

Proponent Testimony – S.B. 187
Ohio Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee
February 4, 2020

Chair Schuring, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member O'Brien, Senator Schaffer, and esteemed Members of the Ohio Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee:

As an informed and involved Ohio citizen and grandmother, I have for a number of years, joined with several coalitions both nationally and within Ohio who are dedicated to protecting the health and innocence of minor children in an increasingly dangerous and sexualized culture. As such, I am thankful to Senator Schaffer for sponsoring S.B. 187, a bill *"To amend section 2919.22 of the Revised Code to prohibit a sexually suggestive performance by a minor, and if the offender is a D liquor permit holder, to require the court to order the revocation of the permit."*

S.B. 187 is common sense legislation that would expand the offenses harmful to minors and clearly define what constitutes the endangering of minor children through their participation or engagement in obscene or sexually suggestive performances at D liquor permit premises such as bars or restaurants in Ohio. Children do not, by nature, have interest in performing in bars or engaging in entertainment routines that are sexually stimulating to adults and that may involve obscene poses, dance moves, suggestive clothing, nudity, etc. Children involved in such harmful and inappropriate activities are clearly coerced, permitted, enticed, or encouraged by adults to engage in such behaviors. There must be penalties for endangering minor children by placing them in compromising and erotic environments and encouraging them in activities that appeal to the prurient interests of adults.

Unfortunately, this legislation is not brought without prior cause or incident. There was, in fact, an occurrence in just over one year ago where a nine-year-old boy was filmed in an erotic performance in a Lancaster, Ohio bar. This young child was dancing for tips before an adult audience who cheered his moves, splits, and suggestive routine. Sadly, there was that there was no immediate intervention on the child's behalf from local law enforcement. This must never happen again in Ohio.

The text of S.B. 187 is a sobering read, with explicit descriptions. I must ask the Members of the General Government and Agency Review Committee to carefully read the language being added to section 2919.22 of the Revised Code and to remember that there are children who remain vulnerable and unprotected in Ohio.

I respectfully ask for the support of each and every Committee Member in advancing S.B. 187 without changes or modifications. I believe this important legislation must be expediently advanced to the floor of the Ohio Senate for timely review and passage.

Thank you for the opportunity to present written proponent testimony for S.B. 187.

Sincerely,

Kathy L. Johnson