

## NEWS

### Prostitution legal in Las Vegas?

Sen. Harry Reid's idea to abolish prostitution sparked debate in Las Vegas' mayor race.

*Melissa Vogrin*

According to [Reuters](#), Senate majority leader Harry Reid gave a speech last month in which he criticized legal prostitution, saying that it has a detrimental affect on encouraging businesses to relocate to Nevada, resulting in a potential loss of jobs.

"Nevada needs to be known as the first place for innovation and investing — not as the last place where prostitution is still legal," he said.

Nevada, currently the only state with legal brothels, may be changing its stance on prostitution. Brothels have been legal in counties with fewer than 400,000 residents since the early 1970s, and there are currently two dozen of them.

Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman almost immediately released a statement in opposition to Reid's statement, vocalizing his belief that it would be in Las Vegas's best interest to "make prostitution legal in the city and create a Wild West version of Amsterdam."

Goodman, who has been in office for almost 12 years, has made this suggestion before. However, because of term limits, he cannot run for mayor again, and candidates vying to replace him took stands on the issue.

One candidate, current Clark County commissioner Larry Brown, said, "my position is I'm against it. We're trying to create a new Las Vegas here — there are more important priorities. Legalized prostitution is not an image we want to put forward."

Carolyn Goodman, who is both the current mayor's wife and a candidate to replace him, seemed to agree with Brown, as her spokesman explained that "she is concerned about teenage prostitutes and human trafficking but her campaign is focusing on other issues."

State Senator Ruben Kihuen stated that he doesn't think the issue will come up in immediate legislature at the state level. He added, "I've heard people say, 'If we didn't have the image of sex, more companies would want to come to Nevada.' But others say that it's why people come here."

People in the United States have long been divided on whether prostitution should be legal. As [ProCon.org](#) explains, "proponents of legalizing prostitution believe it would reduce crime, improve public health, increase tax revenue, help people out of poverty, get prostitutes off the streets, and allow consenting adults to make their own choices."

On the other hand, "opponents believe that legalizing prostitution would lead to increases in sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS, global human trafficking, and violent crime including rape and homicide."



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ProCon.org quotes an article by the Prostitutes' Education Network that states that there were more than 100,000 prostitutes in the United States in 2007, and that more than one million people in the U.S. have worked as prostitutes in the past, which equals to about one percent of all American women.

Another article on the same page estimates the number of prostitutes in the world to be at 40 million.

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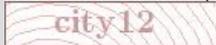
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