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# ELIMINATE VICE AND REINVEST IN COMMUNITIES

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## NYPD'S VICE SQUAD

**The NYPD's Vice Enforcement Division is, in theory, tasked with policing so-called quality-of-life offenses such as consensual sex work, narcotics use, and gambling. But in reality, over the last 50 years, Vice officers have used their badges to exploit, sexually harass, and otherwise terrorize sex workers and their clients, massage workers, and survivors of trafficking. Nearly all of those victimized by Vice are LGBTQ+, people of color, and noncitizens.**

## THE PROBLEM

- In 2019, a former Vice detective, Ludwig Paz – along with seven other Vice officers – organized an exploitative prostitution ring.
- In 2017, Vice Officer Michael Golden was busted for having sex with numerous noncitizen sex workers while he was on duty, and then arresting them.
- That same year, Yang Song, a 38-year-old immigrant that worked as a masseuse and sex worker in Queens, jumped nearly forty feet to her death during a Vice raid. Before her death, Song confided in her mother and her attorney that she had been sexually assaulted by a Vice officer who made threats and wielded a gun and his badge.
- Over the last decade, New York City has paid more than \$1 million to settle false arrest claims by people targeted for patronizing sex workers.
- 93 percent of those targeted in these fraudulent arrests were men of color. Yet after each of these scandals, the City's response ranged from anemic to non-existent.
- Vice officers use “unlicensed massage” charges to arrest massage workers for merely working. These arrests are often accompanied by unwanted sexual exploitation from Vice officers. Over 95 percent of these arrests are of Asian women, many of whom are undocumented.

## THE SOLUTION

The only acceptable option to combat Vice's reign of terror is to eradicate the unit. Instead of investing in policing, we must elevate sex workers by investing in peer-led outreach, housing, and supportive services, including legal help and medical and mental health care.

We must also reinvest in the communities most harmed by Vice.

The City should **fund peer-led outreach** to massage workers, street based sex workers, and trafficking survivors in multiple languages, and offer harm reduction trainings. Peers can offer non-carceral responses to community complaints, while connecting workers with reproductive and mental health care. They can also connect sex workers to legal assistance for housing, immigration, and wage theft issues, while offering a lifeline to those currently experiencing trafficking and other coercive situations.

The City should also **create hotlines and physical spaces** led by peers for workers and survivors to access services in multiple languages, including Korean and Chinese.

Utilizing peers would bolster community trust, support survivors, provide jobs to those looking to leave sex work, and eliminate the risk of further criminalization or harmful interactions with Vice.

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