

Discrimination, Detention, and the Streets: the Cycle for Transgender Individuals and Sex Workers.



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Introduction

I am Maddie a nonbinary person (they/them) and a former sex worker.

Transgender individuals and sex workers have two big things in common they face stigma-related discrimination and that they pay the price by facing incarceration and homelessness due to that stigma.

Stigma feeds criminalization and criminalization feeds stigma.

The only way sex workers and trans identifying folks, such as myself, are going to feel safe working or walking down the street is by making our existence, not a crime, decriminalizing and protecting our existence in society.

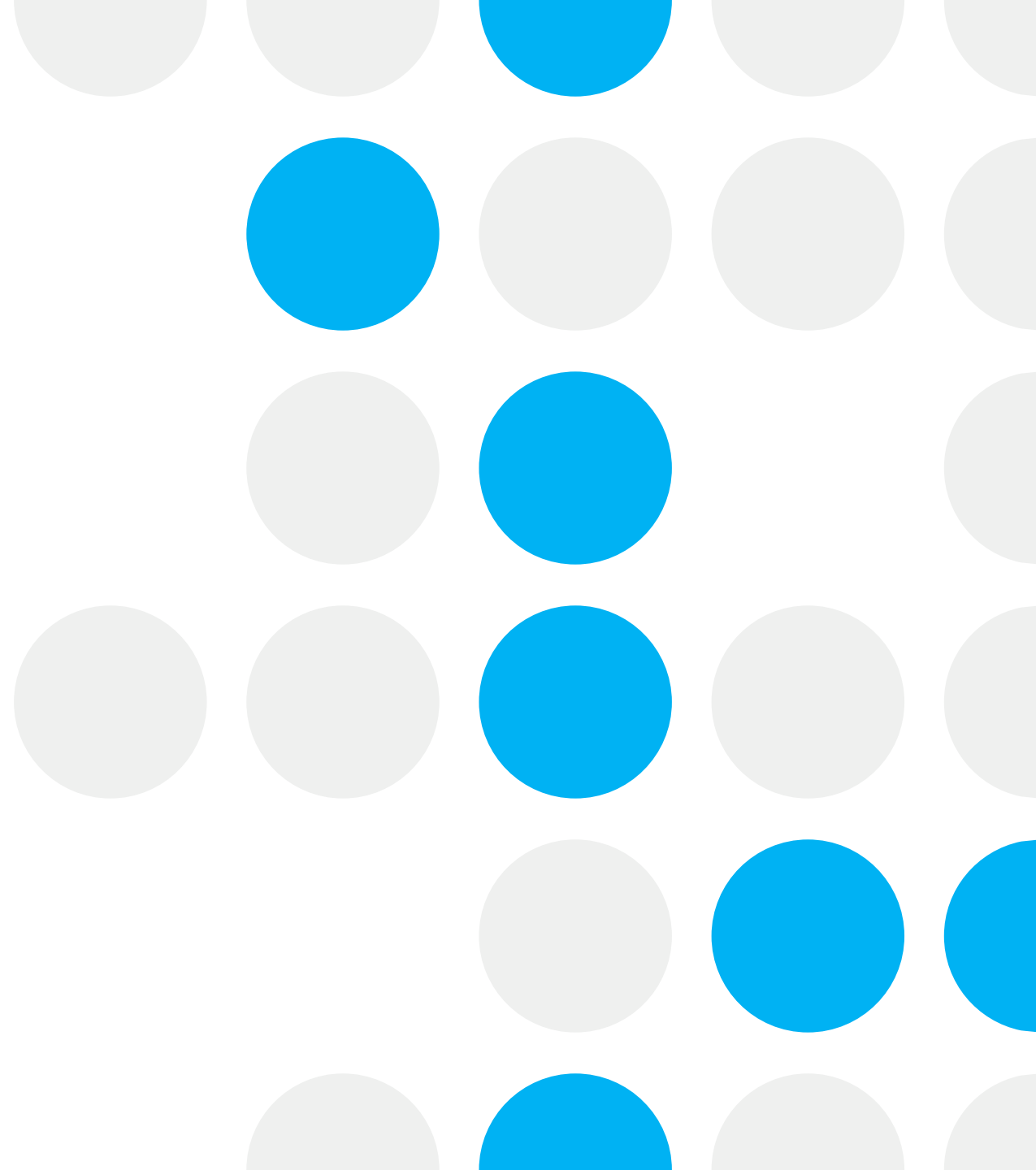
**Criminalization Efforts like
SESTA-FOSTA
and anti-loitering laws
criminalize sex work and being
transgender making it more
dangerous to work safely or
even walk down the street.**



