



## THE JOY SMITH FOUNDATION APPLAUDS CITY OF WINNIPEG GAME-CHANGING DECISION TO REPEAL BODY RUB PARLOURS AND ESCORT AGENCY LICENSES

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**Winnipeg, MB** – The City of Winnipeg Council voted today to end business licensing of body rub parlours and escort services. Winnipeg is the first major urban municipality in Canada to take this bold step against these types of businesses.

Joy Smith, former Member of Parliament, Founder of the [Joy Smith Foundation](#) and tireless advocate against human trafficking, calls the vote “a gamechanger” and is an important step in the fight against human trafficking and the victimization of women, girls and boys.

**“I applaud the City of Winnipeg for taking the initiative to listen and take action against body rub parlours and escort services. Their leadership will help end the victimization of trafficked victims and is an example for other municipalities to follow,” says Smith. “I particularly want to thank Mayor Bowman and Councillors Scott Gillingham and Sherri Rollins, who took a pivotal role in championing this issue to make our community safer and protect our children.”**

Since 2008, licensing escort agencies, independent escort agencies, escorts, body rub practitioners and body rub parlours has fallen under the Doing Business in Winnipeg bylaw. By passing the motion to implement bylaw changes, all licences are repealed.

Over the past several months, Joy Smith has worked closely with City representatives, partners, a federal human trafficking lawyer, and survivors who bravely shared their stories and experiences.

**“Over many months of collaboration with the Joy Smith Foundation and other partners, we gained a much greater understanding of the tragic victimization that can take place within body rub parlours. We want our youth and our communities to be safe and not licensing these facilities as businesses will help to do that.” says Scott Gillingham, City Councillor.**

In addition, the City of Winnipeg is partnering with the [National Human Trafficking Education Centre](#), an educational hub created by the Joy Smith Foundation in October 2021 that offers resources to help Canadians understand and fight human trafficking.



A free customized course will be available to Winnipeg grant recipients through Community Services, empowering those organizations involved with children or youth to recognize the signs of sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Three online modules will also be available free of charge for those who cannot attend the in-person training opportunities.

**“Education is our greatest weapon when it comes to fighting and ending human trafficking,” says Janet Campbell, President and CEO, Joy Smith Foundation. “Our mission is to provide access to information so that every Canadian is educated and empowered to stay safe from human trafficking. We are honoured to provide free courses and consultation to the City of Winnipeg and welcome the opportunity to partner with other Canadian municipalities. I invite municipal leaders to contact the Foundation to start the conversation today.”**

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**Media Interviews and Enquiries**  
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#### **About the Joy Smith Foundation**

The Joy Smith Foundation works to provide access to information so that every Canadian man, woman and child is educated and empowered to stay safe from manipulation, force, or abuse of power designed to lure and exploit them in the sex trade or forced labour.

As Canada’s leading authority on human trafficking, and the first organization in the country to focus on coordinating regionalized resources and services, the Joy Smith Foundation’s commitment to ending human trafficking is stronger than ever. In 2021, the Joy Smith Foundation started a new chapter by launching the National Human Trafficking Education Centre and welcoming Janet Campbell as its new President and CEO.

For more information: <https://joysmithfoundation.com>



#### **About the National Human Trafficking Education Centre**

The National Human Trafficking Education Centre provides courses for teachers, parents, front-line responders and all Canadians who want to play a role in the prevention and intervention of human trafficking. Instructor-led and online courses range in length and are easily accessible through the Centre’s portal.

Visit the [National Human Trafficking Education Centre](#) for more information and to register for a course.

