Drop Condoms on the Red Carpet, Not in Criminal Court

May 1, 2012 By Laura Whitehorn

We applauded when actor Zac Efron let a condom fall out of his pocket onto the red carpet at the premiere of his movie Dr. Seuss' The Lorax in February. In interviews, Efron stepped out as a role model for safer sex.

But there is one place we do not want to see condoms on display: in criminal courtrooms. That's because prosecutors in New York present condom possession as proof against women on trial for prostitution. Carrying condoms, the prosecutors say, shows that a defendant charged with soliciting was preparing for sex—and is therefore guilty. That's not the prohibitive effect condoms should have, and it undermines women's attempts to protect themselves from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

A bill in front of the New York Legislature would make it illegal to present condoms as evidence of intent to commit the crime of prostitution. Support the bill at pozarmy.com.

After he acquitted one woman of prostitution charges, Judge Richard M. Weinberg of Manhattan Criminal Court made his own stand against prosecutorial ignorance, ruling, "[I]n the age of AIDS and HIV, if people are sexually active at a certain age and they are not walking around with condoms, they are fools."

We always knew Zac Efron was nobody's fool.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Prostitution-NY-HIV-22339-1521