

**Sexual Exploitation Industry
Makes Both Victims and Victimiziers**

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Chairman Smith and honorable members of the Kansas Senate Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee. I am submitting my written testimony in support of the Kansas Community Defense Act, SB 147.

I am a psychotherapist and the director of the Sexual Trauma and Psychopathology Program at the University of Pennsylvania. For more than 27 years, everyday, all day I have treated rapists, and rape victims, pedophiles and incest survivors, prostitutes, strippers, porn models and sex addicts. These patients will often tell their therapists things they will not tell others including the police.

I would like to talk to you about what I have learned from my professional experience and what research in the area conducted by me and by others has revealed. Research and my professional experience indicate that the sexual exploitation industry is connected to crimes such as rape and prostitution, psychiatric problems such as substance abuse, and post traumatic stress, relationship problems such as divorce and infidelity, and community problems that reduce the quality of life. Let me give you an unvarnished look into the real and hidden aspects of this industry.

The sex industry makes people both victims and victimizers, all at the same time, all in the same person. The strippers and the ones who watch the strippers are both victims and victimizers. And the community pays the price for this.

Let's start with the strippers. Research indicates and my clinical experience supports that most women who work in the sex industry have been sexually abused in their childhoods. Between 60-80% have suffered this childhood devastation. These are women who when they were little girls would get into their beds each night, roll themselves into a fetal position and every night he would come in and peel her open. The physical invasion and visual invasion of their bodies becomes the norm and it damages them psychologically giving them an unhealthy view of sexuality. Often as adults, they re-enact their childhood trauma by working in the sex industry. The men, who are now customers, physically and visually invade the adult women's bodies, reenacting the role of the perpetrator. This is an industry that is sexual abuse for money. Having been raped as a child, these women work in the sex industry because it feels like home.

It is no surprise then that research indicates that 60% of strippers are depressed, 40% are substance abusers usually cocaine and alcohol, 55% have Borderline Personality Disorder, a very serious psychiatric disorder which includes harming yourself in a number of ways, and 35% have Multiple Personality Disorder, an even more serious psychiatric disorder in which you dissociate and leave your body psychologically. Strippers are usually high, drunk or dissociated while they are stripping. You can't do this job and stay in your body. It hurts too much. I have worked with strippers who were alcoholics, who told their bosses at the strip club that they were going to therapy and had joined AA to deal with their alcoholism, who were told by their bosses that they were still required to drink alcohol on the job.

Strippers will sometimes say that they go into stripping because it empowers them. Do you know how powerless you must feel and low in self-esteem must be in order for selling your body to make you feel better? Sometimes strippers say that they do it to make money. Or that they spend the money for good causes like tuition for their kids. This psychological rationalization doesn't seem to persuade us in any other areas. We don't say that if cocaine dealers are spending their money on kid's tuition then selling cocaine is ok. Strippers

will sometimes say that they are stripping so that they can get money for college for themselves. Strip clubs try to hire college students including advertising for them in college newspapers. I have treated college students who have worked as strippers and gone on to become prostitutes and become HIV +. My clinical experience and that of others indicate that strippers are more likely to go on to be prostitutes, not college students. Very, very rarely does a stripper go back to college and then on to a career.

Once they have become strippers, what they experience is horrendous. There is subtle and not so subtle pressure to act in ways that are self-harming. Women who become strippers feel the pressure to get fake breasts despite the fact that research indicates that women who get fake breasts are 3-4 times as likely to commit suicide, can't ever get a clear mammogram again, will have to have them surgically replaced, often multiple times in their life and are at risk for digestive disorders as are their babies.

The treatment strippers receive from the customers in strip clubs is toxic and assaultive. Research indicates that 91% of strippers have been verbally abused, 52% have been called cunt, 61% called whore, 85% called bitch, 88% have had their arm grabbed, 73% have had breast grabbed, 91% have had their buttocks grabbed, 27% have had their hair pulled, 58% have been pinched, 24% have been slapped, 36% have been bitten, 76% have had customers flick cigarettes, ice, coins at them, 70% have had customers follow them home and 42% have been stalked by customers. If men would do this to women in public, what would they do to women in private?

