I am aware the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Bill is currently going through the Scottish Parliament. A new amendment to the Bill has been lodged, on the control of lap dancing and other adult entertainment venues. Amendment 516, lodged by Sandra White MSP, seeks to allow local authorities to apply a specific licensing regime to adult entertainment venues, including by limiting the number of premises in the local authority area that are permitted to provide adult entertainment, potentially with a zero limit.

I strongly support this amendment.

- Lap dancing clubs objectify and demean women and their existence harms our work for a society free of violence in which women have full equality.

- Lap dancing is a form of commercial sexual exploitation, and as such as a form of violence against women. It sanctions objectification of women, glamorises exploitation and harms work to achieve gender equality.

- Lap dancing does not have to be seen as a normal part of society. We believe it is realistic to aspire to a society where they do not exist. It is a matter of political will. Iceland has just banned all strip clubs and any employer profiting from the nudity of its employees.

- Lap dancing clubs routinely breach their licenses, for example by enabling prostitution. Scottish research with 110 men who had bought sex in prostitution found that 31% of the men had accessed prostitution through a lap dancing club.

- Lap dancing is a manifestation of gender inequality. It is not a coincidence that the performers in lap dancing clubs in Scotland are almost all women and the customers and business owners are almost all men. This industry thrives on the systematic exploitation of women by men. An industry like this has no place in modern Scotland.

- The Fawcett Society’s ‘Corporate Sexism’ report noted the commonness of firms holding business meetings, entertaining clients and celebrating deals at lap dancing venues, with some establishments offering unmarked receipts for expenses. They identify this as a major new threat to women’s equality at work.

- Lap dancing clubs also harm communities. They make women feel uncomfortable and unsafe, and create no-go areas in our towns and cities. In 2001, the female rape rate in the London Borough of Camden, which then had seven clubs sited mainly in residential areas, was three times the national average; researchers at the Lilith Project say that since 1999, rape
of women in Camden has increased by 50 per cent and indecent assault by 57 per cent.

Lesley Walker
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