

Lower Mainland Mayors presentation: Friday, January 17, 2025.

Thank you. My name is Cathy Peters. I was an inner city high school teacher 45 years ago.

For the past 11 years I have been raising awareness about the crime of **Human Sex Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation, and Child Sex Trafficking.**

It is the fastest growing crime globally, in Canada and locally. BC is vulnerable with 3 ports, international airports, easy access to the USA border.

My website: **beamazingcampaign.org**

My new book: **Child Sex Trafficking in Canada and How to Stop It.** I have just completed the second edition.

I have 2 new booklets: for **Indigenous and Public Health providers.** These should be available to every band and hospital in BC.

I am observing 5 Trends:

1. With the full decriminalization of hard drugs in BC, drug use amongst youth has exploded and become normalized/accepted. Once youth are easily hooked, they will sell their bodies to get more drugs. Sex trafficking explodes. Full decriminalization of hard drugs needs to be repealed.
2. With massive immigration and a weakened economy in Canada human trafficking, crime, prostitution is increasing.
3. Sexting (sending nude photos) is being normalised so sextortion, online grooming, luring, and recruiting for the sex industry is increasing. There is an increase in the sexualization of youth/children. Which in turn increases childhood sexual assault/incest, and child-on-child sexual assault.
4. There is a lack of digital safety training, social media accountability, positive parenting support and **lack of education to teach men and boys NOT to exploit women and girls.**
5. The unchecked development of artificial intelligence (AI).

Human trafficking is the recruiting, transporting, transferring, receiving, holding, concealing, harbouring or exercising control over a person for the purpose of exploiting them.

STATS:

-13 years old is the average age of recruitment. In cities- 10-12 year olds.

-50%-90% in the sex trade are Indigenous.

-82% involved in prostitution had childhood sexual abuse/incest.

-72% live with complex PTSD.

-95% in prostitution want to leave- it is NOT a choice or a job.

-90%-99% of prostituted persons are pimped or trafficked- organized crime and international crime syndicates are involved.

-Only 1-5% of individuals get out of the sex industry. The majority experience mental illness, drug addiction, commit suicide or are murdered.

The most notorious cases in Canada are from the Lower Mainland:

Amanda Todd (victim), **Robert Pickton** (sex buyer and gruesome serial killer), **Reza Moazami** (trafficker).

I have been raising awareness about sexual exploitation and Child Sex Trafficking, to every City Council, Regional District, MLA, MP, school board and police agency in BC since **The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA)** became Federal Law in 2014, so that police would enforce it, the public would understand it and be able to report it.

The Law has 4 parts:

- 1. Targets the DEMAND by criminalizing the buyers of sex and profiteers.**
- 2. Recognizes the seller of sex as a victim, who is immune from prosecution.**
- 3. Exit strategies are in place to assist the victim out of the sex trade.**
- 4. Robust prevention education programs are in place so youth, children and the vulnerable are not pulled into the sex industry.**

This Law focuses on the **source of harm**: the buyers of sex and the profiteers. The clear statement from Parliament was that girls and women in Canada are

NOT FOR SALE; that they are full human beings, with dignity and human rights.

This LAW is not enforced in BC, so prostitution is de facto legalized. **Unless the sex buyers are deterred this crime will continue to explode.**

Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal are global sex tourism hotspots. Canada is a **Child Sex Tourism** destination.

The global sex trade is growing FAST, targeting children (children is where the money is), fueled by the internet where most of the luring is taking place. The US Surgeon General is recommending no social media platforms until ages 16-18 years of age, and no smartphones until at least age 15. Dumbphones are a better option than smartphones. Phones need to be removed from schools in BC.

Contributing factors to a rapidly growing sex industry is **globalization, unregulated technology, limited law enforcement and very little prevention education.**

Canada has a new **National Human Trafficking Hotline number: 1-833-900-1010.** Provincially VictimLink has a helpline.

Communities need to: **Reduce Demand** by addressing complicit businesses. **Diminish Supply** by education and public awareness.

Businesses involved; unregistered massage and body rub parlours, nail spas, day spas, modelling agencies, tattoo parlours, escort services, cheap bars and hotels, men's clubs, AirBnB, VRBO, casinos, strip clubs, organized crime club houses, bus stops, homeless camps, tent cities, can be typical covers for sexual exploitation.

Prostitution is ILLEGAL in Canada. Sweden has the similar law as Canada, where men and boys understand gender equality, so prostitution is not accepted or normalized there. So, it is possible to stop sexual exploitation. **The KEY is to reach the Premier, so he understands the Federal Law needs to be enforced.** I have an example template letter for the Premier.

The sex industry is targeting youth online. Schools are **recruiting grounds for gangs even in elementary schools**. An effective deterrent is the **School Liaison Officer Program**; officers prevent crime and protect the vulnerable.

Pornography is a public health crisis. Along with childhood sexual assault, pornography is a pipeline to prostitution. Online pornography is grooming our children. Mass-scale prevention education is needed in this country.

Who are the victims? Typically, female but due to popularity of online gaming sites a growing number of boys.

Who are the traffickers? Typically male, with some female traffickers who recruit their peers. Traffickers today are highly organized, sophisticated, move fast; organized crime and even sometimes family members are involved.

Who are the buyers? Male buyers from all ages and demographics are the root cause of the harm caused by human trafficking. If there were no buyers there would be no business.

What is needed to stop this crime in BC?

1. The enforcement of the **Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons ACT** (PCEPA), that criminalizes the sex buyer, profiteer and trafficker, while acknowledging that the seller of sex is a victim.
2. Additional funding and programs to help trafficked person out of prostitution.
3. A provincial public awareness campaign to stop sexual exploitation plus school education- especially teaching boys not to exploit women and girls.
4. A Human Trafficking Task Force similar to drugs and gangs and updating of provincial police policies in line with PCEPA.
5. Education for crown counsel and judiciary.

QUESTIONS (my words in brief):

Mayor Mike Little- District of North Vancouver- *Why is this occurring in BC and not elsewhere?*

Ans: Political will is the key. The Premier is the Key.

Mayor Linda Buchanan- City of North Vancouver- *No campaign here- Why? USA has posters in airports.*

Ans: No awareness campaigns by the government. But Paul Brandt with “Not in My City” NGO out of Alberta is training Canadian airports, and training police (Maddison Sessions).

Mayor Brenda Locke- Surrey- *Schools? School Boards? Do they know about this?*

Ans: They are difficult to reach. Terrace School Board is an exception.

Mayor Richard Stewart- Coquitlam- *Mental health issues? Any recognition of this?*

Ans: No medical, nursing or social work program address this issue in Canada. Mental health for our youth is at risk today.

MAYORS:

Membership: 23

Locke, Brenda (C) – Surrey

West, Brad (VC) – Port Coquitlam

Berry, Ken – Lions Bay

Brodie, Malcolm – Richmond

Buchanan, Linda – North Vancouver City

Cassidy, Laura – Tsawwassen First Nation

Harvie, George V. – Delta

Hurley, Mike – Burnaby

Johnstone, Patrick – New Westminster

Knight, Megan – White Rock

Lahti, Meghan – Port Moody

Leonard, Andrew – Bowen Island

Little, Mike – North Vancouver District

MacDonald, Nicole – Pitt Meadows

McCutcheon, Jen – Electoral Area A

McEwen, John – Anmore

Pachal, Nathan – Langley City

Ross, Jamie – Belcarra

Ruimy, Dan – Maple Ridge

Sager, Mark – West Vancouver

Sim, Ken – Vancouver

Stewart, Richard – Coquitlam

Woodward, Eric – Langley Township