

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 Barbara Phillips, and I am a resident of Marysville, Ohio. I come to you as a mother, grandparent, lifelong Ohioan and community activist who cares about the future that we are leaving our children and grandchildren.

As a concerned and dedicated Ohioan, I have watched first-hand in my own community of Marysville where adult drag performances have occurred not only in the presence of minor children, but with the participation of said minor children. In fact, in the last year, one of our local community pubs held a drag performance that involved at least 2 drag performers dancing with small boy about the age of 4 or 5 and involved the performers handing the child money. This behavior was videotaped and circulated in the community with no repercussions. In fact, the establishment owner and those who support these performances have publicly scoffed in the face of community criticism. We must have consequences for such disgusting displays, and we must protect children who cannot protect themselves.

I have raised the alarm in my own community about this harmful behavior. It robs our children of innocence, violates our community standards of decency and is also, frankly, unnecessary. The proliferation of this behavior does not harmonize with the concept of a safe and healthy environment in which to raise children to be productive, happy and mentally and emotionally stable members of society.

Our children deserve better. And the time is now to take a stand to protect them. When it comes to adult performances and adult imagery, those expressions need to be in adult establishments where minors are not present. And it defies logic and decency for an establishment owner or a performer to FIGHT to allow minors to view such performances. As such, I urge you in the strongest terms to stand now for those who cannot stand for themselves. Please protect Ohio's children from such harmful displays and performances.

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