

E-mails received from Maxine Doogan, official proponent of Ordinance: Enforcement of Laws Related to Prostitution and Sex Workers (working title)

Received July 25, 2008:

Department of Elections
Attention: John Arntz,

July 24, 2008
Re: title of ballot initiative

Greetings,

I just wanted to thank your department for their part in facilitating our signature collection drive. We found all the department staff friendly and helpful in answering our questions and helping us through in the process.

I also wanted to make mention that in circulating the same initiative with the same language as in 2006, we were given a different title and different summary by the city attorney's office. Last time the title was Non Enforcement of the Prostitution Laws and Bring Protection to Sex Workers and the summary made statements that lead some to believe that funding for all sex worker education funding would be prohibited if the measure passed. We asked and got clarification through Jake McGoldrick's office that that would not be the case.

This time, the city attorney's office gave us the title of Enforcement of Laws Related to Prostitution and Sex Workers and didn't mention anything about protection. And again the summary was different in that it reflected more details about some of the task force on prostitution recommendations and spoke more directly about the FOPP as well as the aim for protection.

My concern is that the title given two years ago would have been more comprehensive for voters in that it referred to stopping one thing, the enforcement of the prostitution laws and focusing on the intent of our initiative, protection for sex workers. Some have questioned what is the difference between a prostitute and sex worker. These words are used interchangeably in our culture. But it is of note that in some sectors of the erotic community prostitutes refer to themselves as sex workers, but some sex workers never identify themselves as prostitutes. I think that for simplification purposes one word ought to be used to refer to prostitutes and that word ought to be sex workers. Also, I hope that in crafting a title, at this next phase of ballot initiative process, the word protection will be included as well.

In referring to the term prostitution, I would expect that the actual legal definition would be used and not some arbitrary dictionary version. Because California Penal Code 647(b) has 3 elements to it, one of which is a lewd act, this definition ought to be included as well.

The term trafficking victim ought to be defined for voters as anyone of any age who is subjected to force, coercion or fraud.

The term institutionalizing racial profiling has to describe the means by which the police use unfettered discretion to enforce the prohibition on prostitution to make "unreasonable searches and seizures," whereby sex industry workers end up being deported. Even when sex industry workers are offered diversion through the FOPP, the arrest is enough to bar undocumented workers from obtaining legal visas or citizenship in the USA.

Thanks for your time and attention in this matter and your department's hard work in this election season.

Maxine Doogan
Proponent of Nov. ballot initiative.

Received July 24, 2008:

Thanks for the information.

FYI, the sex worker nation are mostly workers at night so scheduling meetings regarding our issues are 9 am isn't the way to conduct a public process that includes us.