Thank you, Mr. President. I am a sex worker and transgender rights activist from the United States. On behalf of hundreds of civil society organizations\(^1\) that called on the U.S. government to ensure the human rights of people engaged in sex work, I would like to both congratulate and thank the U.S. delegation for accepting recommendation #86. We believe that it is the first instance of affirmation of sex workers’ rights in this forum.

Due to stigma and criminalization, sex workers -- and those profiled as such -- are subjected to violence and discrimination, and are often barred from necessary services and the right to equal protection under the law. State agents themselves, specifically police officers, commit physical and sexual violence against sex workers. These abuses are particularly rampant in low income, African-American and immigrant communities and also greatly affect transgender, bisexual, lesbian, and gay people. Globally, U.S. policies, such as the “anti-prostitution pledge,” have negatively affected international HIV/AIDS efforts.

Having agreed, before this Council, that “no one should face violence or discrimination in access to public services based on sexual orientation or their status as a person in prostitution,” the next step is for the U.S. to take concrete action to implement this statement. As part of such implementation, it is critical that the government work to systematically involve sex workers in policy decisions that affect them. Specifically, we hope to see the government eliminate federal policies that conflate sex work with human trafficking, investigate and prevent human rights abuses perpetrated by state agents against sex workers, and examine the impact of criminalization on our communities. Protecting the human rights of sex workers is also connected with broader efforts to ensure sexual and reproductive rights and address the problems of the criminal justice system in the U.S.

We are deeply appreciative of the respect for, openness to, and engagement with civil society that the U.S. government has shown throughout this UPR process. We stand ready to work with the administration to implement this recommendation and others.

Thank you.

\(^1\) These organizations include:
Desiree Alliance
St. James’ Infirmary
Bay Area Sex Worker Advocacy Network
Best Practices Policy Project
Different Avenues
Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive (HIPS)
Sex Workers Project, at the Urban Justice Center
Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP USA)
Sex Workers Outreach Project (NYC), Sex Workers Action New York (SWOP-NYC/SWANK)
Sex Workers Outreach Project (Tucson)
Sex Workers Outreach Project (Chicago Chapter)
Sex Workers Outreach Project (Las Vegas Chapter)
Sex Workers Outreach Project (Seattle Chapter)
Sexual Rights Initiative
Woodhull Freedom Foundation
HIVictorious, Inc.
Nashville CARES International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS Global (ICW Global)
TAMPEP (European Network for HIV/STI Prevention & Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers)
Nigerian Diversity Network
Action pour la lutte Contre L'ignorance du SIDA (Democratic Republic of Congo)
Asocijacija za Borbu Protiv Side (Association against AIDS, JAZAS, Yugoslavia)
Tais Plus (Kirgizstan)
Scarlet Alliance (Australia)
Sex Worker Forum (Botswana)
x:talk (London)
The International Committee for the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe
Erotic Service Providers’ Legal, Education and Research Project
Human Rights Watch
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
International Women’s Health Coalition
Women’s Network for Unity
MADRE
Ipas
Amnesty for Women
Women's Organization Network for Human Rights Advocacy
Women’s Re-Entry Network
Women of Color United
American Jewish World Service
Religious Institute
Center for Anti-Violence Education
Americans for Informed Democracy
National Minority AIDS Council
Harm Reduction Coalition
American Medical Students Association
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
AIDS Project Los Angeles
AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
Housing Works
International Rectal Microbicide Advocates
U.S. Positive Women's Network (PWN) a project of WORLD (Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Disease)
Women’s Network for Unity (Cambodia)
Madonna e.V. (Germany)
Syndicat du Travail Sexuel (STRASS) (France)
Collectif pour le Developpement Economique, Social et Culturel Integre (Democratic Republic of Congo)
JIIJ Association (Hong Kong)
Paso del Norte Civil Rights Project
Public Interest Project, US Human Rights Fund
Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR)
Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program (CLPP), Hampshire College
Population & Development Program, Hampshire College
Sexuality and Gender Working Group, Human Rights Network
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance
Malcolm X Center for Self Determination
SisterLove
Women with a Vision
Black Communities' Process (PCN)
Aniz, Inc.
Four Freedoms Forum