

**The No Pride in Policing Coalition (NPPC) Opposes Bill 251:
It expands Police powers against Black, Indigenous and
racialized people and is not what Trafficking Survivors have
asked for.**

Deputation on behalf of the No Pride in Policing Coalition (NPPC) by Jamie Magnusson and Gary Kinsman before the Standing Committee on Justice Policy regarding Bill 251, Combating Human Trafficking Act, 2021. For, the 1pm session on May 13, 2021.

My name is Jamie Magnusson and this is Gary Kinsman. We are presenting on behalf of the No Pride in Policing Coalition (NPPC). We are a coalition of queer and trans activists organizing for defunding and abolishing the police and all forms of carceral institutions. We stand in solidarity with sex workers.

We are totally opposed to Bill 251 and Ontario's 5-year plan, the "Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy 2020-2025". We are outraged that the government plans to spend \$307 million dollars implementing this strategy. We noted that the Toronto Police Services proposed \$0 to this year's budget, no doubt mindful of the mass demonstrations this past year led by Black activists and Black Queer and Trans activists calling for defunding and abolishing the police and all forms of carceral institutions in response to the police killings of Black, Indigenous and Racialized people, including members of the queer/trans community such as Coco. The NPPC and many other groups have been demanding that funds from policing and carceral institutions be re-directed back into these communities to create self-determined, sustainable communities.

Instead, the Ontario government is using a covert strategy to expand policing powers and to extend carceral logics into human and social services, budgeting more than \$300 million to implement it. These funds need to be re-directed into Black, Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized communities that have experienced years of disinvestment and destruction in the areas of public housing, education, libraries, community centres, anti-violence against women programs and services, queer/trans support, migrant services, and more.

Bill 251, which conflates sex work with human trafficking, proposes legislation that will further criminalize and endanger sex workers, and especially migrant sex workers and those who are from Black, Indigenous, Asian and racialized communities. Further, it outlines a cross-government action plan bringing the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services into greater cooperation with police services, the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Attorney General. This effectively extends policing and carceral logics into youth and other social services, criminalizing young people, especially from Black, Indigenous and racialized communities. This will have devastating impacts particularly on queer and trans Black, Indigenous and racialized youth who have been ousted from their family homes and are trying to survive free of confinement, surveillance, regulation, criminalization and stigmatization. This move effectively extends and intensifies carceral state logics into human services dealing with queer/trans and racialized young people. The NPPC recognizes the violent implications of this move with regard to our queer/trans racialized communities, and those within our communities who are struggling economically and socially during the pandemic. Often expelled from their families and fleeing from stigmatizing social services, under the new legislation queer/trans youth would be further targeted for police harassment and criminalization.

What Bill 251 calls for has nothing to do with what people who have survived trafficking have been calling for. We contrast what Indigenous trafficking survivors have been asking for versus what Bill 251 delivers.

Laura Hall, an Assistant Professor, in the School of Indigenous Relations, at Laurentian University in Sudbury, who has done support work and research with Indigenous survivors of trafficking gave the NPPC express permission to use the following quote:

“State-sanctioned anti-trafficking work has been funneled into policing and narrowed from what trafficking survivor groups were saying in 2015-2016. Policing *is* a problem. They don't do their jobs when it comes to actually finding the people who have done harm to Indigenous women and Two-spirit people and they also *are* violent to Indigenous women and Two-spirit people. If we give them more powers, obviously what we're doing is narrowing the scope of our prevention work while funneling much-needed resources away from Indigenous people and toward state agencies like the police.

Prevention is about creating safety, shelter, and community-care for Indigenous trafficking survivors. This means housing, not policing. Land access, Not policing. Culture-based addiction treatment, not policing.

Policing does harm to Indigenous trafficking survivors, and Indigenous communities more generally, who then get caught up in the arms of the state. 'Protection' work, 'wellness' checks and so on, funnel Indigenous people directly into state services including CAS (child welfare) and obviously prison.

Empowering Indigenous people to do our own justice-based work, to take care of each other and ourselves, should be at the center of our social response, and not more policing and criminalization.”

Bill 251 is diametrically opposed to what survivors have been asking for. We therefore call for a refusal to pass Bill 251 and instead for the funds that were to be allocated to it to go instead to Indigenous and other community-based agencies and projects providing housing, culturally based addiction treatment and harm reduction and other social supports, and access to the land for Indigenous people. To give more funds to the police who are a major danger to Indigenous, Black and racialized communities, to sex workers and poor and homeless people more generally, is to move in the entirely wrong direction.

The No Pride in Policing Coalition supports Black and Indigenous communities in advocating for redirecting police funds to invest in sustainable infrastructure for self-determination with respect to community-based health and wellbeing. We support the wisdom that children and youth are best served by investing in self-determined, adequately funded communities rather than police services.

Bill 251 moves entirely in the opposite direction of what marginalized communities are demanding, which is to re-direct funding from policing to communities.

Bill 251 is a major threat, it must not be passed.

References

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Shaver, F., Bryans, J., Bhola, I. (2018). Perceptions of sex work: Challenging the narratives of police and regulatory officials. In Elya M. Durisin, Emily Van der Meulen, Chris Bruckert (Eds.), *Red light labour: Sex work, regulation and resistance*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Ontario's anti-human trafficking strategy 2020-2025. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-anti-human-trafficking-strategy-2020-2025>

No Pride in Policing Coalition Statement on Bill 251

The No Pride in Policing Coalition (NPPC) is a queer and trans organization calling for defunding and abolishing the police and standing in solidarity with sex workers.

