

December 14, 2007

1-877-776-2004 ext 2

**WHO: Supervisor Jake McGoldrick and SEX WORKERS OUTREACH PROJECT**

**WHAT: Press Conference**

**WHERE: City Hall steps Polk side, SAN FRANCISCO**

**WHEN: 11:30 MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2007**

On Monday, December 17th, 2007, Sex Workers Outreach Project USA will host the 5th Annual International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers in Civic Center Plaza at 6pm. The public is welcome. Names of those who have been victims of violence will be read, their stories told and they will be remembered with a candle-light vigil.

Every December 17th for the past 5 years, Sex Workers Outreach Project USA (SWOP-USA) has held a vigil in Bay Area cities to call attention to the violence perpetrated against certain women, all sex workers, most of who are only remembered for their criminal status.

“Violence is the result of an underground economy and the black market that has emerged over so many years of criminalization,” said Robyn Few, co founder of SWOP-USA. “Our criminal status often renders us silent. How can we seek redress? How can we go to the police? Until we are able to change our status, we will always be viewed as willing participants in our own rape and murder.”

“When violence is perpetrated against one woman, be she a sex worker or not, it is an act of violence against all women,” said Supervisor Jake McGoldrick, who will co-host this year’s event with SWOP-USA. “It is time to change the laws against prostitution so that we can protect these workers.”

“The new form of 21st century slavery is not prostitution but rather penal slavery,” states Dr Avaren Ispen, Lecturer at UC Berkeley in Social Theory. “The criminalization of certain populations makes them easier to control as an informal economy and when they get out of line their labor can be coerced legally in the jail. Real abolition of slavery means ending the complicity of the state with structural violence against sex workers.”

On December 17th around the world sex worker rights advocates and allies will take to the streets calling attention to violence against all women, but especially those who have no voice and who are often further criminalized in the media when their stories are told.

On December 14<sup>th</sup> in Oakland, SWOP representatives will meet on International Blvd and in Berkeley on San Pablo Ave and offer legal advice, gifts and services to sex workers. On December 17<sup>th</sup> in Chicago, SWOP members will march to the police station, Arizona members will do a memorial procession to El Tiradito Shrine in Tucson. In Vermont, SWOP will meet at the Unitarian Church. In Las Vegas, sex workers will stroll down Fremont St. with candles and signs. In New York they will meet at the Judson Memorial Church. In Michigan they will go to the Capitol building in Lansing and in Los Angeles members will go to the Women’s Alive Access Center. For a complete list of events happening around the world please go our website at [www.swopusa.org/dec17](http://www.swopusa.org/dec17)

