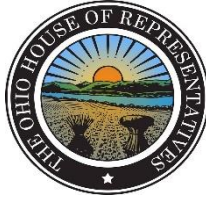


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**Representative Angie King
Ohio House District 84**

**House Bill 249 – Sponsor Testimony
House Judiciary Committee
May 28th, 2025**

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you for your time and consideration today of HB. 249, the Indecent Exposure Modernization Act.

Today I am not only a legislator, but I am also coming before you as a mother of two and grandmother of four beautiful children. We as leaders of Ohio continuously say: *"Ohio is a great place to live, work, and raise a family."* I believe it can be and if we truly believe those words, then we need to not put the innocence of children at risk. Through the years there has been a cultural shift where we have forgotten to shield our children from the things that young, developing mind may struggle to comprehend. We have forgotten to let children be kids and not inundate them with the worries, concerns and social issues of adulthood.

Nowadays, children are exposed to the realities of the world at much younger and faster pace, but why must it be forced upon them? House Bill 249 has one purpose . . . to protect Ohio children. I want to live up to the words: *"Ohio is a great place to raise a family."* This is why HB. 249 is an important piece of legislation that will give Ohio families a safe place within their communities where they can take their children without fear of their children being exposed to explicit material and performances, they're not yet mature enough to understand.

As strongly as I support Ohio families, it is important to point out this bill makes no restrictions or claims on adult activity. There is no viewpoint or sexual orientation discrimination as this bill applies to ALL adult cabaret performances. The transgender community will be able to dress and express their gender as they go to a grocery store, the post office and live their daily lives. The traditions of Cincinnati's Delhi Skirt Game or Maria Stein's Country Fest Tractor Square Dancing (yes...the tractors square dance in my district) will not be affected as these performances are not obscene or lewd. Also, public performances of plays such as Shakespeare in the park or screenings of movies like Mrs. Doubtfire or Tootsie will not be affected. HB. 249 simply puts in place important measures to protect children from being exposed to cabaret performances that are marketed to adults with adult themes, imagery, and performances.

To those who believe this is a solution in search of a problem, we have seen obscene performances taking place where minors are present in Ohio. The catalyst for this bill came from my own community. I was appalled to watch a video of a “family friendly” event held in our city park where adults were dancing for children, these adults were then rewarded with cash, given to them by the children who handed them dollar bills. One of the performers, dressed in a skimpy thong leotard, twerked and gyrated on the concrete. This same adult, then seated on the ground with his legs spread open and raised towards the sky; gave a view of his crotch area for all to see, including small children.

Adult novelty sales were also available at the event, including pillows and stress balls in the shape of genitalia. All of this was fully available to the children attending this “family friendly” event. Let me ask this...what message are we sending to our children by allowing events, in public spaces, where they are encouraged to throw money at adults dancing in a sexual and provocative way? Again, Ohio’s families should feel safe taking their children to a city or community park without their child being exposed to adult performances and adult novelty items.

As legislators, it is of extreme interest of the state to protect Ohio’s children from exploitation and the robbing of their innocence. We already prohibit children from strip clubs and exposure to pornographic materials. In the same way, HB. 249 protects children from obscene performances in public spaces. Adults can have their day, but it needs to be behind the doors of a private establishment where minors are NOT allowed.

Chair Thomas, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important piece of legislation. It is my hope that you too, place a high value on the protection of children’s innocence and favorably report HB.249.