On February 22, 2021 Doug Ford announced new ‘anti-human trafficking’ legislation, building on a five-year \$307 million dollar investment into policing and community resources. The new legislation purportedly fights ‘human trafficking’, but does it really? In fact, proposed Bill 251 reduces the definition of ‘human trafficking’ to ‘sex trafficking’ and does not distinguish ‘sex trafficking’ from ‘sex work’. Further, the proposed legislation represents an unprecedented increase in police powers in the Province of Ontario and is designed to expand the surveillance infrastructure targeting Indigenous, Black and racialized communities. The legislation brings children’s aid societies (CAS) into further cooperation with police services and facilitates greater collaboration between the Solicitor General’s Office and the Ministry for Children, Community and Social Services. This move effectively extends and intensifies carceral state logics into human services dealing with racialized youth.

The No Pride in Policing Coalition stands in solidarity with Sex Worker organizations in challenging Bill 251. More than any other current Canadian legislation, the new bill separates what it calls ‘human trafficking’ from its social and historical connections to labour exploitation by having a singular focus on ‘sex trafficking’. In spite of its singular focus, the new Bill will do little to help young people and in fact will intensify policing of Indigenous, Black and racialized communities, and will further criminalize and endanger sex workers. The new legislation extends the reach of police services into the lives of racialized youth, by linking social services for children, youth and families with the police services and the carceral state.

The NPPC calls for the immediate withdrawal of Bill 251

We further call for defunding and demilitarizing all police services in Canada with the end goal of abolition of all carceral practices and institutions. We call for funds from policing to be redirected to Black, Indigenous, racialized and marginalized communities to create sustainable programs and services.

Follow the links below on our website for our full list of demands:

<https://noprideinpolicing.ca/>

Why Abolition?: The implications of Bill 251 for further criminalizing sex work, queer and trans, Indigenous, Black and racialized communities

Erasing the full spectrum of labour relations historically associated with the term ‘human trafficking’ by focusing exclusively on ‘sex trafficking’ is a sleight of hand trick to legitimate expanding police powers at a time when more and more groups are calling for defunding. What is erased includes the expansive range of human trafficking represented by global supply chains in food production, factory production, domestic services, hospitality, and personal care work. Dismantling the full spectrum of human trafficking entails abolishing prisons and other carceral sites that are produced and maintained by global capitalism as cheap sources of labour. It also involves dismantling free trade agreements which arguably produce transnational geographies of human trafficking. We can see that truly dismantling legal and illegal human trafficking involves dismantling the structures and institutions that represent what we have come to know as global racial capitalism.

These observations beg the question: why is legislation being introduced at this time using a rhetorical strategy that disingenuously restricts the definition of ‘human trafficking’ to ‘sex trafficking’, with a focus on young people? We argue that this thinly veiled tactic legitimates a massive investment into policing and a significant extension of carceral state logics into the everyday life of racialized and gendered youth, queer and trans and migrant workers and sex workers.

We are currently living through mass global uprisings calling for defunding, dismantling and abolishing police institutions and prisons. These uprisings are organized through the leadership of Black and Indigenous communities and supported by an ever-increasing constellation of allies. The call for abolition acknowledges that global racial capitalism requires white supremacist police violence against Black and Indigenous and People of Colour in order to continue producing a profit. It requires ever more expansive border control along with discretionary powers to apprehend and detain individuals, family and children. The new legislation, in fact, gives unprecedented discretionary powers to police and social services to apprehend and remove 16 and 17 year old youth.

Recently the Toronto Police Services proposed a 0% increase to their budget. They were undoubtedly concerned that requesting an increase would be met with loud public opposition. However, this did not hinder them from shifting funds around, allowing them to increase surveillance of Black and other marginalized communities in Toronto. We argue that Bill 251 is a ‘back-door’ avenue artfully strategized by the Conservative government to infuse funding into policing, significantly expanding and deepening a surveillance state. It represents a publicly paid, state-endowed ‘gift’ to support the private interests represented by carceral/surveillance capitalism.

Groups such as the No Pride in Policing Coalition that routinely challenge any increase to police budgets may be disingenuously constructed as disinterested in protecting our most vulnerable. To the contrary, No Pride in Policing supports Black and Indigenous communities in advocating for redirecting police funds to invest in sustainable infrastructure for self-determination with respect to community-based health and wellbeing. We support the wisdom that children and youth are best served by investing in self-determined, adequately funded communities rather than police services.

Children/youth and families require access to housing, food security, and economic security, politically shaped through by an ethic of care. Their safety and wellbeing require publicly funded community centers, schools, libraries, health services and community programs to cultivate and enhance talent such as visual arts, literature, music, dance, sports. Whereas carceral capitalism is invested in the disposability of lives, sustainable self-determined communities are invested in life-making.

Bill 251 is moving entirely in the opposite direction of what marginalized communities are demanding, which is to re-direct funding from policing to communities. The No Pride in Policing Coalition recognizes the violent implications of this move with regard to our Queer/Trans racialized communities, and those within our communities who are struggling economically and socially during the pandemic. Often expelled from their families and fleeing from stigmatizing social services, under the new legislation queer/trans youth would be further targeted for police harassment and criminalization.

WE DEMAND THE WITHDRAWAL OF BILL 251

- We call for the immediate defunding of the Toronto Police Services budget by 50%, to be redirected so as to create sustainable queer and trans and Indigenous and Black and Racialized livability.
- We call for the abolition of policing and all forms of carceral practices and institutions.
- We call for the funding to be redirected back into marginalized communities in order to promote self-determination through an ethics of care.

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