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Title of presentation: Politicalization of Human Trafficking Laws in Canada

Abstract

This study reviews the evidence at the basis of a recent government report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights titled, "Moving Forward in the Fight Against Trafficking in Canada." Through a critical socio-legal lens, I examined the degree to which empirical evidence was relied upon by the committee and the depth of academic support that could be found for the recommendations put forward. The findings demonstrate that very little academic empirical research was taken up by the committee. Instead, the sources that most strongly influenced the committee appear to have been submitted by the government, organizations with an abolitionist ideology and religious organizations. The final report did not reflect empirical academic evidence, nor did it incorporate the recommendations of organizations working with the population. Canadian human trafficking law appears to be based more on politically charged ideas of sex work and human trafficking than it is reflective of empirical knowledge.