

March 28, 2019

Statement by Dena Duff
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Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

For the record, my name is Dena Duff and I am the front house manager, also known as the Madam, at Sheri's Ranch located in Pahrump, Nevada.

My statement has been submitted to the committee secretary and is on NELIS.

I have been a resident of Nevada since 1988 and a Nye County resident since 2004. I am a mother and grandmother, and I have worked at Sheri's Ranch for the last 13 years. In that time, I have interacted with hundreds of women from not only Nevada but all over the United States and from other countries.

I find myself in a very unique position in that I have the privilege to work with and help empower these amazing women. These women come from all walks of life and working hard to support themselves and/or their families but also working to better their futures and for some putting themselves through school. These same women become productive members of their communities by investing in property as well as the local economy, by paying taxes on the money earned while working in the brothels.

But what is a brothel? A licensed brothel provides a safe place for sex workers and their clients to conduct their business in an atmosphere of respect, dignity, and confidentiality. They have a right to respect with no judgment from the public eye. These women are entrepreneurs who provide a service - Nothing more and nothing less. Making sure that all of us working within the brothel industry are on the same page, by providing and maintaining a safe work environment and a certain amount of uniformity across the board for all sex workers is a step in the right direction.

In our country, women have had a long, hard journey to attain the achievements that we have today. We currently have more women in Congress than ever before, and we also have more women owning and operating their own businesses. Even here in Nevada, we have the first woman majority legislative body in the United States - All of this while juggling family, careers and all of life's other challenges. We can be proud of all of these milestones that women have accomplished, but we still have a way to go. I feel that the perception of what the brothel industry is in the public eye versus what the reality of what the brothel truly is, needs to be voiced and heard by more than just the few us in the industry. We look forward to the opportunity to to dispel what a vocal minority preaches about the industry to the general public.

While I firmly believe that the brothels are a benefit to the women who work in them, the customers who visit them, and the communities they reside in, this study will provide, for the first in history, a voice for the women in the sex industry, and a chance to be heard.

Our foremost priority is the health and safety of the women who work in our industry, as well as, the guests who visit our establishments. We support measures that review the rules and regulations and ensure Nevada's brothels serve as model businesses and excellent workplaces. More importantly, this is a opportunity to give women who work in the industry, especially those who have been stigmatized and misunderstood for decades, a voice.

On behalf of Sheri's Ranch, we support Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6 and thank Assemblywoman Cohen for bringing forth this resolution. Sheri's Ranch looks forward to participating and educating not only this body but the general public about the brothel industry in Nevada.