

**From:** Ian Williamson [mailto:Ian.Williamson@nistudents.org]  
**Sent:** 23 October 2013 15:59  
**To:** +Comm Justice Public Email  
**Cc:** Rebecca Hall  
**Subject:** Paper on Human Trafficking Bill for Committee for Justice from NUS-USI

Hi Christine,

Further to your letter of 3 October seeking views/comments on Lord Morrow's Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further Provisions and Support for Victims) Bill, here is a paper from NUS-USI.

NUS-USI does not wish to give verbal evidence to the committee on the bill, as this paper covers the key aspects regarding it.

Many thanks,

Ian Williamson

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**Comments from NUS-USI for Committee  
for Justice on Human Trafficking and  
Exploitation (Further Provisions and  
Support for Victims) Bill**

(National Union of Students - Union of  
Students in Ireland)

## Introduction

The National Union of Students - Union of Students in Ireland (NUS-USI) was established in 1972 under a unique arrangement where both the British and Irish national student unions, National Union of Students (NUS) and Union of Students in Ireland (USI) respectively, jointly organised in Northern Ireland to promote student unity across the community.

NUS-USI student movement represents the interests of around 200,000 students in Northern Ireland and campaigns on their behalf in many different fields such as student hardship, health, prejudice and accommodation. We also provide an infrastructure that helps individual Students' Unions in the North of Ireland to develop their own work through our research, training and development functions.

## Opening comments on the Bill

NUS-USI wishes to begin by thanking the Committee for Justice for enabling the opportunity for groups to submit their views on Lord Morrow's Human Trafficking Bill.

Human trafficking is an issue of extreme significance and must be tackled extremely robustly by the authorities. We believe that the issue requires tough legislation in order to combat it, but we have massive concerns about this bill in its current form.

## Bill must address human trafficking alone

We believe that it is wrong and extremely unhelpful that the Bill appears to conflate the issue of human trafficking and sex work.

Any bill should be focusing on human trafficking and not any other issue. Human trafficking is such an important matter that any work or potential legislation regarding it should not be sidetracked or diluted by involving any other matter within it.

Human trafficking is an issue of such seriousness that it demands a bill focusing on it alone and anything else simply isn't acceptable.

The issue should be addressed in an apolitical way to ensure it is dealt with, and focused upon as effectively as possible.

## NUS-USI strongly opposes clause six, part one

NUS-USI believes that clause six of part one of the Bill, which is titled 'Paying for sexual services of a person', could have very dangerous ramifications for sex workers.

This clause could drive sex work further underground, and could endanger the safety of women working, in addition to potentially making it more difficult to leave the industry if they choose to. It could prevent sex workers from speaking out and we believe that this clause seriously undermines the bill. We would strongly encourage that this clause is removed, and if not we believe that the bill should be scrapped and a new one created focusing solely on human trafficking.

We want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the significant effort that Lord Morrow has put into the bill, but we hope that he will understand its current flaws and consider amending it or tabling fresh legislation to reflect the need to address human trafficking alone within such a bill.

Many have expressed significant reservations about the Bill, including Detective Chief Supt Philip Marshall of the PSNI. The Justice Minister, David Ford, does not support the clause. We would strongly encourage the committee to act to

help remove this clause as soon as possible.

The Swedish approach as regards sex work does not appear to work, and this bill should concentrate on human trafficking only, instead of trying to introduce legislation on any other issue.

The 2007 publication 'Collateral Damage: The Impact of Anti-Trafficking Measures on Human Rights around the World', stated that: "anti-trafficking measures are still being used to justify a raft of measures which are aimed at suppressing sex work in general."

## Other matters

On what should be a separate issue, NUS-USI believes that government here must fund comprehensive and extensive research into problems facing sex workers in Northern Ireland.

There is currently very little research on sex workers and we believe that a detailed study could provide information to help build policy and strategy to help safeguard people involved in sex work and to help those who wish to leave sex work to do so safely. This research could significantly help inform the provision of public services to deliver support for sex workers to help ensure their safety and to help those wishing to leave sex work to do so.

We strongly believe that there is a pressing need for government here to fund such research as soon as possible and they should involve organisations representative sex workers to ensure that they can deliver the widest response possible.

In conducting this type of survey it is also vital that the survey is conducted in a manner which encourages sex workers to take part and ensures their safety and anonymity.

In examining any matter it is essential that evidence is gathered and that an evidence base is built to understand demand and need for public services, for example, or to inform government policy. We believe that this type of comprehensive research work is essential to inform any debates and policy on this matter.

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