

## March Debate of the Month

**Style: Thought Talk:** A thought talk is similar to a Socratic Seminar. There is a general question that acts as a discussion point for each thought talk session in which all attendees (except the moderator) are allowed to answer/join in a conversation. There is no time limit for speakers since the goal is to have a fruitful and thought-provoking political discussion. The moderator is in charge of keeping the room orderly, choosing speakers, and making sure the discussion stays on topic.

### **Thought Talk: Does participating in sex work empower women?**

**Background:** Sex work is a broad profession, including but not limited to prostitution, pornography, stripping, escorting, and working in brothels. Claimed to be the oldest profession known to man, sex work has consistently been a path taken by those who need to earn some income. With the rise of the internet came a greater demand of sex work, thus expanding the profession considerably. Some argue that sex work forces women to succumb to the demands of a patriarchal society that only places value on women who are sexualized, thus further contributing to their oppression. On the other hand, some argue that women taking autonomy over their bodies and voluntarily participating in sex work empowers them, as they are taking advantage of the expectations society has placed on them. Regardless, however, the question remains: Does sex work empower women?

### **Moderator Points:**

- Do only some types of sex work empower women? Why? What is the distinction?
- Is there any way to participate in sex work without putting women at a disadvantage?
- What professions, including or not including sex work, empower women?
- How can we curtail any negative effects of sex work on women?
- What about sex work impedes women's progress?
- Is sex work anti-feminist? Why or why not?
- Would normalizing sex work be beneficial or adverse to the women who participate?

*In a tumultuous time in which feminism and women's history are increasingly being brought to the forefront of contemporary discussion and debate, it is imperative that we acknowledge the roots and complexities of women's experiences in our society. As such, sex work is a woman-dominated profession, in which many debate the adversities and benefits of such. In celebration and In discussing this often taboo topic, we elucidate issues that are often pushed into the shadows, and subsequently devise solutions to any problems we may discern in order to create a safe, progressive, and tolerant environment for men and women alike.*