

BRITISH COLUMBIA HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

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THE RIGHTS OF SEX WORKERS

Humanist Manifesto II: “In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be recognized. While we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults. The many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered “evil.” Without countenancing mindless permissiveness or unbridled promiscuity, a civilized society should be a tolerant one. Short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise, individuals should be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their lifestyles as they desire. We wish to cultivate the development of a responsible attitude toward sexuality, in which humans are not exploited as sexual objects, and in which intimacy, sensitivity, respect, and honesty in interpersonal relations are encouraged.”

“We want laws to be refocused on making sex worker’s lives safer and improving the relationship they have with the police while addressing the very real issue of exploitation. We want governments to make sure no one is coerced to sell sex, or is unable to leave sex work if they choose to,” Tawanda Mutasah, Amnesty International’s Senior Director for Law and Policy on the publication of the Amnesty International Policy on State Obligations to Respect, Protect and Fulfil the Human Rights of Sex Workers in 2016.¹

The British Columbia Humanist Association supports:

- the rights of sex workers to be free from human rights abuses including rape, violence, extortion and discrimination;
- decriminalization of consensual sex work for those over the age of 18; and
- prohibitions on exploitation and trafficking in commercial sex (including children).

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol30/4062/2016/en/>