

For Immediate Release

## **New prostitution laws on the right track**

**June 4, 2014, Ottawa**—The Institute of Marriage and Family Canada is pleased with the direction taken by proposed prostitution legislation, released by the Department of Justice today.

The Government of Canada is acknowledging that prostitution is an inherently dangerous activity. Globally, it has been linked to criminal activities including human trafficking, drug trafficking and killings.

Legalization of prostitution elsewhere has not reduced these crimes, with working conditions for men and women engaged in prostitution as dangerous as ever. A review in New Zealand published in 2008, five years after legalization there, showed few of those engaged in prostitution felt legalization had done anything about violence on the job.

Furthermore, the sale of sexual services is unlike any other business transaction in that it dehumanizes the seller and is not, in the vast majority of cases, a choice freely made.

The effects of this exploitation ripple outward to affect all of society – including those who know that exploitation is occurring in their community.

While advocates of legalization have argued that people ought to be free to make their own choices, they ignore the fact that most prostitutes begin as minors aged 14 to 16.

“We’re encouraged that this legislation shows special concern for children, by taking aim at child traffickers,” says Institute of Marriage and Family Canada Executive Director Andrea Mrozek. “Hopefully this will prevent at least some at-risk youth from being lured into prostitution.”

The new laws would prevent children from being exposed to prostitution in their neighbourhoods as well. While those engaging in prostitution would not be criminally charged for their activity, there would be an exception made if they were soliciting in places where a child could reasonably be expected to be present.

“It’s important that we protect childhood,” says Mrozek. “Criminalizing the purchase of sex while offering help to those who are being exploited is a sensible approach, and a necessary one if we aim to create safe communities.”

Andrea Mrozek can be reached for comment at 613-565-3832, ext. 7502.