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Sex Workers Project Statement on the Indictment of Rentboy.com

New York, NY – In response to Wednesday’s indictment of CEO of Rentboy.com Jeffrey Hurant on charges of promoting prostitution and money laundering, following action by Homeland Security to shut down the internet platform and arrest seven employees earlier this year, the Sex Workers Project of the Urban Justice Center released the following statement.:

“The Sex Workers Project sees these actions as a gross misuse of law enforcement time and funding that will cause more harm to vulnerable communities.

We are further concerned that the indictment of Mr. Hurant uses Rentboy.com’s information-sharing and harm reduction practices to justify the charges. The indictment cites information that Rentboy.com shared with its clients on what activities are legal or illegal, which is clearly not only protected speech under the First Amendment but a cornerstone of support for marginalized communities. The ability to share information about the law should never be abridged, and if sharing this information leads to criminal consequences it will have a chilling effect on organizations that seek to advocate for and provide services to these communities.

Efforts like the raid on Rentboy.com that criminalize third party advertising platforms serve to further isolate marginalized communities, which only leads to increased violence, vulnerability and victimization. Access to third-party advertisers means the ability to screen potential escort clients and build community, which are essential to the health and safety of those who engage in informal economies.

LGBTQ individuals face discrimination in mainstream work places. Lack of housing and income options force many to find alternate ways of meeting basic resource needs. Closing down options for people to work safely and criminalizing the basic harm reduction information that keeps people safe adds to the harm, instead of curbing it.

This indictment is a dangerous step in the direction of isolation, and contributes to the victimization and violence that marginalized communities experience every day.”

ABOUT THE SEX WORKERS PROJECT: The Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center provides client-centered legal and social services to individuals who engage in sex work, regardless of whether they do so by choice, circumstance, or coercion. One of the first programs in the nation to assist survivors of human trafficking, the Sex Workers Project has pioneered an



approach to service grounded in human rights, harm reduction and in the real life experiences of our clients. Their professional service providers are multi-lingual, non-judgmental and bring more than ten years of experience.

As the only US organization meeting the needs of both sex workers and trafficking victims, the Sex Workers Project serves a marginalized community that few others reach. SWP engages in [policy](#) and [media advocacy](#), community education and [human rights documentation](#), working to create a world that is safe for sex workers and where human trafficking does not exist.

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