

## **WHEREAS:**

The Constitution & Bylaws of the Democratic Socialists of America, Section II: Purpose state:

We are socialists because we reject an economic order based on private profit, alienated labor, gross inequalities of wealth and power, discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, disability status, age, religion, and national origin, and brutality and violence in defense of the status quo.

We are socialists because we share a vision of a humane social order based on popular control of resources and production, economic planning, equitable distribution, feminism, racial equality and non-oppressive relationships.

We are socialists because we are developing a concrete strategy for achieving that vision, for building a majority movement that will make democratic socialism a reality in America.

We believe that such a strategy must acknowledge the class structure of American society and that this class structure means that there is a basic conflict of interest between those sectors with enormous economic power and the vast majority of the population.<sup>1</sup>

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We assert that::

1. Sex work is work.
2. Sex workers are workers.

Because we are socialists, we repudiate SESTA and FOSTA as attempts to target and oppress sex workers. We recognize that SESTA and FOSTA re-enforce an economic order based on private profit by de-legitimizing sex work as labor and conflating it with sex trafficking, a harmful premise that disenfranchises sex workers and erects barriers to victims seeking safe harbor.

We repudiate SESTA and FOSTA, which serve to further alienate sex workers who are already targeted by social stigma and criminalization. This alienation has a direct impact on the ability of sex workers to maintain safety by criminalizing the exchange of information about subjects ranging from violence prevention (such as “bad date” lists of violent purchasers) to economic empowerment planning.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, barriers to direct contact with prospective customers have led to the re-emergence of abusive pimps and traffickers, “bosses” claiming to have capacity to connect sex workers to jobs, eradicating the autonomy and further jeopardizing the safety of independent sex workers.<sup>3</sup>

We repudiate SESTA and FOSTA as legislative actions that only serve to increase the gross inequalities of wealth and power by eliminating an essential source of economic stability for sex workers.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dsausa.org/constitution>

<sup>2</sup> <https://survivorsagainstsesta.org/documentation/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://survivorsagainstsesta.org/about-sesta/>

We repudiate SESTA and FOSTA because we know that the anti-sex work movement, and these bills, exist because of a legacy of white supremacy, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia in America, all of which are manifest in this attack against a field dominated by people of color, women, and LGBTQ individuals.

We repudiate SESTA and FOSTA, because we know that the carceral state is a brutal and violent system. We know that further criminalization of sex work has the potential to lead to arrests resulting in violence and traumatization, incarceration, and disenfranchisement.

Because we are socialists, we know that our “vision of a humane social order based on popular control of resources and production, economic planning, equitable distribution, feminism, racial equality and non-oppressive relationships” is impossible without the autonomy, economic empowerment, and freedom of sex workers.

Because we are socialists, we know that developing a concrete strategy for achieving this vision must include solidarity with sex workers. We recognize that we can only make democratic socialism a reality in America when sex workers are a thriving part of our movement.

**THEREFORE:**

Twin Cities Democratic Socialists of America is dedicated to:

1. listening to and learning from sex workers when they share their experiences, and actively pursuing opportunities for individual and community education;
2. participating in local actions planned to support sex workers;
3. and integrating procedures and social practices designed to create safe spaces for sex workers within DSA to find solidarity and organize.

In the words of Selma James:

*[Choose] between prostitutes and police, between “bad” women and “bad” laws, between whores and careerists, between the State and the women confronting it for justice.*

-Selma James, “Hookers in the House of the Lord” (1983)

We choose solidarity with sex workers.