

My name is Danny Gold, I am a sex worker and parent of three children whom I homeschool alongside my co-parent and partner of many years.

My work enables me to have a healthy, active relationship with my children, and take care of their special needs. I have a flexible schedule and am able to work for myself while providing a high quality of life for my family.

In 2015, I was held captive and violently sexually assaulted by an ex boyfriend who posed as a client to gain access to me.

I was very fortunate to report this crime and find justice without being criminally punished myself.

If I had been, not only would I have had to heal from this deeply traumatic event, I would have been charged and less able to provide for my family. Because of my level of privilege as a consensual, independent sex worker, I was able to advocate for myself and find help through family, friends, community, and therapy to help me recover. Criminal punishment would have been a huge detriment to this process.

If I had been criminally punished, the only factor that could possibly make my circumstance more challenging and potentially impossible to recover from, would be if I was also a victim of trafficking that had been forced into the work in the first place. I would have not only suffered a violent crime, I would have had no independent resources to recover my mental health or my livelihood as I would be further pushed into the trafficking system where my criminal record would not be an issue.

Were I a trafficking victim I likely would never be able to seek justice due to risk of being criminalized and charged with crimes before my attacker ever was.

I urge you to understand for families like mine, and even more so the families that have been split apart and harmed due to the heinous act of trafficking, that punishment of a victim or a consensual worker provides a very grim and even further challenging outcome for their future, no matter what their path should be.

Additionally, please understand that criminalizing a worker, whether consensual or not, for taking control of their own actions by “loitering”, will only push more victims into systems of trafficking in order to find shelter and reduce risk of being arrested and prosecuted.

I support RI immunity Bill H7165 & Loitering Repeal H7452 and urge lawmakers to consider the nuance and ripple effect of punishing victims and workers.

Sincerely,
Danny Gold