

BRIEF SUBMISSION TO THE STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE

March 20, 2023.

TOPIC: Human Sex Trafficking in Canada; its impact and how to stop it.

Submitted by:

Cathy Peters

BC anti-human trafficking educator, speaker, advocate

Be Amazing Campaign to Stop Sexual Exploitation

Beamazingcampaign.org

TITLE: *The importance of protecting women, children and the vulnerable in Canada from sexual exploitation (prostitution, trafficking, pornography) so they can reach their full potential and experience genuine gender equality in Canada, where historically, human rights have been a cornerstone of the country's development.*

Note: Please review my Brief submitted to the Federal Justice Committee on PCEPA Review, submitted February 13, 2022. It has valuable data, research, and updates on the importance of maintaining the current Federal Law, "The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act".

Introduction: My name is Cathy Peters¹, and as an educator and private citizen I have been raising awareness about human sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, and child sex trafficking to Canadians for the past 10 years. I am a former inner city high school teacher from the Lower Mainland in British Columbia, where I became concerned about this issue over 40 years ago. To date I have made over 600 presentations to over 20,000 people (not including online presence) to politicians, police, and the public. I have written my book "Child Sex Trafficking in Canada and How to Stop It" as an overview of the issue. It is a compilation of what I have learned from survivors, families, parents, law enforcement, health providers, frontline stakeholders, Indigenous leaders, educators, and community leaders. Hundreds of survivors have shared with me their stories of sexual trauma. This book exposes the landscape of sexual exploitation in Canada and what needs to be done to stop it.

My lens of focus and concern: Dr. Ingeborg Kraus², global expert on psychotraumatology from Germany who works with women and girls in the sex industry makes this statement, "Sexual violence is the deepest form of violence a human being can experience". A survivor stated to me, "Sexuality is sacred and we must value ours and others sexuality".

Trends: There are 5 rapidly growing and disturbing TRENDS I am observing from my advocacy work that are contributing to the increasing lack of equality for women and girls in Canada, creating deep, sustaining HARM and TRAUMA to women and girls, and predisposing them to sexual exploitation, sexual violence, prostitution, and trafficking:

1. **The increasing loss of safe spaces for women and girls:** Men who are identifying as women are aggressively and vociferously insisting on their rights to participate in any woman's activity, including access to washrooms, changerooms, gym spaces, transition houses, aesthetic services, on sports teams, in prisons- any place/location that women occupy. This has become a horrifying and very frightening development for all women, girls, and mothers that I speak with. They feel their womanhood and motherhood is threatened and a woman's existence is becoming undermined if not moot. The harm this is causing particularly to a young girl's development is incalculable.

2. **Pornography:** Pornography is the fuel for prostitution, human trafficking, domestic violence, rape, and harm towards women and girls. According to Dr. Gail Dines³, one of the leading anti-porn scholars in the world, pornography is filmed prostitution and a predatory industry. It is a multi-billion dollar industry that is reshaping our world as the major form of sex education and it is sold as a commercial product. The message? Women exist for sexual use and abuse. She states that porn is so omnipresent in today's culture that it is a public health concern that cannot be ignored. She notes that porn online is unregulated whereas tobacco and alcohol are regulated, so why does porn get a pass? Porn is the public health crisis of the digital age. At the very least there is the need for strict age and consent verification so youth and children cannot access pornography.
3. **Childhood sexual assault and incest:** There are rapidly growing trends of sexual exploitation that are not being addressed, including the flagrant sexualization of children. Children who are sexualized are vulnerable, live with PTSD (Complex Trauma Stress Disorder)- Source- Dr. Nadine Burke⁴, pediatrician on ACEs⁵ (Adverse Childhood Experiences), Dr. Vincent Felitti⁶ (he observes childhood trauma is associated with chronic diseases during adulthood and child trafficking will worsen the economic burden on civil governance). The education system lacks any Codes of Conduct in schools for example. Research: "Child Sexual Abuse by K-12 School Personnel in Canada: Executive Summary" is the most comprehensive study of child sexual abuse by school personnel ever done in Canada between 1997 and 2017. Canadian Centre for Child Protection. The published study is in the Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, published online June 12, 2018. [doi.org](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10801-018-9999-9). A shocking statistic is that 86% of the perpetrators are certified teachers. "Tip of the iceberg" report finds 252 school personnel accused of sexual offences", the Canadian Press, CTV News, November 2, 2022. I am hearing an increasing number of experiences of incest from survivors; father-daughter abuse and sibling abuse. Marginalized communities are most affected by incest⁷.
4. **Lack of digital safety training and lack of social media platform accountability:** The spread of child sexual abuse material or child pornography exploded with the rise of the internet, and child sex trafficking is increasing with exposure to a greater market online. The problem is complex and growing. There needs to be legislation and regulation (the USA has the Earn It Act) to hold social media platforms accountable. Canada (and the USA) need to build a safe internet so youth can connect, learn, love and thrive⁸ and youth need critical thinking skills, good empathy and ethics social media education so they can become responsible digital citizens⁹.
5. **Lack of positive parenting supports:** Psychologist Cordelia Anderson¹⁰, founder of Sensibilities Prevention Services who started one of the first child sexual abuse prevention programs in the USA states, "*Grooming is the tactic of overcoming the survivor's defenses by slowly desensitizing his or her natural reaction to abusive behaviours. Key protective factor: parents.*" In all my presentations parents voice that they are feeling undermined and overwhelmed by the onslaught of sexual exploitative material available online and offline. Parents are the most important influencers in a child's life and their role needs to be supported, not alienated. Cybertip.ca, for example, has an excellent website with tools and resources for parents. Cybertip.ca assisted and supported mother Carol Todd in getting resolution and justice for her daughter in the internationally renowned Amanda Todd sextortion case (British Columbia)¹¹. Dr. Jennisue Jessen¹² is a survivor and member of the USA Advisory Council on Human trafficking, established in 2015. In Dr. Jessen's powerful presentations, she describes being trafficked by her grandfather from age four to seventeen. She states, "*We need men who are courageous in their masculinity. We need men who are co-equal, co-leaders to partner within our families. We need to teach men and boys*

