



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 82

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to mandate meaningful sentencing for prostitution recidivists.

By Council Members Vallone Jr., Avella, Nelson, Rivera, Quinn and Gallagher

Whereas, Many communities within the city of New York are negatively impacted by prostitution, most especially by repeat offenders of this crime; and

Whereas, The city overall has experienced an increase in the number of those arrested for prostitution since 1999, and only in 2002, when the majority of police resources were focused on counter-terrorism, was there a decline in this arrest rate; and

Whereas, Certain communities, such as Greenwich Village, have experienced a significant amount of arrests; for example, from January to March of 2003, according to the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, 300 people were arrested for prostitution and 242 were arrested for loitering for solicitation; and

Whereas, Recidivists in Greenwich Village, those classified by 5 or more arrests in 24 months, represented 46 arrests during that period, a number which the Manhattan District Attorney's Office considers to be unusually high given the total number of arrests for prostitution; and

Whereas, To preserve the quality of life of residents, the businesses they own and frequent, and to encourage future economic investment in their communities, appropriate reforms to curb this activity must be implemented; and

Whereas, The police department, though effective in apprehending prostitutes, are limited in their ability to curb future activity due to the current sentencing laws; and

Whereas, First-time offenders who patronize prostitutes are offered a rehabilitation program instead of jail, which has proven to reduce patronizing recidivists, however, no similar program is offered to those arrested for prostitution; and

Whereas, Many prostitutes engage in this criminal activity due to a lack of options such as job training, education, treatment for physical and emotional injuries suffered, and protection from pimps who threaten physical force; and

Whereas, Mandating those arrested for prostitution to attend a life skills rehabilitation program may effectively reduce the rate of recidivist prostitutes; and

Whereas, Rehabilitation, however, may not be the only sentencing option for those who are repeat

offenders; and

Whereas, The courts have been reluctant to impose meaningful sentences for recidivists; and

Whereas, Failure to punish repeat offenders with jail time sends the message that the city does not take these crimes seriously; and

Whereas, Legislation such as New York State Assembly Bill 04409 would authorize and mandate stiffer penalties for persistent offenders thereby helping to deter this criminal behavior; and

Whereas, In order to ensure that quality of life crimes such as prostitution do not proliferate, it is important that all efforts be employed, including meaningful sentencing for prostitution recidivists; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to mandate meaningful sentencing for prostitution recidivists.