



Only Rights Can Stop the Wrongs

NSWP STATEMENT

CONDEMNING THE RAID AND ARRESTS AT RENTBOY.COM

NSWP, the Global Network of Sex Work Projects, emphatically condemns the actions of the USA's Department of Homeland Security and federal prosecutors in New York for the raid on the offices of Rentboy.com and the arrests of seven of its staff members.

This action appears to be a blatant, morally-driven discriminatory attack on gay consensual sex. The New York Times Editorial Board [have stated](#) that the criminal complaint that resulted in this raid was **'so saturated with sexually explicit details, it's hard not to interpret it as an indictment of gay men as being sexually promiscuous.'** Many USA activists, LGBT community members and commentators have [highlighted](#) the increasing climate of homophobia that they identify as having accompanied the tenures of Mayor De Blasio and the Commissioner of NYPD, William Bratton.

NSWP's opposes all forms of criminalisation and other legal oppression of sex work (including sex workers, clients, third parties, families, partners and friends). The term **'third parties'** includes managers, brothel keepers, receptionists, maids, drivers, landlords, hotels who rent rooms to sex workers and anyone else who is seen as facilitating sex work. Sex workers and our allies actively campaign for full decriminalisation of sex work for a number of reasons, including promoting safe working conditions and labour rights for sex workers; Increase access to health services and reduce sex workers' risk of HIV and STIs; Increase sex workers' access to justice; Reduce police abuse and violence; Help to tackle exploitation and coercion when it does occur.

Sex workers need to be able to communicate openly with clients and managers without constantly fearing arrest, police harassment or worse. Sex workers often use advertising websites to screen clients for their own safety.

The timing of this raid could not be more acutely out-of-step with the overwhelming body of evidence and the findings of international bodies such as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, who recommend that

1





Only Rights Can Stop the Wrongs

governments should work towards the decriminalisation of sex work and The Lancet which recently published a special series on HIV and Sex Workers, which also recommends the decriminalisation of sex work.

Amnesty International's global movement [recently voted](#) to adopt a policy to protect the human rights of sex workers, including the full decriminalisation of sex work at their International Council meeting this August. Amnesty joins a growing list of other major international agencies such as the World Health Organization, Human Rights Watch and the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women in the call for decriminalisation of sex work.