

After reading the articles concerning differing opinions about safe injection sites or Ontario's recent ruling on prostitution, write a **small essay (750- 1000 word)** explaining whether or not you personally support this controversial issue. In your response you should explain the arguments you find the most persuasive either in support of, or against one of these controversial legal decisions. You should also engage with the arguments on the other side of these debates. Why are you not convinced by these other arguments? Your response should be logically constructed and grammatically correct.

Your essay should:

- Be at least 750 words in length
- Should quote directly from the articles
- Cite the articles used (Authors name, website or newspaper)
- Should engage with a counter-argument
- Should have a **clear thesis** in the introduction

Self Injection Article #1

As several Canadian municipalities contemplate setting up supervised drug-consumption sites, one roadblock they may encounter is from local police, new research suggests.

A study published this month says police officials in Ottawa and Toronto expressed "firm, clear and unanimous" opposition to such sites during interviews and believe that the sites will exacerbate crime and bring harm to neighbouring businesses and residents.

Empirical evidence showing the benefits of these sites may not be enough to sway the opinions of those who put more stock in their own experiences on the street, the study's authors wrote in the journal *Substance Use & Misuse*.

"(Supervised consumption site) proponents should recognize that research evidence, even if it meets rigorous academic standards, might be insufficient to sway opinions among those who hold a firm view of addiction as a moral failure," the article said.

Carol Strike, a professor in the school of public health at the University of Toronto, led the study, which was described as the first in-depth examination of police perceptions of clinics that allow people to inject or smoke illicit drugs under the supervision of trained staff.

The release of the study comes at a time when several municipalities are in the throes of discussing whether to set up such clinics, and in the wake of a unanimous Supreme Court of Canada ruling in September that said Vancouver's supervised injection site was exempt from federal drug laws.

Supporters say supervised drug-consumption sites help save lives because they prevent overdoses and the spread of diseases.

But researchers found police officers in Ottawa and Toronto — ranging from senior managers to frontline officers — are clearly skeptical of so-called harm-reduction strategies and find the idea of offering to help someone who is using or has just used illicit drugs "illogical."

One Ottawa police officer put it this way, according to the study. "We're keeping them as addicts, as opposed to trying to get them to be former addicts, where they can once again contribute, maybe do some of the things that they've always wanted to do, as opposed to being stuck in a vicious circle."

Police in both cities told researchers that supervised consumption sites send dangerous mixed signals, especially to young people.

"The ambiguous messaging that comes out from a society that says you can't use these drugs, they're against the law, but if you do, we'll provide you a place to do it in. The ambiguity of that, it's a little bit problematic when you're trying to explain to young people about the consequences of illegal drug use," Toronto police Chief William Blair was quoted as saying in the study.

Police also expressed concerns that such sites will draw drug "tourists," who see an opportunity to be exempt from law enforcement, according to the study.

They told researchers that treatment, rehabilitation, and consistent anti-drug messaging were better approaches.

Spokesmen for the Ottawa and Toronto police said Thursday the study accurately reflected their force's positions.

Police officials in other municipalities discussing supervised drug-consumption sites, including Victoria and Montreal, said Thursday their departments have not yet taken positions on the issue.

The Vancouver Police Department fully supports that city's Insite injection site, a spokesman said.

Read more:

https://www.thestar.com/news/2012/01/12/toronto_police_do_not_support_safe_injection_sites_study_suggests.html

Safe Injection Article #2

Toronto and Ottawa should open multiple safe-injection sites: study

Tom Blackwell Apr 11, 2012 – 11:38 AM ET | **Last Updated: Apr 12, 2012 11:54 AM ET** | **Toronto Star**

A client administers drugs at Insite, a safe injection site on Hastings Street in Vancouver. A new study suggests Toronto and Ottawa should open a total of five similar sites.

Ottawa and Toronto should set up a total of five safe-injection sites where drug users can shoot-up legally, urges a new report whose recommendations would mark a major expansion of the controversial concept if implemented.

