

Urge to Vote in Favour of Equality Model Bill

To: Members of the Scottish Parliament

Subject: Urge to Vote in Favour of Equality Model Bill

Submitted by: Women's Platform for Action International

Dear Member of the Scottish Parliament,

We write to you on behalf of [Women's Platform for Action International \(WoPAI\)](#), a global platform of women's rights organisations committed to women's human rights, substantive equality, and the abolition of systems that commodify and exploit women.

On 3 February, the Scottish Parliament will vote on proposed legislation on prostitution. This vote will signal whether Scotland is prepared to confront one of the most entrenched forms of male violence against women, or whether it will continue to tolerate a system that enables the sexual exploitation of women, particularly those who are poor, marginalised, racialised, and vulnerable.

We urge you to vote in favour of this legislation. The Bill reflects what survivors of prostitution have [long demanded](#): an Equality (Nordic) Model approach that decriminalises people in prostitution who are overwhelmingly women, provides pathways out, and holds perpetrators accountable.

This is a progressive, evidence-based, and survivor-centred model, grounded in women's lived realities and human rights obligations. Survivors themselves are unequivocal:

"The Equality model on prostitution supports the exploited and punishes the exploiters. It is the only legal model that any democratic society can adopt if they truly believe in human rights. The Unbuyable bill is Scotland's real chance to get the law right, and if they fail to use it, it would be a betrayal of survivors not only in Scotland but globally."

- Blessing Okoedion, survivor of prostitution and sex trafficking, board member of WoPAI



WATCH [“A Call to Scotland: Survivors Speak Up”](#)

Claims currently being circulated that criminalising buyers of sexual acts increases violence or “drives prostitution underground” are not supported by evidence. These arguments have been repeatedly advanced by vested interests seeking to preserve the commercial sex industry, and they have consistently failed under scrutiny.

Most recently, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [confirmed](#) that France’s adoption of the Equality (Nordic) Model does not violate the European Convention on Human Rights, explicitly rejecting claims that criminalising buyers endangers women in prostitution. The ECtHR recognised the legitimate aim of combating exploitation and violence against women and affirmed states’ obligations to reduce demand for prostitution.

Countries such as Sweden, followed by France and others, demonstrate that it is possible to reduce prostitution, challenge male sexual entitlement, and advance women’s rights through law and policy.

Scotland rightly presents itself as a nation committed to equality. That commitment cannot coexist with a legal framework that allows men to buy sexual access to women with impunity. No society can credibly claim to advance women’s rights while normalising the objectification and exploitation of women.

On 3 February, you have the opportunity to affirm that Scotland stands with women, survivors, and equality. We urge you to vote in favour of the Bill.

Ana Sofia Fernandes
Chair of Board,
Women’s Platform for Action International (WoPAI)