

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Monday, Feb. 2, 2026

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Sex Workers Rally to Protest Superbowl Spending on Anti-Trafficking Scams

Santa Clara, California – Sex workers and advocates will be rallying on Monday, February 2nd from 3:00 to 5:00 PM at the San Jose Convention Center. We object to the huge spending on “anti-trafficking operations” around Super Bowl LX, being held Sunday, February 8th at Levi Stadium in Santa Clara. Dozens of law enforcement agencies, including ICE, are coming together for these operations. Is this push really about anti-trafficking or is it a pretext for a crackdown to arrest and deport immigrants?

“It feels like Groundhog Day,” said Soma Snakeoil, Executive Director of *The Sidewalk Project*:

“Every year the same fake stories about sex trafficking at the Super Bowl resurface. There’s not a shred of evidence to support an increase in sex trafficking at the Super Bowl. A simple web search or checking [Snopes.com](https://www.snopes.com) would show this is false. Even the [Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women](https://www.globalallianceagainsttrafficinwomen.org) has debunked it. Historically, these operations target sex workers for arrest and few, if any, victims of trafficking are actually found. Most of those arrested are Black, Latinx and other women of color. Sex worker criminalization and deportation does not increase safety for anyone.”

So why does this urban myth keep coming back – year after year? The simple answer – it delivers money for law enforcement and scam “anti trafficking” non-profits. For example, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors recently approved \$27,456 in overtime funding for Human Trafficking operations for Superbowl LX based on an average overtime rate of \$156 per hour while state and federal budgets for survivor services have been drastically cut. This illustrates their priorities: money for law enforcement, nothing for survivors.

“Why doesn’t the government start properly funding social safety nets, permanent housing, and robust physical and mental health care,” says Soma Snakeoil.

“If they really care about victims, the state and counties should provide a Guaranteed Care Income,” said Rachel West of US PROStitutes Collective. Most sex workers are mothers. The Guaranteed Care Income San Francisco pilot was a groundbreaking one-year program that provided \$2,000 in monthly unconditional cash payments to ten low-income single mothers. This initiative was the first of its kind to explicitly recognize and compensate for the caregiving work of mothers, affirming that raising children is vital work that deserves payment. The participants faced severe economic hardships, including housing instability and little or no income. Many of these women were at high risk of criminalization or losing their children to the child welfare system, and some were active in sex work. Coordinated by *In Defense of Prostitute Women’s Safety* (IDPWS) and partner organizations, the pilot demonstrated that increasing financial security for low-income mothers reduced the systemic challenges of poverty and child removal.

The rally is being called by the [Stop the Raid Committee](#), which campaigns for the decriminalization of sex work. ###