their inherent worth and value. We need good strong Dads raising their children to be good strong people.”

The 5 Trends mentioned above will undermine any policies and laws put forward by the Federal Government and need to be addressed to move forward to achieve true gender equality and equal status for biological women and girls.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS:

for the Federal Government to stop sexual exploitation and human sex trafficking in Canada:

1. To stop human trafficking the **root cause of HARM needs to be addressed**. This is a gendered issue; men and boys are the perpetrators and need to be taught the importance of healthy relationships to discourage the demand. Source- Valiant Richey¹³ from the OSCE (Organization for the Security and Cooperation of Europe) and the Palermo Protocol¹⁴ Article 9 Section 5¹⁵.
2. **Enforcement**- Police officers need funding and training. **Education**- There needs to be a National public awareness program re PCEPA and sexual exploitation. The Judicial system needs training on this crime.
3. **Advertising** sexual services is a criminal offense and needs to be monitored by law enforcement.
4. There needs to be **collaboration** among all police agencies across Canada because victims are trafficked from city to city.
5. **City Problems**- Cities need to have stricter laws and licensing controls for massage parlours, nail spas and brothels. There need to be regular inspections. Gang problems, gang recruitment and crime is spiking in the urban centers. In turn human trafficking is spiking and the ages for targeted victims is getting younger and younger¹⁶.
6. There needs to be a **deterrent** for buyers through enforcement and education. ‘John Schools’ work¹⁷.
7. Work closely with **Indigenous** groups. Indigenous women have no voice. They want access to **rape kits and forensic nurses**. New migrants are vulnerable. Traffickers prey on **vulnerability**.
8. Prioritize the prevention and rescue of **underage youth**- online and in person. Unregulated technology, easy access to pornography and lack of digital safety training has exacerbated the problem so that youth are vulnerable to be lured, groomed, and trafficked¹⁸.
9. **School Liaison officer programs** are best deterrent in schools. Officers in schools deter crime, gang recruitment and human trafficking. Mentorship programs for at risk youth with trauma-trained police officers work.
10. Best National programs: **Canadian Center for the Protection of Children** (C3P Manitoba- they run Project Arachnid), **Canadian Center to End Human Trafficking** (CCTEHT- Ottawa) and the new **National Human Trafficking Education Center** (NHTEC- Manitoba with the Joy Smith Foundation). These important and effective agencies need to be supported and advertised as part of a National Public Awareness campaign.

Prostitution and sexual exploitation is always dangerous and damaging to women. Gender equality will remain unattainable as long as men can buy, sell, and exploit women and children. Legalization or full decriminalization (repeal of PCEPA) will lead to massive expansion of the sex industry. Harm reduction is harm production. (Examples: Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nevada and previously Rhode Island who later reversed their laws¹⁹).

Quotes:

“Too often efforts are only focused on victim identification or the prosecution of traffickers. If we don’t address demand (the sex buyers) the problem will never, never stop.”

-Valiant Richey, special Advisor to the OSCE, Austria

“There is not a single one of the established political parties that has set out a human rights-based solution to the hell on earth that is the German prostitution system.”

-Dr. Ingeborg Kraus, Ph.D. Psychology, internationally renowned psychotraumatologist, Germany

“Without men’s demand for prostitute women, there would be no such women.”

