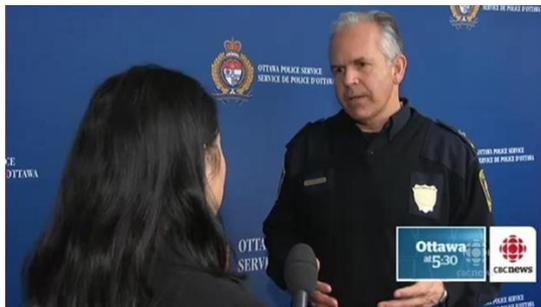


<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-police-chief-wants-prostitution-laws-to-target-johns-1.2611285>

Ottawa police chief wants prostitution laws to target johns

Countries like Sweden and France have laws to target the men who buy sex

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Chief Charles Bordeleau on prostitution laws 3:41

Ottawa police Chief Charles Bordeleau says he'd like to see the country's prostitution laws follow the leads of countries like Sweden and France, who have laws that target the men who buy sex instead of the prostitutes themselves.

Last December the Supreme Court of Canada [struck down several of the country's prostitution laws](#) and has given the government a year to come up with new legislation, should it choose to do so.

The decision has sparked a debate throughout the country about how best to strike a balance that both protects women from being exploited or trafficked and also respects the rights of the women who choose to work in the sex trade.

Ottawa police Chief Charles Bordeleau says he believes Canada's prostitution laws should target the demand and the men who try to buy sex. (CBC)

Bordeleau said he is concerned total decriminalization doesn't do enough to protect women.

"I don't want something that is legitimized or decriminalized that you have more and more women being trafficked and victimized," he said.

The majority of complaints police get about the sex trade involve street prostitution. But street prostitution makes up only 10 per cent of the sex trade, with the majority happening online and indoors through escort ads.

Bordeleau said he wants a legislative tool that respects Charter rights while allowing his officers to respond to community concern by rounding up the buyers, or johns.

"What we've been doing here in Ottawa and seen some success is more like the Nordic model where we target the johns and those who prey on vulnerable women purchasing the sex. As a police service we'd like to see that continue down the path that we've taken," he said.

117 men arrested last year in john sweeps

In Ottawa, first-time offenders caught in sweeps had to pay \$600 to attend john school, with that money going towards a program that helps street prostitutes.

Last year police arrested 117 men in targeted sweeps, including men who were found carrying bondage equipment and in one case a stun gun.

Another man was charged with sexual assault after allegedly choking prostitutes he picked up.

About 10 per cent of Ottawa's sex trade takes place on the street.

Criminology professor Christine Bruckert said a law like the one Bordeleau advocates for would push prostitutes into more remote areas and put them even more at risk.

"They are now going to be coping with clients who are nervous, hard to read," said Bruckert.

"The most marginalized sex workers will experience this in the most horrific way."

Vanier residents divided over laws

Residents in Vanier, where most of the street sweeps took place, are divided on what should be done about Canada's prostitution laws.

Patrick Morin, who runs the Vanier Snack Shack, said he wants to see prostitution decriminalized.

"You have to be able to put her in a safe environment, they have to be able to call for help to pay taxes to feel comfortable," said Morin.

"They have to be like 'this is my job' and be accepted in society."

Gillian Kirkland lives in the neighbourhood and has young children. She wants police to continue targeting johns, but said if the new law prohibits that, she thinks the city should create a red light district.

"I think the people who engage in prostitution should also be willing to deal with the consequences of living in a neighbourhood with drug use, with condoms on the street," said Kirkland. "If that's what they think is a good use of their time, they should be willing to deal with everything that comes along with it."