

1 [Resolution Commending the Work of the US PROStitutes Collective to End Violence and  
2 Criminalization]

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4 **Resolution Commending the US PROS Collective for the protection of sex workers’**  
5 **over the nation and to end Violence and Criminalization through organizing.**  
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7 WHEREAS, The US PROStitutes Collective (US PROS) is an organization of sex  
8 workers and supporters which for twenty seven years has campaigned for justice, protection  
9 and resources so that no woman, man or child is forced into prostitution through poverty or  
10 other violence, and that the safety of all women and children is prioritized; and

11 WHEREAS, US PROS comes out of a history in San Francisco of sex workers  
12 organizing for their rights from as far back as 1917 when five hundred prostitute women took  
13 over the Central Methodist church in the Tenderloin; and,

14 WHEREAS, US PROS addresses the sexism, racism and other discrimination that  
15 push women in prostitution such as low wages, unequal pay, welfare cuts, rape and domestic  
16 violence, debt, insecure immigration status, homelessness and more; and,

17 WHEREAS, US PROS has brought to the attention of communities and government  
18 representatives the ways in which criminalization and fear of arrest and deportation increase  
19 sex workers’ vulnerability to violence as women are deterred from reporting attacks; and

20 WHEREAS, In the early 1980s, US PROS spearheaded efforts to bring to public  
21 attention and stop the serial murders of mainly prostitute women on the West Coast, joining  
22 with the Coalition to Stop the Green River Murders in Seattle, and the Black Coalition Fighting  
23 Back Serial Murders in Los Angeles; and

24 WHEREAS, In 1984, US PROS founded Legal Action for Women (LAW), a free legal  
25 service to defend sex workers’ and other women’s legal and civil rights; and

1           WHEREAS, In 1994, US PROS was appointed by the Board of Supervisors to the San  
2           Francisco Task Force on Prostitution, set up because the “criminal nature of prostitution has  
3           led to widespread beatings and victimization of prostitutes”, and played a key role in ensuring  
4           that the Task Force groundbreaking recommendations prioritized women’s safety and the  
5           situation of the most vulnerable sex workers such as women who work the streets and  
6           women of color; and

7           WHEREAS, In 1996, US PROS and supporters launched a petition in City Hall for  
8           implementation of the Task Force recommendations, which according to the SF Examiner poll  
9           had the support of 66% of people in the City; and

10          WHEREAS, In 1998, US PROS and LAW launched a two-year community project to  
11          seek justice for four victims, three of whom were prostitute women, monitoring the trial of  
12          serial rapist Jack Bokin – he was convicted and sentenced to 231 years in prison and stopped  
13          from attacking other women; and

14          WHEREAS, In 1998, US PROS founded the In Defense of Prostitute Women’s Safety  
15          Project to provide support to victims of rape, sexual assault and other violence; and

16          WHEREAS, In 1998, US PROS testified at the SF Commission on the Status of  
17          Women public hearing on “Violence against Women and Girls in Prostitution”, and with  
18          Supervisor Tom Ammiano coordinated a public hearing in City Hall on “How to Stop Violence  
19          against Prostitute Women and other Sex Workers” which culminated in the Board of  
20          Supervisor’s resolution “Mitigating Violence against Prostitutes” passed in 2000; and

21          WHEREAS, US PROS has built a wide network of support for implementation of the  
22          resolution, including unanimous support from the Human Rights Commission, the Immigrant  
23          Rights Commission and the Youth Commission, as well as from religious communities,  
24          residents, lawyers, and many other organizations and individuals; and

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1           WHEREAS, US PROS is coordinating a community-based initiative, *Safety First:*  
2    *Protecting Sex Workers from Violence*, which highlights sex workers' continued vulnerability  
3    to rape and even murder, and urgently seeks to turn the resolution into ordinance; now,  
4    therefore, be it

5           RESOLVED, To recognize the efforts and contribution of the US PROstitutes  
6    Collective to making San Francisco a place where everyone, whatever their sex, race, age,  
7    occupation or lifestyle, has the right to be free from attack and to have access to the  
8    resources they need to survive; and, be it

9           FURTHER RESOLVED, To give a special recognition to lifelong campaigner for  
10   women's rights and anti-racism Selma James from London, England, who is in San Francisco  
11   to speak on "Rape, Race and Prostitution: the Cash Connection" as part of a national  
12   speaking tour, who was the first spokeswoman of their sister organization the English  
13   Collective of Prostitutes and has been a key advisor to US PROS since its beginning,  
14   focusing on the demand for safety and financial independence which sex workers share with  
15   all other women.

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