



## **Let's Stop Pushing Policies That Turn Women into Drug-Addicted Chattel**

**by David Berner**

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No sooner had the Pickton verdict been aired than every wiseacre in town felt compelled to add his wisdom to the mix. Most pointed to the obvious fact that the verdict does nothing to alleviate the conditions that allowed these monstrosities to occur.

The scourges of addictions and prostitution have been named the enemy, at least until 2010 has come and gone.

Most hookers, whether of the Downtown Eastside or four-star hotel vintage, are addicts of one kind or another. They make their so-called living by renting out their privates by the hour. You think there is something honourable about such a life?

From the outset, the Four Pillars anti-drug strategy, spoken of in these parts in the same hushed tones as

Exodus or Revelations, has been one pillar and three matchsticks.

Harm-reduction measures such as free needles, safe-injection pit stops and replacement drugs hold sway in the official view.

Enforcement, prevention and treatment are given short shrift. Treatment, in particular, is barely funded at all, and the official playbooks claim it doesn't work.

Which, of course, is always an amusing surprise to the thousands of Canadian men and women, and the millions around the world, who have given up drugs and are now proudly clean and sober.

But look at what some of our leaders are selling. Libby Davies and Mayor Sam Sullivan are lobbying for legal brothels . . . co-ops no less.

How enterprising. How chic. How mutton-headed.

Davies, the NDP MP for Vancouver East, is a wonderful person. She is smart and kind and thoughtful and a good laugher. She has always worked hard for her constituents.

But on some issues, compassion need be tempered by knowledge. And Davies, though honoured with international awards for her work in this area, has remained mysteriously in the dark about the real mechanics of addictions and prostitution.

The mayor, on the other hand, is the dark. His ideas on these subjects are strictly from Mars. Give the girls drugs and help them open a co-op whorehouse. Great!

Why has it never occurred to these well-meaning souls to reach out to prostitutes and ask: "May I help you get out of the life?"

For the mayor, this is unthinkable. The mayor has a belief system, and he insists Vancouver swallow it.

It goes like this: You, the addict/prostitute, are like me; you are disabled and you will always be disabled. Therefore, the only humane thing to do is to help you live with your disability; we will make you comfortable, we will give you drugs and a place to sell your body while the meter's ticking.

In the world of Libby and Sam, young women will be officially enslaved. State-financed and state-sanctioned, girls will remain drug-addled chattel.

What unholy hidden hostility asks for this?