Spearheaded by two public-health experts, the report suggests the site would curb the spread of HIV and other infectious disease, prevent some overdose deaths and reduce injection in public places.

It calls for three sites in Toronto and two in Ottawa. Multiple sites would be better than the one in Vancouver because drug populations are spread around in the Ontario cities, and it would lessen any impact on the neighborhoods, the researchers said.

However, Deb Matthews, Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, said that the province had no current plans for a safe injection site.

“We are always prepared to listen to good advice, and we make our decisions based on evidence ... [but] we have no plans to pursue supervised sites at this time,” she said in a news release.

Such facilities “are likely to represent good investments of health care dollars,” said Dr. Ahmed Bayoumi, an HIV specialist at Toronto’s St. Michael’s Hospital and one of the authors.

The report comes after the Supreme Court of Canada ruled unanimously last October that the pioneering Insite safe-injection facility in Vancouver could stay open under an exemption to the Criminal Code. The Harper government had tried to end the exemption granted by the previous Liberal administration, arguing the site was a “failed experiment.”

The court, though, said that closing Insite would have threatened the drug users’ health and lives, contravening their constitutional right to life, liberty and security of the person.

Supporters of the concept point to scientific studies that suggest it has reduced the number of fatal overdoses and curbed the spread of infectious disease through shared needles.

A study published earlier this year, on the other hand, indicated the idea will meet some opposition among police officers in the two cities, reporting that officers feared the sites will increase crime and harm the neighbourhoods where they’re situated.

The wide range of officers surveyed by the University of Toronto team almost unanimously indicated they thought it was illogical to help addicts do something that was illegal.

“We’re keeping them as addicts, as opposed to trying to get them to be former addicts, where they can once again contribute, maybe do some of the things that they’ve always wanted to do, as opposed to being stuck in a vicious circle,” said one Ottawa officer quoted in the study published in the journal *Substance Use & Misuse*.

The city of Montreal indicated last October it was also in favour of setting up supervised injection sites for addicts, though it is looking at setting up sites at existing medical facilities, rather than a single, stand-alone centres.

And the exact location of those injection sites has been hotly debated, with residents around proposed locations warning of an influx of addicts.

The city's public health department released a report last December, however, that concluded the evidence indicates such facilities will not increase crime or drug problems in their vicinity.

Prostitution Article #1

Supreme Court strikes down Canada's prostitution laws

Parliament has 1 year to bring in new law as Criminal

Code provisions remain in place

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 20, 2013 9:53 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 20, 2013 10:40 PM ET

The Supreme Court of Canada has struck down the country's anti-prostitution laws in a unanimous decision, and given Parliament one year to come up with new legislation — should it choose to do so.

'It is not a crime in Canada to sell sex for money.'- Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, Supreme Court of Canada

In striking down laws prohibiting brothels, living on the avails of prostitution and communicating in public with clients, the top court ruled Friday that the laws were over-broad and "grossly disproportionate."

"Parliament has the power to regulate against nuisances, but not at the cost of the health, safety and lives of prostitutes," wrote Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin in the 9-0 decision that noted "it is not a crime in Canada to sell sex for money."

The ruling was in response to a court challenge by women with experience in the sex trade, Terri-Jean Bedford, Amy Lebovitch and Valerie Scott that had resulted in an Ontario court ruling that overturned the laws.

The Ontario Court of Appeal later upheld the law against communicating in public, but sided with the lower court in overturning the provisions against living off the avails and keeping a common bawdy house or brothel.

Sex workers advocate Valerie Scott, left, and Terri-Jean Bedford brought the case against Canada's prostitution laws. (Darren Calabrese/Canadian Press)

"These appeals and the cross-appeal are not about whether prostitution should be legal or not. They are about whether the laws Parliament has enacted on how prostitution may be carried out pass constitutional muster. I conclude that they do not," McLachlin wrote.

