

RECOGNITION OF THE DAY TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST SEX WORKERS

“I hate most prostitutes and I did not want to pay them for sex ... I also picked prostitutes as victims because they were easy to pick up without being noticed. I knew they would not be reported missing right away and might never be reported missing. I picked prostitutes because I thought I could kill as many of them as I wanted without getting caught.” — Gary Ridgway, the Green River Killer.

“I thought I could kill as many of them as I wanted without getting caught.” Those haunting words stick with us 15 years after Ridgway was convicted of murdering 48 sex workers.¹ The Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers was conceived by the Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP), a national social justice network dedicated to the fundamental human rights of people involved in the sex trade and their communities. Every year, on December 17, SWOP and allies of individuals involved in commercial sex come together to call attention to the violence facing sex workers every day.

The Amara Legal Center is proud to take part in recognizing the honor and dignity of sex workers around the world. True to our mission, we embrace the inherent dignity of all people, especially those who reside on the margins and often face harassment and criminalization due to their gender or racial minority status.

As Amara is a service provider, we want all individuals selling sexual services by choice, coercion, or circumstance to see us as a resource. We meet our clients where they are to provide non-judgmental legal services that empower them to live self-determined lives. On the Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers, we focus on the importance of access to resources. Amara wants to be a resource to all sex workers and survivors.

Yvette Butler is the Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships at the Amara Legal Center.

¹ CNN, Green River Killer Sentenced to Life in Prison, December 19, 2003, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/LAW/12/18/green.river.sentencing/>

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