**Trans Individuals
experience more
police discrimination**

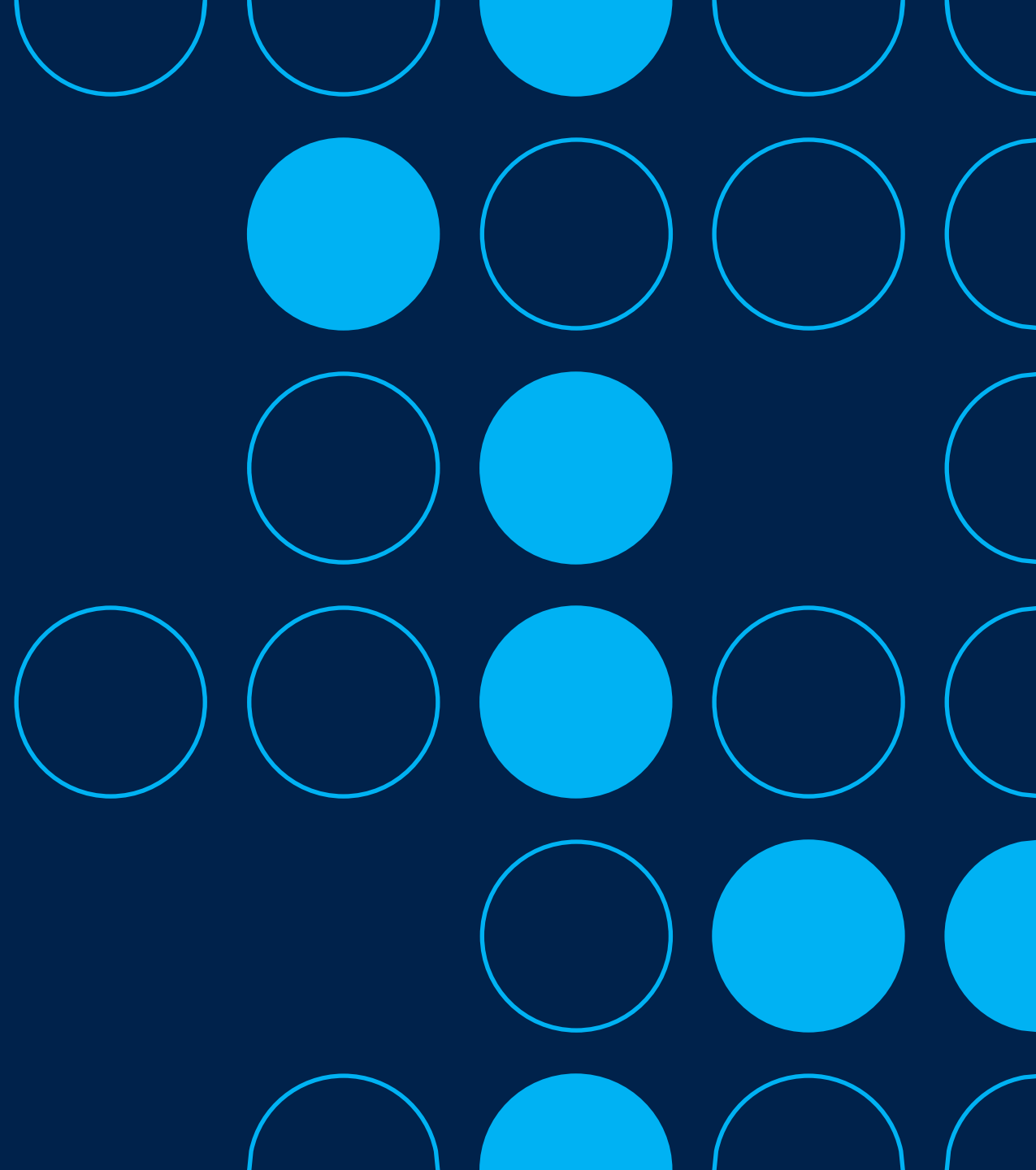


**Trans Individuals
experience more
unsheltered
homelessness and
other vulnerabilities.**



Trans individuals may not feel safe living in shelters 1 in 4 transgender individuals experiencing homelessness report avoiding homeless shelters for fear of harassment, and an additional 6 percent have been denied access to shelter.