Sven-Axel Mansson, Sweden

Bibliography:

1. Cathy Peters- biography- Cathy is a retired inner city high school from the Lower Mainland, raising awareness about sexual exploitation for the past 10 years. She has received 14 Challenge Coins from Kitimat, North Vancouver, Coquitlam, Richmond, Surrey, and Chilliwack RCMP detachments, RCMP HQ Counter Exploitation Unit, New Westminster Police Department after presenting at the Justice Institute, Federal Corrections, Delta, Abbotsford, and the Vancouver Police departments. She has been introduced in the BC Legislature and asked to three Federal Justice committees on human trafficking. She has been a speaker to MMIWG gatherings, numerous Indigenous groups, and had a booth at the July 2022 Assembly of First Nations Convention meeting hundreds of Indigenous leaders. She was nominated for an Order of BC, the Carole Matusicky Distinguished Service to Families award, presented at the Global Summit Connecting to Protect: *Addressing the Harms of Porn on Youth from a Public Health Perspective* (University of Calgary) and presented at the first RCMP Human Trafficking webinar for law enforcement across Canada. She received a Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Medal for her anti human trafficking advocacy work.
2. Dr. Ingeborg Kraus. Trauma-and-prostitution-eu/
“The Nordic Model of Prostitution: A change in perspective in protection of human dignity”, by Dr. Ingeborg Krause, July 2, 2021. TRAUMA AND PROSTITUTION-Scientists for a World Without Prostitution.
3. Dr. Gail Dines book- *Pornland: How Porn has Hijacked Our Sexuality*. TED Talk “Growing up in a Pornified Culture”.
4. “How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime”, Dr. Nadine Burke TED Talk, ACEs and childhood trauma. Ted.com
5. “What are ACEs? And how do they relate to Toxic Stress?” ACEs: Center on the Developing child, Harvard University. Developingchild.harvard.edu
6. “Childhood Trauma Linked to Chronic Diseases in Adulthood”, by Vincent J. Felitti, Cancer InCytes, Volume 2, Issue 1, 2013. Cancerincytes.org
7. incestaware.org
8. National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE)- article “Building a Safe Internet”- full of strategies, resources, research on tools to build a safe internet. This is a timely resource.
9. Jesse Miller is trainer with Safer Schools Together: Digital Threat Assessment Training saferschoolstogether.com
10. “A Public Health Approach to Pornography” by Ms. Cordelia Anderson, April 17, 2017. vimeo.com
11. Amanda Todd Legacy Society. Videos and documentaries are on this website explaining the case, in hopes of educating parents, youth and children about sextortion. amandatoddlegacy.org
12. Dr. Jennisue Jessen, member of the U.S. Advisory council on Human Trafficking. “Human Trafficking in Plain Sight: One in Five Children at Risk” by Pam Bales, North by Colorado Media Group, Jun/Jul 2022 Edition. This article is an introduction to Dr. Jessen and her work in counter-trafficking. compass31.com
13. Valiant Richey is the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking Human Beings. He represents the OSCE at the political level on anti-trafficking issues and assists the 57 OSCE participating states in the development and implementation of anti-trafficking strategies and initiatives. He sponsored the timely report “*Discouraging the demand that fosters trafficking for sexual exploitation*”, OSCE, June 10, 2021. This paper puts a spotlight on the role of demand in encouraging exploitation and causing harm to victims. The primary aim of the paper is to support and enhance the implementation of state-led responses to demand.

14. Palermo Protocol, United Nations Human Rights, "Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children" supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime, November 15, 2000 by General Assembly Resolution 55/25. ohchr.org
15. Article 9, section 5 reads: "States Parties shall adopt or strengthen legislative or other measures, such as educational, social or cultural measures, including through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, **to discourage the demand** that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that leads to trafficking.
16. Public Safety Canada on Human Trafficking. Joy Smith Foundation, joysmithfoundation.com. "Sex Industry Slavery: Protecting Canada's Youth", by Dr. Robert Christmas, 2020, University of Toronto Press. ISBN 978-1-4875-2485-2. A police officer's perspective into Canada's sex industry.
17. Demand.org and the work of Dr. Michael Shively with NCOSE- National Center on Sexual Exploitation, Washington, DC.
18. Children of the Street (PLEA) in BC originally founded by Order of Canada recipient Diane Sowden. Sexual Exploitation Education (SEE) by Tiana Sharifi.
19. "Decriminalized Prostitution: Impunity for Violence and Exploitation" by Dr. Donna Hughes, one of the founders of the academic study of human trafficking. In 2016 she founded the international academic journal "Dignity: A Journal of Sexual Exploitation and Violence." She is a professor and serves as the Director of Graduate Studies in the Gender and Women's Studies Program at the University of Rhode Island. Academia.edu