

From the Desk of...

Christina Parreira

My name is Christina Parreira. I am a PhD candidate in sociology at UNLV and worked as a sex worker in Nye County brothels as a means to collect data for my doctoral dissertation. So I know this issue like the back of my hand, as I have both lived it and studied it for 6 years.

On the issue of the 24-hour rule, the county's rationale has always been STI prevention. But from a public health standpoint this has no basis in science.

I work at a syringe exchange where I test clients for HIV/Hep C, and it could take up to 3 months for these to appear on a test - not to mention that there has never been one case of HIV transmitted in the brothels.

And although I do testing at work and run the risk of contracting something myself via contact with bio hazard and used syringes, I am not forced to live at the syringe exchange.

An STI can be contracted in the time it takes to read this statement. And a test the next day only forces the sex worker to spend her own money to get re-tested, lose time off of work, and ease the misguided public conscience; a result of stigma. What actually prevents the spread of infection are condoms, which of course are already mandated by law.

The reality is that we are not in the brothel hoping for a chance to get out and contract an STI. We want to leave to see our families and children at the end of a work day and have basic freedoms that other workers are trusted to have.

I have asked proponents of the 24-hour rule what their rationale is, but other than the misinformed public health reasoning, there is no good reason. This rule is outdated and based in stigma against legal tax-paying women.

If we want prostitution to happen in legal regulated businesses, we should make it a hospitable environment for the workers. Lastly, I urge you to listen to actual sex workers; those impacted by these restrictive laws.

Thank you for your time.