"I would therefore make a suspended declaration of invalidity, returning the question of how to deal with prostitution to Parliament."

That means the provisions stay in the Criminal Code for the next year while the government decides what to do.

In a statement, Justice Minister Peter MacKay said the government would take the time to decide how to address "this very complex matter."

"We are reviewing the decision and are exploring all possible options to ensure the criminal law continues to address the significant harms that flow from prostitution to communities, those engaged in prostitution and vulnerable persons," his statement said.

MacKay also said there are "a number of other Criminal Code provisions" in place to protect sex-trade workers "and to address the negative effects prostitution has on communities."

The women in the case had argued that the law prevented them from safely conducting their business as sex-trade workers, arguing that hiring bodyguards and drivers, and being able to work in private homes or talk with potential clients in public were important to their safety.

"Now the government must tell Canadians, all consenting adults, what we can and cannot do in the privacy of our home for money or not. And they must write laws that are fair," Bedford told reporters gathered in the foyer of the Supreme Court building in Ottawa on Friday.

One of her co-respondents in the appeal said a new law won't work.

"The thing here is politicians, though they may know us as clients, they do not understand how sex work works," said Scott. "They won't be able to write a half-decent law. It will fail. That's why you must bring sex workers to the table in a meaningful way."

'Sky's not going to fall in'

Scott says new laws should be up to municipalities, not the federal government.

"If the Harper government rewrites laws, they will fail and the next generation of sex workers will be right back here. So let's not be stupid, federal government. Let's do something progressive, actually."

Scott added that "the sky's not going to fall in" with Friday's ruling.

"People said that when women got the right to vote, equal pay, equal rights, and same sex marriage — all of those things, every single one, people said the sky would fall in. It did not. Society is the better for it and society will be the better for sex workers having proper civil and occupational rights."

The women's lawyer, Alan Young, said it was important to understand the ruling affects "one of the most under-enforced laws in the Canadian Criminal Code."

"The fact that people are crying that the law's been invalidated, [they] don't understand that the law's been ineffective and largely just used in a discriminatory way."

"We're not really going to see any change tomorrow. It's going to be business as usual," Young said.

Others condemned the ruling.

"It's a sad day that we've now had confirmed that it's OK to buy and sell women and girls in this country. I think generations to come — our daughters, their granddaughters and on — will look back and say, 'What were they thinking?,'" said Kim Pate, executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies and a member of the Women's Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution.

"To say that [prostitution] is a choice when you're talking about the women we work with is to say that in fact it's OK to just exploit them," Pate said.

"We've never seen men criminalized for buying and selling women and girls. We've always seen women criminalized for selling themselves. We absolutely object to the criminalization of women. Our position would not interfere with those women who truly have made their choices."

Worry about 'open season' for prostitution

Don Hutchinson, vice-president and general legal counsel for Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, said his group wants Parliament to come back with a new law that would "criminalize the purchase of sex and provide support services for those who wish to exit the sex trade.

"What we're suggesting is that for the first time in Canada, prostitution would be illegal. The purchase of sexual services or the rental of somebody's body would become illegal," Hutchinson said.

"If there's no replacement legislative scheme, then it's open season in regard to prostitution."

Lebovitch, however, said the decision will help protect sex-trade workers.

"I am shocked and amazed that sex work and the sex work laws that affect our lives on a daily basis will within a year not cause us harm any more."

"It's a [huge victory for all the people in Vancouver](#), all my sisters out there who are going to be safe. It's just a huge, huge victory. I'm so happy," added Lorna Bird of the advocacy group Sex Workers United Against Violence.

Prostitution Article #2

Peter MacKay insists new prostitution bill will protect sex workers

Senate committee kicks off three days of 'pre-study' hearings on proposed law

The Canadian Press Posted: Sep 09, 2014 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Sep 09, 2014 5:57 PM ET

Justice Minister Peter MacKay told senators reviewing his prostitution bill Tuesday that the legislation will mean safer conditions for sex workers. (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

Canada's justice minister insists that once passed, the Conservative government's new prostitution bill will mean safer conditions for sex workers.

