

HB 245 Testimony

June 3, 2024

Chairwoman Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and Members of the Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify as a proponent of HB 245, the Adult Cabaret Act.

My name is Erica Schmackers. I am here today as a resident of the city of Celina, a lifelong Ohio citizen, but most importantly as a mother. After seeing videos of what was considered by a local Pride group (Small Town Pride) to be a “family friendly” show, I am heartbroken.

My husband and I believe Celina is a wonderful place to raise our family. Many here are raised with a strong work ethic, stemming from the deep agricultural roots of our small town. Along with that strong work ethic comes a love for community, country, family and each other. It’s why we chose to stay and raise our children, when so many of our peers have since left.

The people of Celina take pride in our town and what it has to offer. I am disgusted at what Small Town Pride advertises as “family friendly.” A public display that encourages young children to throw dollar bills at adults, dressed in attire that one would find in burlesque bars and strip clubs, while they dance provocatively. This is occurring at a place where many young children and families frequent. I am disappointed that those we have elected as gatekeepers and watchers of our cities and great state, have allowed this. Such a display that one would

find, behind closed doors in an establishment, with the words "YOU MUST BE 18 TO ENTER" written on the doors, is being allowed outdoors, for ALL eyes to see, even the littlest eyes.

In a world where sexualization of children is ever present and increasing, shouldn't we, as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, friends, community members take charge of watching out for the youngest members of our community? What message are we sending to our children by allowing events, in public spaces, where they are encouraged to throw money at adults who are dancing in a sexual and provocative way? I don't want my daughter or my sons, thinking that it is okay to shake your body to earn a dollar. I especially don't want my sons thinking a woman's worth comes from how her body looks and how she presents herself sexually. I want my children to be raised knowing that their self-worth comes from their strong work ethic, their creative minds, their kind words, and their humble hearts. I want them to look for those same traits in others.

I ask you, as an Ohio resident, but more importantly I ask you as a young mother. One who is trying to shield her children from a world that so desperately wishes to destroy their innocence, to reconsider removing sexualized adult performances from our public spaces. Adult performers can have their day, but please do not allow them to put on shows that should clearly be put on behind doors of a private establishment, where minors are NOT present.

Thank you for your service to the citizens of Ohio and your time and consideration,
Today, of my testimony in support of HB 245.