

I am a former stripper who worked in the industry for fifteen years. Outside of my immediate friendships made while working, I now have a global network of fellow sex industry workers and allies. As a demographic of people who are marginalised by the broader community, governments, and targeted by people who wish us harm, sex worker/industry networks are extremely valuable in providing support both financially and emotionally. The internet offers us the opportunity to be visible, both to the broader community and to customers, it also provides avenues with which to keep ourselves safe.

There is a lot of activism, fund raising and educating that happens within the sex industry networks. The internet is where the majority of this happens. With the passing of FOSTA/SESTA in the USA in March 2018, the sex industry has already seen a decrease in online safety with pages where industry workers would exchange life-saving information such as warning each other about dangerous clients. Since FOSTA/SESTA there has been an increase in missing and murdered sex workers in the USA.

Censorship levels have not been reviewed in decades and are now outdated. Not only this, but to apply television censorship guidelines to the internet is a suppression in itself. People who are using the internet are personally responsible for what subject matter they choose to expose themselves to. In the case of minors, it should be the parents' responsibility to censor the materials that their child is able to access via phone or computer. Adult interest should not be censored unless it is criminal, ie. child pornography, animal abuse.

The use of algorithm bots has already taken a toll on many of us on various platforms. I have had many friends who's accounts have been taken down for objectionable content, while the same content posted by a user who is not involved in the sex industry eg. Influencers, pole dancers who do not work in clubs, models, artists.

To purport that one individual or even a governing body should or could be responsible for such a task is unrealistic and irresponsible. To hold every user of the internet to a puritan leaning moral standard that has not been reviewed in decades, is the opposite of progressive in that it is oppressive.

For anyone, individual or governing body, to have access to personal sexual material that have been used in private communications with other consenting adults is a violation. It is as much of a violation as if the material had been extracted and used without consent by a civilian third party. It is unnecessary and violating. I suggest that there are more effective ways to target online safety that do not involve the violation of individual's privacy or the rights of sex industry workers to be protected. The repercussions of this bill on the safety of my community will be violent and long lasting. Lives have already been lost.

I would suggest that in further discussion of this bill, actual sex workers are consulted in order for the government to gain a full level of understanding of the violent consequences for our community. Largely made of women, many with children of their own. To these children, the value of their parent/guardian, is not diminished by the work their parent does to sustain them.

Please help to keep our community safe.