The ultimate goal, however, is to end the sex trade in Canada altogether.

"Let us be clear about Bill C-36's ultimate objective: that is to reduce the demand for prostitution with a view towards discouraging entry into it, deterring participation in it and ultimately abolishing it to greatest extent possible," Peter MacKay said.

MacKay testified this morning before a Senate committee studying Bill C-36, the government's response to last year's Supreme Court decision striking down the existing prostitution law.

His testimony kicked off a three-day "pre-study" of his bid to rewrite Canada's prostitution laws.

C-36 is the government's response to a Supreme Court decision last year that struck down the existing law as unconstitutional and gave the government a year to come up with a replacement.

Opponents of the new bill say it doesn't address the high court's assertion that the old law violated the rights of sex workers by exposing them to undue risk.

They say prostitutes will be placed at greater risk under the new law, since prospective clients will face arrest, making transactions more fraught with danger.

But MacKay says the bill gives sex workers the ability to create better working conditions and immunity from prosecution if they seek help from police.

Still, he says he expects the courts will scrutinize the new legislation closely and examine individual cases as they arise.

"Prostitution is now de facto illegal, but the emphasis and the focus is on the purchaser and the perpetrator — the pimps who are attempting to exploit and gain materially from prostitution itself," MacKay said.

Safer work conditions?

Senators struggled with the idea of making it a crime to buy sex when prostitutes are allowed to sell it of their own free will.

It is a nuance the courts will likely explore, MacKay allowed.

"They will investigate, without doubt, and will look at the individual circumstances in every case," he said, adding the issue of whether any sex worker actually operates under free will must be part of that examination.

Criminalizing the clients could just make the exploitation worse, suggested Conservative Sen. Don Plett.

"Is the pimp going to say to the 14, 15 or 16 year old girl, 'I am losing many of my customers...you go out and hustle a little harder to make sure you keep as much activity going as possible,'" he asked.

Hopefully the prostitutes will feel empowered enough to come forward and report such exploitative behaviour, MacKay responded.

And that's what women need, suggested Timea Nagy, who testified at the committee Tuesday.

Nagy, who describes herself as a victim of human trafficking who now works with other victims, said she hears the concerns of some sex workers who fear the new rules could create more dangerous conditions.

But she said those who choose to work in the sex industry have options and luxuries available that trafficking victims don't.

"They have been lured, manipulated and they are being kept against their will while serving 10-15 clients a day, like I did once, just so they can eat once a day," Nagy said.

"They are not doing this for money, to save up. They are doing this so they don't get beaten."

In a landmark ruling last December, the Supreme Court concluded that several key provisions of the existing prostitution laws were unconstitutional, and gave the government one year to come up with a new legal framework.

MacKay introduced legislation in May to create what he has referred to as a "Made in Canada" law, which borrows heavily from the so-called Nordic model by focusing legal sanctions on the buyers, rather than the sellers of sex.

Earlier this summer, the House justice committee heard from sex workers, anti-trafficking experts, academics and advocacy groups from both sides of the debate over legalizing prostitution.

After three days of hearings, MPs voted to amend the bill to narrow the proposed restrictions on "public communication" to cover only areas in the vicinity of schoolyards, daycares and playgrounds.

That change — and, specifically, whether it goes far enough to address the concern that the new rules will do little to protect the safety and security of sex workers — will likely be one of the main issues up for discussion as the Senate committee begins its review of the bill.

Prostitution Article #3

Terri-Jean Bedford kicked out of prostitution bill hearing

Sex worker who won Supreme Court challenge claims to know of federal politicians who use prostitutes

By Kady O'Malley, [CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 10, 2014 7:58 AM ET Last Updated: Sep 11, 2014 12:02 PM ET

Retired dominatrix Terri-Jean Bedford was escorted by security out of a Senate committee meeting after refusing to heed the chair's warning that her allotted speaking time had run out — but not before threatening to make politicians "forget about Mike Duffy."