Least you think that only the customers are involved in this abuse, the research indicates that the management and staff also abuse the strippers. Research indicates that 85% of strippers have been verbally or physically abused by the management and staff. This includes 21% who have been called cunt, 18% who have been called slut, 33% who have been called bitch, 12% who have been pinched and 12% who have been slapped by management and staff.

It is not surprising that strippers work with bodyguards. They work with bodyguards because this activity produces violence. The strippers send messages to men about how women are to be treated, fill the men with alcohol, and then sic these men on their sisters in this community who do not have bodyguards.

The men become carriers of these beliefs back to their homes, onto their jobs, into the streets, into the schoolyard. Do not be fooled into thinking that these men apply these beliefs only to women who work in the sex industry or only apply these while they are in the strip club. Also do not be fooled into thinking that if you zone sexually oriented businesses it into one area of town that will protect you. That is like making a pee and no pee section is a swimming pool. We are all in this together.

There are those that say strip clubs are a healthy sexual outlet. If pornographic sex made us healthy and improved our relationships, then those most involved would be the healthiest. In fact, women who work in the sex industry have about a 25% change of making a marriage that lasts as long as 3 years. This is terrible outcome. If pornography made us healthy, we'd be healthy by now.

What about the damage to the men who go to strippers? They are also both victims and victimizers as well. My own research indicates a correlation between going to strip clubs and engaging in non consensual sex. In addition, involvement in sex industry activity increases sexual addiction. If they become sex addicted, they are likely to suffer severe negative outcomes. Research indicates that 40% of sex addicts will lose their spouse, 58% will have severe financial losses, 27% will lose their jobs and 40% will lose their profession because they are sexually acting out on the jobs. About 6-8% of adult males in the US are sex addicted, which is millions of men.

Men who use print and live pornography are more likely to be sexually callous toward women, are less likely to approve of women's liberation, feel more dissatisfaction with the way natural women look and are less interested in being married or having children. They are at increased risk for sexual dysfunction including premature ejaculation, erectile dysfunction and retarded ejaculation.

The Catholic Church has condemned the practice of bachelor parties at strip clubs. There is hypocrisy in engaging in sex acts with strangers as a preparation for going to a church to make of vow of love and monogamy. This is a psychological bind as well as a moral one.

A women interviewed in the book Pornified wanted to ask those women who tolerate bachelor parties or their partners going to strip clubs on other occasions, this : “If they walked into their bedroom and an almost naked women was straddling their husband or boyfriend, would that be ok with them? Why is it ok because it happens at a business that doesn’t think that’s cheating?” Some of the men who go to strip clubs will produce catastrophic outcomes.

Elsewhere we see Katrina survivors spending hurricane relief money at strip clubs, men leaving babies in cars to go to strip clubs, college athletes who use strip club trips to as recruiting tools for new athletes, professional athletes involved in strip club scandals, lawsuits concerning overcharging and stock brokers who entertain clients at strip clubs. All of these situations brought scandals, new regulations to stop them, lawsuits, convictions or jail time.

These are not the only crimes we can expect to increase when strip clubs come to town. Research indicates that men who use live and print pornography are more likely to accept the rape myth which is a belief that women want to be raped, need to be raped, like to be raped and to believe that rapists deserve less punishment. They are more likely to behave on those beliefs and to be involved in non-consensual sex including rape.

With some of these studies, it is not clear whether print and live pornography **makes** rapists or just **attracts** rapists into the area. In either case, I suspect that the community doesn’t want it.

In all types of sexual violence the central factor involved is what is called permission-giving beliefs. These permission-giving beliefs are beliefs that what I am doing does not hurt anyone, is normal, and that everyone is doing it. The main permission-giving belief of sexual violence perpetrators is that women’s bodies are pieces of sexual meat to be consumed for male entertainment. This belief becomes a releaser of sexual boundary crossing and sexual acting out whether it is sexual harassment, rape or incest. The sex industry is a significant factor in spreading that belief.

