

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party  
*for the South East of England*

The Baroness Uddin  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

October 27<sup>th</sup> 2009

Dear Baroness,

As I am sure you are aware, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of November the Policing and Crime Bill Report will be debated by the House of Lords. It includes proposals to allow lap dancing clubs to be licensed in the same way as sex shops and sex cinemas (clause 26, Part 2) thus giving communities a greater say in the licensing of lap dancing clubs. The objective is to also place such clubs under greater scrutiny, thereby better protecting women in the industry and challenging the idea that sex clubs occupy the same sort of place in communities as cafes or pubs.

However, the proposals in the Policing and Crime Bill are flawed:

- 1) The new licensing regime is optional for local councils. This opens up the likelihood of the industry exploiting a patchwork licensing system and performers continuing to face poor working conditions as clubs migrate to areas of weaker regulation. It also means that local communities will only be given a voice in some areas.
- 2) Venues that hold lap dancing sessions less than once a month will be exempted from the new licensing regime. This includes pubs and clubs that hold 'lap dancing nights', catered for by lap dancing agencies, a significant sub market of the lap dancing industry and one which is likely to expand under these proposals.

I understand that in the past you have expressed concern about the poor licensing of lap dancing so, as a Member of the European Parliament's Gender Equality Committee, would urge you to speak and vote in favour of amendments to ensure reforms are applied universally and without any frequency based exemptions. These amendments will be tabled by Baroness Gould and represent an opportunity to ensure that the Policing and Crime Bill makes significant progress towards tackling commercial sexual exploitation.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.