The woman who won a Supreme Court challenge to Canada's prostitution laws told committee members that the government's proposal to criminalize buyers of sex would "make Canada the laughingstock of the world."

And she issued a veiled threat.

"If this law passes, I'm going to make you guys forget about (suspended senator) Mike Duffy. Because I got more information and proof on politicians in this country than you can shake a stick at. I promise."

Bedford was invited along with other witnesses to share her thoughts on the Conservative government's response to last spring's landmark Supreme Court decision.

But, less than halfway through a question and answer portion, Bedford was admonished by Senator Bob Runciman, the committee chair, for exceeding her allotted time for a response and she responded angrily.

"You've given lots of other people lots of time. I have 30 years of your abusive laws, so I should be allowed at least an extra five minutes to talk about it."

"You pet everybody else on the back, but when you know I've got a bombshell to deliver you want to try to avoid me at all costs," Bedford said.

When Bedford tried again to make a point about the costs of her legal battle, Runciman adjourned the meeting and security escorted her out.

Outside East Block, surrounded by reporters, she reiterated her opposition to the government's proposed prostitution bill rewrite.

"They're on the attack against strong, independent women who can think for themselves," she said.

Asked whether she knew of any current MPs or senators who use sex workers, Bedford said, "What do you think?"

"I'm not going to answer any more stupid questions."

Bedford later issued a statement in which she apologized for losing her temper.

"I was barely able to read my speech because I was so angry at the government for parading victims with repeated irrelevant information and then organizations who were shilling for government handouts on which they are dependent," she said.

"The shameful use of victims by the government in this process, and their disregard for life by ignoring court findings, refusing to listen to their own legal staff and refusing to answer questions from legitimate sources made me snap."

She added that she's already heard that some people "are sympathetic to the points that I made," and even her outburst.

"The truth will win out," she concluded.

'Fundamentally flawed bill'

Bedford, one of the three applicants behind the legal challenge that brought down Canada's prostitution laws last December, was testifying before the Senate legal and constitutional affairs committee on Wednesday afternoon.

Her co-appellant, Valerie Scott, also appeared before the committee on Wednesday, although not as part of the same witness panel. Scott is the legal co-ordinator for Sex Professionals of Canada.

Although Scott and Amy Lebovitch, who was also part of the challenge, testified before the House justice committee in July, Bedford did not.

She did, however, follow those hearings closely, according to her blog, and predicts that the proposed law will ultimately fail in court, even after it was amended to narrow the ban on public communications to cover only areas in the vicinity of schoolyards, daycares and playgrounds.

"Changes to or removal of clauses from a fundamentally flawed bill are irrelevant," she wrote in July.

"It is flawed in its intent. It will be flawed in its implementation. It is flawed as to whether it is itself legal or constitutional. It is flawed in that it will make things worse for women. Its passage will be a victory for human traffickers and organized crime."

Another court challenge could take years

It could take up to a decade to get a final Supreme Court ruling on the constitutionality of the government's prostitution bill, according to criminal defence lawyer Graeme Hamilton.

Hamilton was one of several lawyers to testify before the Senate committee Wednesday morning.

He pointed out that the Bedford case required 25,000 pages of evidence, and predicted that it could take several years to collect a similar dossier to challenge the new law, if passed.

The estimate came during an exchange with Liberal Senator George Baker, who also quizzed justice officials about the constitutionality of the bill.

Senators heard from a panel of former sex workers turned anti-prostitution activists, several of whom shared their personal stories of what, by their accounts, amounted to under-age sex slavery.

Although strongly supportive of the bill, the "survivors," as they call themselves, have also called for further amendments to remove all provisions that would criminalize sex workers themselves.

The hearings are scheduled to wrap up on Thursday afternoon.

The bill is currently awaiting final House approval, and is expected to be officially referred to the Senate later this fall.