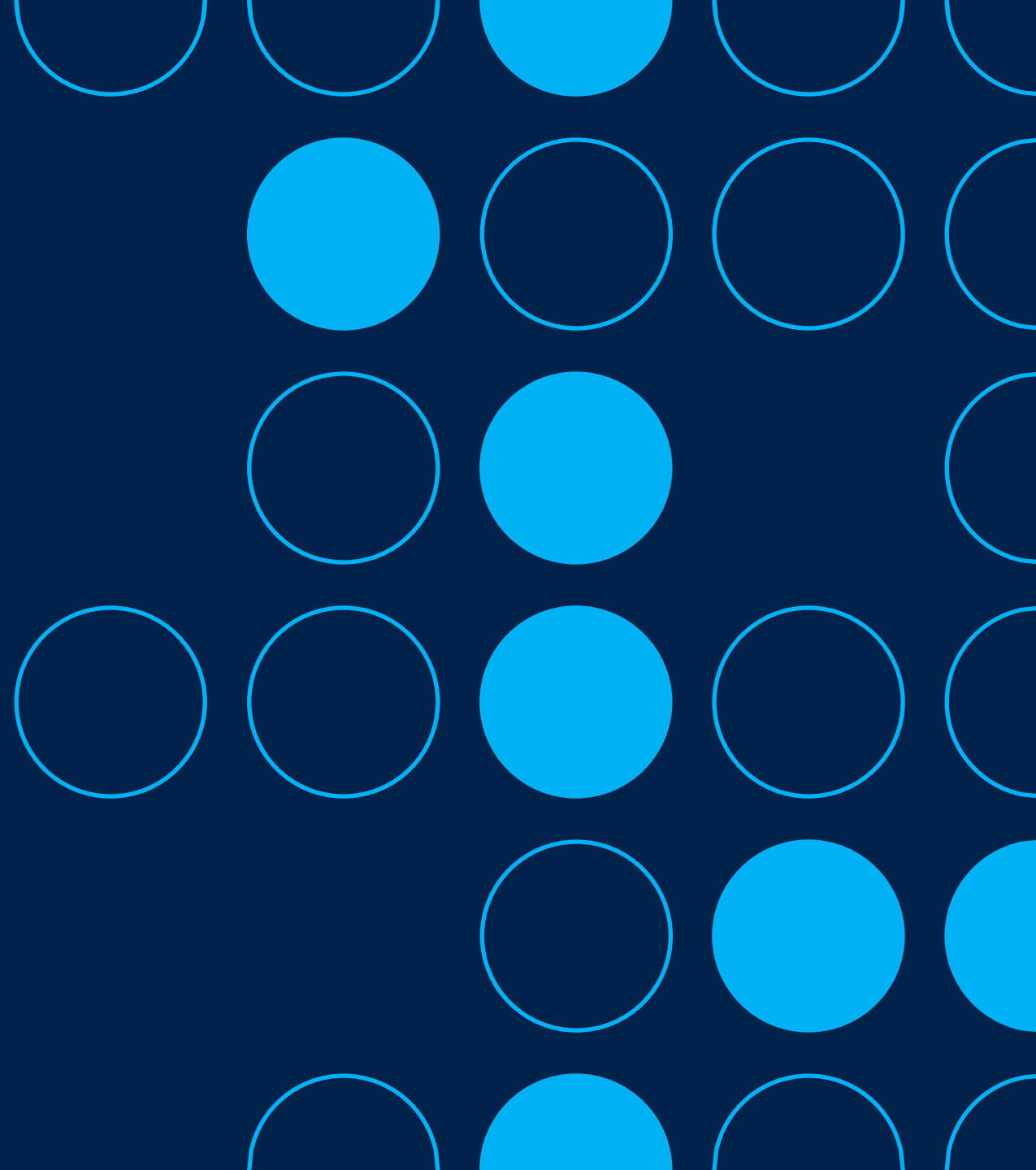
This will only be exacerbated by the recent halting of the Equal Access Rule.



**Large Numbers of those
involved with sex work
are experiencing
homelessness
But little is done to
study why.**



**Criminalization and
discrimination of sex
work creates
significant barriers to
housing, public
benefits, and other
essential social
supports for street-
based sex workers.**





Potential Solutions

- Gathering information in surveys that specifically target these groups and their experiences
- Comprehensive discrimination training for police, social service workers, healthcare professionals, and caseworkers
 - Focus on changing harmful attitudes towards sex workers, transgender individuals, and transgender sex workers
 - Include the perspectives and lived experiences of those directly affected as part of the education process
 - Foster understanding and improve the quality of service for marginalized communities
- Organizing and working towards getting rid of local loitering laws and other criminalization laws such as SESTA-FOSTA that only expose individuals to more violence and hardship.



We cannot continue to let stigma and criminalization dictate the lives of people like me. It's not just about decriminalizing sex work; it's about protecting the dignity, safety, and humanity of every individual.

Pictured: Myself as a performer and advocate at Richmond, VA Sex Worker Co-Op (RVA SWOP) Anti SESTA-FOSTA Event Feb 2020

Citations

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