Rape is not the only crime that is likely to increase. Research indicates that men who batter their partners, if they use live and print pornography are likely to sexually abuse their partners as well.

Another crime that will increase is prostitution. Stripping is “prostitution lite”. When you increase the permission-giving beliefs for sexual entitlement to women’s bodies, you will increase the demand to sexual servicing and make sex a commodity that you buy, and then you have an increased demand for prostitution. Research indicates that men who use live and print pornography are more likely to go to prostitutes and more likely to think that going to a prostitute is not cheating on your spouse.

With an increased demand for prostitution, there may not be enough women who were raped as children in the community willing to be prostitutes. This leads to sex trafficking such as what happened at the massage parlors in Johnson County Kansas where women who were sex trafficked in from China were held in sex slavery and forced to work in massage parlors. Elsewhere women have been sex trafficked into strip clubs and brothels. Typically in sex trafficking, you have women and children, who are kidnapped or deceived, transported across international borders, are raped and beaten, have their lives threatened or the lives of their relatives threatened and have their passports stolen so they can’t run away and are then sold into sex slavery. Research indicates that sex slavery is happening in Kansas.

In one study I conducted, I polled the chiefs of police across the state of Pennsylvania. I asked them about the effect of live pornography which includes strip clubs as well as peep shows. The majority of the chiefs of

police indicated that live pornography increased crime in their communities and decreased the quality of life in the community.

This is an industry that spreads the myth that male sexuality is viciously narcissistic, predatory and out of control. It encourages behavior that is devastating to relationships and makes it harder for women to respect men. Pornography is hate speech against men.

I believe that most men know that working in the sex industry is damaging to the performers. When I ask sex addicts if they want their mother to be a stripper, their wife to be a prostitute, their sister or their daughter to be a porn model, 100% say no. They want someone else's mother, someone else's wife, someone else's sister or someone else's daughter to do those things. Not the women they love.

Finally, let me make one thing absolutely clear: these problems that I have named such as prostitution, rape, violence, depression, substance abuse, degradation of women, etc are all seamlessly interwoven with the activity of stripping itself. You cannot fix or prevent these problems by having more bodyguards, better parking, higher cover charges, better clothes for the strippers or a dress code for the customers. The damage is in the activity itself. You can try to move the prostitution that this causes to another neighborhood but that is neither prevention nor cure.

This is an industry that depends upon all of us to be silent about what we know to be true. By our silence we allow those who are psychological cannibals to prey upon the psychological vulnerabilities of others. So silence is complicity. So I say to the strip club bosses, the pornographers, the pimps and sex traffickers who make money by hurting people and damaging our communities, you will never have the comfort of my silence again. I hope the same is true for you as well. And if it is true, you can be the kind of hero for which this state so deeply hungers.

Thank you.

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Women in Strip Clubs Speak Out

Abuse by Customers

- 91% Verbally abused
- 52% Called cunt
- 61% Called whore
- 85% Called bitch
- 88% Arm grabbed
- 73% Breast grabbed
- 91% Buttocks grabbed
- 27% Hair pulled
- 58% Pinched
- 24% Slapped
- 36% Bitten
- 76% Customers flicked cigarettes, ice, coins
- 70% Customers followed them home
- 42% Customers stalked them

Abuse by Managers or Male Staff

- 85% Verbally or physically abused
 - 21% Called cunt
 - 18% Called slut
 - 33% Called bitch
 - 12% Pinched
 - 12% Slapped
- (http://www.ccv.org/View_from_Inside_Stripbars.htm)

Dissociation and abuse among multiple personality disordered patients, prostitutes and exotic dancers.

	Strippers	Prostitutes
Sexual abuse	65%	55%
Multiple personality disorder	35%	5%
Borderline Personality Disorder	55%	11%
Depression	60%	60%
Substance abuse	40%	80%

Strippers and prostitutes suffer from a number of psychiatric disorders. Childhood abuse often precedes their entry into the sexual exploitation industry.

Ross, et al (1990) Dissociation and abuse among multiple personality disordered patients, prostitutes and exotic dancers. Hospital and Community Psychiatry, 41, 3.