



Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) Limited
Company No: 07058666

REASONS FOR LOBBYING/PETITIONING FOR BAN ON ADVERTISING FOR SEXUAL SERVICES

Whilst we understand that of legislation against sex advertisements will have counteractions, nevertheless we find it morally abhorrent that our society is complicit in allowing criminals to advertise their wares in the sort of advertisements that appear in classified ads papers, and hugely on the internet, where information on women available for sex can be easily downloaded to a Smartphone, offered a range of sexual services, location, phone number etc. It is worth remembering that it is illegal to pay for sex with a woman who is controlled by others, and Service Providers are a third party receiving money to allow this criminal activity to proceed.

We feel that there is no other form of criminality in which social acceptance is so great, or which society does so little to prevent, and wish to bring the issue forward for debate.

STATEMENT:

We call upon the Government to introduce legislation that will make it illegal for "sex for sale" advertisements to appear in any media or location where vulnerable adults and children are being sexually exploited for the profit and gain of others.

The legislation should cover all aspects of advertising by all means including paper, electronic or other objects and should encompass those who assist, promote or aid and abet such advertising.

BACKGROUND:

By allowing visible advertising we are legitimizing prostitution and by extension, forced prostitution for profit of others. Women and girls who are trafficked for sexual exploitation - forced prostitution - endure appalling conditions: they suffer violent control, false imprisonment, denial of human rights and dignity, brutal rape.

Where is the line to be drawn? We don't allow tobacco advertising – why does our society allow "sex for sale" advertising, often a front for forced prostitution?

Reasons for having legislation in place

- The increase in available pornography and explicit films and dvds is increasing men's need for sex, and fuelling the demand for sex, which is increasingly being met through forced prostitution – trafficking – using fraud, deception and violence
- The sale of people for sex of all kinds is readily available to view and purchase on the internet, advertisements offering girls for sex in newspapers, magazines, massage parlours, lap dancing clubs, shop signage, toilets, telephone boxes and so on. These enticements help to create and increase demand – generating huge tax free profits for the men and women who are tricking women and children into forced prostitution.
- The message we give to boys and young men is that if it sexual services are legitimately advertised, then it must be acceptable, and legal, to use the services offered

Is this the morality and the culture we want to encourage?

Benefits of having legislation in place

- Removing easily accessible information on where to buy sex will be an irritation and a disruption to the habitual user thus potentially reducing the demand.
- By making the availability and distribution of such adverts illegal, publishers and service providers who would be liable to prosecution will refuse to accept sex for sale advertising.
- By removing visible advertising we make it more difficult for first-time or casual users to access the marketplace
- By making visible advertising illegal we remove the means by which brothel managers and traffickers draw in their customers and thus disrupt their marketing strategy.
- By making such advertising illegal we would be discouraging the prevailing subliminal message being given, particularly to susceptible boys and young men, that it is acceptable to buy women for sex.
- Publishers who ignore the legislation and continue to advertise such services, can be more easily prosecuted.



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(Alternative presentation)

Whilst we understand that of legislation against sex advertisements will have counteractions, nevertheless we find it morally abhorrent that our society is complicit in allowing criminals to advertise their wares in the sort of advertisements that appear in, for example, the Adult section of classified advertising papers, and which are readily available in reputable newsagents.

We feel that there is no other form of criminality in which social acceptance is so great, or which society does so little to prevent, and wish to bring the issue forward for debate.

Sex for sale advertising encourages demand for anonymous and easy sex. Massage parlours, escort businesses and saunas are mostly a front for illegal brothels, where victims of trafficking work in forced prostitution. A ban would therefore help to disrupt traffickers' business, as legitimate publishers and distributors would immediately refuse to accept such advertising, thereby reducing opportunities for users to buy into the trade. Publishers and distributors who continue to accept such advertising would by default be liable to prosecution.

There is an argument for saying that banning sex for sale advertising would force human trafficking further underground than present and make it harder for the police/NGOs to make direct contact with women victims. However, it is hard to see how much more underground this trade can be. We have it on good authority that the police do not use these advertisements as a main source of information, and will of course continue to have access to advertising which has not been removed.

It could be argued that a focus on a ban of sex for sale advertising would risk diverting government attention from potentially more useful policies/legislation, although this legislation would surely only be one measure in a range of measures for disruption of the supply and demand of women and girls for sex. Given that sex for sale advertising fronts up human trafficking organised crime, the Metropolitan Police unit responsible for counter-trafficking in London, specifically expressed their requirement for legislation to facilitate prosecutions against publishers and to maximise disruption of the illegal sex trade.

It is suggested that legislating for a ban on sex for sale advertising would be difficult to implement as sex trafficking is not a police priority and has no target or evaluation, but surely changing police priorities can be done with discussion if there is the political will, especially if legislation makes accessing the demand more difficult, and offers better chances of prosecution.

Permitting sex for sale advertising sends a message within society that having sex with a trafficked woman is acceptable when clearly it is not. The advertising readily available for all punters to access, including tourists, susceptible young men just into puberty, legitimizes this activity and gives the "green light" of societal approval to those seeking anonymous sex whatever the source.

**IF YOU WISH, PLEASE USE SOME OF THESE ARGUMENTS AS AN AIDE TO DISCUSSION
OF THE ISSUES WITH YOUR MP, WITH PUBLISHERS, WITH YOUR SERVICE PROVIDERS
AND WITH YOUR FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES, AND CONTACTS**