

10       **A RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE LEGALIZATION OF BROTHELS IN MARYLAND**

20       **WHEREAS:**     Prostitution is the “the world’s oldest profession” yet it is highly stigmatized  
30                             in the Western World; and,

40       **WHEREAS:**     In the ancient world, prostitution was legal in Cyprus, Corinth, and Sardinia;  
50                             and prophets Hosea and Ezekiel disapproved of the Jewish law banning  
60                             prostitution in ancient Israel; and,

70       **WHEREAS:**     Prostitution was legal in the United States until the 1900s when states  
80                             started to ban prostitution as a result of the Woman’s Christian Temperance  
90                             Movement which was also responsible for the prohibition of alcohol; and,

100       **WHEREAS:**     Today, prostitution is a misdemeanor in the United States except in some  
110                             counties in Nevada where it is completely legal, and;

120       **WHEREAS:**     Banning prostitution does not dissuade its practice, rather it forces it to go  
130                             underground where the government cannot regulate it. This leads prostitution to  
140                             be a retreat for criminal activities, the spread of diseases, and countless violent  
150                             and nonviolent crimes; and,

160       **WHEREAS:**     Banning prostitution leads to empty “catch and release” arrests, consumes the  
170                             judicial system, and does not deter those arrested from prostituting themselves  
180                             again because the punishment is insignificant compared to desperate need of  
190                             income and demand for sex; and,

200       **WHEREAS:**     There is little evidence correlating prostitution to the infection of sexually  
210                             transmitted diseases because prostitution is not regulated; and,

220       **WHEREAS:**     The inability to track the spread of diseases is highly problematic not only to  
230                             prostitutes and their clients but also to society as a whole which functions  
240                             blindly under the threat of infection; and,

250       **WHEREAS:**     Legalizing prostitution would allow health institutions to monitor, treat and  
260                             educate sex workers without government’s intrusion. In New South Wales and  
270                             Victoria, Australia, where prostitution is legal; sex worker organizations  
280                             regularly visit brothels and provide free condoms, sex education and health  
290                             information to prostitutes, and have successfully decreased the spread of disease  
300                             and;

310       **WHEREAS:**     Violent crimes are common in prostitution, both in its legal and illegal form.  
320                             However violent crimes are more prevalent in countries where prostitution is  
330                             illegal. Indeed, a study by Kirby Cundiff shows that legalizing prostitution  
340                             would decrease rape by 25,000/year. Moreover legalizing prostitution would  
350                             minimize the societal taboo associated with it and therefore allow victims to  
360                             report rapes to the police; and,

370       **WHEREAS:**     In the Green River murders, eleven African-American prostitutes from Los  
380                             Angeles were found dead under rag piles in Detroit as part of “gender  
390                             cleansing;” and,

400       **WHEREAS:**     Legalizing prostitution would stop the sexual and economic exploitation of  
410                             prostitutes by pimps. According to civil rights and feminist lawyer Catherine A.  
420                             MacKinnon, “Women in prostitution not only begin poor, they are

430 systematically kept poor by pimps who take the lion's share of what they earn.”  
440 Furthermore because pimps treat prostitutes as property, pimps are allowed  
450 unlimited control over them; and,

460 **WHEREAS:** Human trafficking for sexual exploitation is more prevalent now than ever.  
470 Legalizing prostitution would secure that such persons are not illegal aliens or  
480 held against their will. MacKinnon cites that ninety percent of street prostitutes  
490 in Toronto wanted to leave but could not and that, “If they are there because  
500 they cannot leave, they are sexual slaves.”

510 **WHEREAS:** MacKinnon concludes that because prostitutes are predominantly women and  
520 girls, that the social and legal stigma of prostitution is outright discriminatory  
530 and indeed a violation of basic civil rights. “Criminal prostitution laws make  
540 women into criminals for being victimized as women. Then these laws are often  
550 enforced for bureaucratic, turf-protective, funding, political, or advancement  
560 reasons--that is, arbitrarily, against women.” The Fourteenth Amendment  
570 provides equal protection under the law yet criminal laws against prostitution  
580 are clearly gendered against women. Additionally, the Thirteenth Amendment  
590 prohibits involuntary servitude and slavery, yet the practice of sex slavery,  
600 which is component of prostitution, undermines this.

610 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature urges the Maryland  
620 General Assembly to remove its law banning all forms of prostitution and  
630 instead legalize brothels as established businesses under the Maryland  
640 Department of Assessment and Taxation; and,

650 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That, included in this initiative, the Maryland General  
660 Assembly regulate brothels under the auspices of the Maryland Department of  
670 Health or a similar health organization to regularly monitor brothels and to  
680 ensure the health and safety of prostitutes.

690 **MANDATES:** Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.  
700 Speaker of the House Michael Busch  
710 President of the Senate Mike V. Miller

**SPONSOR:**

Lani Martinez, Towson University