

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, June 7, 2022

Sex Workers, Allies, Family and Friends Mark 10 Years Fighting Unjust Laws

Vancouver's 10th Annual Red Umbrella March for Sex Work Solidarity

**Saturday, June 11, 2022
2 p.m. Vancouver Art Gallery
South Plaza, 800 Robson St.**

2022 marks the 10th year that Vancouver sex workers, allies, family and friends stand together to fight Canada's unjust prostitution laws.

From February through April 2022, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights conducted hearings for a Review of Canada's new 2014 prostitution laws — the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act* (PCEPA). The Justice Committee plans to release their report in June, before Parliament closes for summer recess on June 23.

"This year, the annual Red Umbrella March will be more important than ever," says Andrew Sorfleet, president of Triple-X. "We've been organizing Vancouver's Red Umbrella March since 2013, before the old prostitution laws were declared unconstitutional. In December 2014, the government enacted the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act* which makes buying sex illegal and which stands right in the way of sex workers being able to form their own associations."

In February, Triple-X submitted a brief to Canada's Justice Committee Review of PCEPA, "Stronger Together: Solidarity organizing and exploitation prevention," that specifically outlines the laws' infringement on Canadians' freedom to associate. [Link: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/JUST/Brief/BR11602469/br-external/TripleXWorkersSolidarityAssociationOfBritishColumbia-e.pdf>]

"Freedom of Association," section 2(d) of Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees the collective pursuit of common goals. "Sexual Services," section 286 of the *Criminal Code of Canada* violates the Charter because the law prevents sex workers from forming trade unions and professional associations; from collecting membership dues; and sharing membership benefits.

Vancouver City Hall will be lit up in red on the night of June 11 to mark this milestone.

Allies are invited to dress up in red costumes, and attend the march carrying red umbrellas.

The tradition of red umbrella marches for sex worker rights started at the 49th International Venice Biennale Arte in 2001, when sex worker activists from North America, Europe, Asia and Australia marched with red umbrellas through the centre of Venice creating a colourful interruption through the public space and drawing attention to the geography of sex workers' social history. The red umbrella has since grown to become an international symbol of sex worker rights with red umbrella marches taking place in cities around the world.

The Vancouver Red Umbrella March is co-sponsored by Triple-X Workers' Solidarity Association of B.C., PACE Society, Pivot Legal Society, SWAN Society, B.C. Coalition of Experiential Communities (BCCEC), B.C. Bad Dates and Aggressors Reporting Project (BCBDAR).

High-resolution images from previous Vancouver Red Umbrella Marches are available here: <https://triple-x.org/redumbrella/> and here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sallybuck/sets/72157669666157396/>

For more background information on the Justice Committee Review of PCEPA, the laws, and recent court decisions, please visit: <https://triple-x.org/freedomtoassociate/>

-30 -

Event hashtag: #RUM2022
Connect on social media:
Twitter.com/xxxworkers
Instagram.com/triplexworkers
Facebook.com/triplexworkers

Media inquiries:
Andy Sorfleet
a.sorfleet@gmail.com
604-488-0710