not just SWs) deserve, at the very least a clearly written and transparent piece of legislation that allows us to know, with absolute certainty, whether we are breaching the rules outlined in the bill and if we do breach them how we can avoid the complete loss of content, conversations and income.

What concerns me the most if this bill is not amended and more platforms are indeed pushed to use algorithmic policing on their sites with no concern for context or nuance is that we will see even more frequent and sudden removals of any kind of sexual content. And it won't just be us SWs Who witness this; the general public and consumers will witness this also, and as a result there will be the hugely harmful potential to further stigmatise SWs and the work we do.

The more society grows used to seeing any kind of sexual content removed, the louder the message becomes that the work we do and the services we provide is 'wrong' and that we shouldn't be doing it.

I, personally, hate to imagine this version of society because all I see is a worsening of the conditions SWs already live under; more violence, more public shaming and more lost income. Loss of income, as we saw in the case SESTA/FOSTA, could have truly dire effects on many SWs' mental health (as it would be for anyone, in any profession) and in some cases could lead to a rise and suicide rates amongst SWs.

I will mention again, that I am a SW with a civilian job. I hope you can see how this distinguishes me from many SWs. I have the privilege of having an alternative form of income and even within my SW I do not rely on the internet to do my work. While holding this privilege, however, I see how dangerous this bill could be if it is not amended and the voices of SWs are not taken into account. My community is incredibly important to me and I do not want to see us further endangered by not being able to properly screen clients or not

being able to stay connected to friends, amongst many other barriers we may face with this bill.

If this bill is passed as it is, the ramifications will not be felt in an isolated bubble, the effects will echo for many years and shape society into a place where a person's life has less worth because their work is associated with sex. That is not a society I wish to live in.

Sincerely

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