

By Ken Garcia  
SF Examiner Staff Writer  
9/11/08

It took nearly two years for authorities in Berkeley to extricate its fragrant tree-huggers from their lofty heights on the UC campus, pretty much cementing the city's place as the wackiest in the West. But wait — don't count San Francisco out — it's about to give Berkeley another run for its (streetwalking) money.

Four years ago, Berkeley voters soundly rejected a measure to decriminalize prostitution, which would have directed cops and prosecutors to stop enforcing state laws on prostitution. Now, the same ballot plan goes before San Francisco voters in November under the guise of Proposition K, brought to us by the same sex-trade worker who saw another sales opportunity across the Bay.

That person, Mary Ellen (Maxine) Doogan, happens to be a convicted pimp who ran an escort prostitution agency in Seattle a little more than a decade ago. Doogan was in Superior Court in San Francisco this week with her attorney, Philip Horne, trying to get a judge to block voter information for the ballot pamphlet that would have let people know what Prop. K will do if passed.

The view from the experts: It would be very, very bad for prostitutes and very, very good for pimps and sex traffickers.

The information Doogan sought to remove from voters included statements that Prop. K would prevent the San Francisco Police Department from seeking or accepting federal or state funds to investigate organized-crime rings that exploit trafficking victims of an identifiable race or nationality. And that it would "hobble" the district attorney and the Police Department from investigating sex trafficking.

You know, the kind of news that might prove useful if you cared about the safety dangers to women and children created by the whole sex-trafficking trade. Fortunately, most people see through such ludicrous and outrageous legislation, but not, it turns out, the new leaders of the local Democratic Party, which endorsed Prop. K and may pay a pretty price for their ideological hubris.

Judge Patrick J. Mahoney took Doogan's arguments and pretty much tossed them into the Bay, saying the ballot arguments against Prop. K "fall well within the realm of the First Amendment," which he added, was a "pretty persuasive" argument.

Horne argued that the proposition said nothing about pimping or prostitution. He said it only applies to "erotic services."

When prostitution is erotic, I'll be mayor.