



# New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Working for a World Without Violence.

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## **NYSCASA Statement in Support of the “Stop Violence in the Sex Trades Act” (A849/S3075)**

While the New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NYSCASA) has supported efforts to decriminalize sex work, also known as “Decrim,” for many years, NYSCASA has officially added our support of the “Stop Violence in the Sex Trades Act” (A849/S3075) to our public policy priorities.

Our vision for addressing violence in the sex trades is comprehensive and rooted in a harm reduction framework. We acknowledge that: sex work can involve active consent, choice, and bodily autonomy; sex work can function as “survival income”; and participation in the sex trades can also be imposed on someone by force, fraud, or coercion (i.e. human trafficking). We believe that victims and survivors of human trafficking deserve full protections as victims/survivors of sexual violence. Further, we believe that sex workers deserve full labor protections as workers. We acknowledge that human trafficking survivors and sex workers who experience sexual violence in the workplace must be able to access the resources they need to seek justice, move along their path of recovery, and live a life of true wellbeing. Uplifting the voices and concerns of a wide range of survivors of sexual violence is an integral part of NYSCASA’s mission.

Our values emphasize that we cannot create harm to end harm and that we oppose measures that will criminalize vulnerable communities. “End Demand” practices (including models known as the “Nordic Model” or “Equality Model”) harm all people in the sex trades, including survivors of trafficking. This model relies upon criminalization and shaming of consensual adult behavior, conflating the experiences of trafficking survivors/victims with the experiences of people who engage in consensual sex work. This model promotes the idea that criminalizing clients and third-party individuals would reduce harm in the sex trade, which causes harm by increasing the power that buyers have over people in the sex trades and makes the person trading sex more likely to take on higher-risk situations or avoid reporting abuse out of fear of being arrested.

Additionally, this model puts people in increased contact with law enforcement by increasing policing and criminalization of the sex trade, which increases the risk of harm and/or incarceration for trafficking survivors and sex workers alike and disproportionately impacts Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), immigrant, and LGBTQ+ communities. This model also increases shame, stigma, and misinformation about consensual sex work by denying the agency of all people in the sex trades, invalidating the autonomy of people in the sex trades, and suggesting that all people in the sex trades are being coerced. [This model has proven to be devastating.](#)

[increasing the risk of violence against all people who participate in the sex trades, including trafficking survivors.](#)

NYSCASA holds harm reduction as a core value of our organization. Since it is [well established](#) that the “End Demand” strategy relies on creating harm to end harm, NYSCASA has decided not to support the “Sex Trade Survivors Justice and Equality Act” bill (A7069/S6040A). Instead, we support the “Stop Violence in the Sex Trades Act” (A849/S3075), which would repeal statutes that criminalize consensual sexual behavior between adults while upholding laws relating to exploitation of minors, coercion in the sex trades, and trafficking, and to provide criminal record relief for people convicted of crimes repealed under the bill. [Decriminalizing sex work is evidence-based](#) and informed by a broad range of voices, including trafficking survivors and sex workers who have survived violence.

We thank the sponsors of this bill, State Senator Julia Salazar and Assemblymember Richard Gottfried for their bold leadership and efforts towards this piece of legislation. We also thank legal and advocacy groups, including Decriminalize Sex Work (DSW), for their relentless support of sex workers and survivors of human trafficking and sexual violence.