

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Matthews, Ranking Member Isacson, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

My name is Pastor Van Holloway, and I reside in Greene County, Ohio.

I would like to address two important topics with you today.

First, over the past few years I have personally grown to understand more and more the significant impact that a sex-related offense had on my wife. In 2022, my wife Janell had her safe space invaded by a man. After her swim at the Xenia YMCA, my wife went into the women's locker room to shower and change. To her shock, there was a man sitting on a locker room bench and he was completely naked. Having been exposed to this evil for just a few seconds, significantly impacted her life more than I could have ever realized at the time.

Years later, Janell is still wary of using public restrooms. She frequently struggles with anger because many of the people she thought she could trust, betrayed her and refused to recognize the harm that was done to her. She experienced additional hurt and abandonment when the court of law right here in the state of Ohio refused to call what happened to her, criminal.

This terrible experience has also become a powerful motivator in Janell's life. She has been empowered by God to share her story countless times over the past three years to thousands of people, hoping and praying that other women and young girls will be protected. Each time she shares her story, it requires her to relive her traumatic experience in a very personal and public way. She would much rather be spending time with her grandchildren, but fueled by righteous anger against evil and a relentless love for her neighbors, Janell continues to speak up. I am so proud of her.

I must respectfully disagree with Ranking Member Isacson who told City Beat Media that bills such as H.B 249 "don't have a real impact on people's

lives.” I invite you to spend just a few minutes listening to my wife and you will see first hand the real impact it has had on her life.

May I take a moment to speak directly to the men on this committee. God has given you a special responsibility to protect women. I know it may not be popular to say this, but I have come to understand myself that women are much more vulnerable than men. They need a man’s empathy and protection. It is alarming to me that one incident of indecent exposure in a YMCA women’s locker room has had such a powerful impact on my wife. My eyes have been opened to the seriousness of this matter.

The trauma my wife endured has forever altered her life.

Until the law is changed, evil men will continue to use, abuse, and discard women for their own perverted sexual pleasure. Please support this bill. It would make what was done to my wife a criminal offense. This is the right and just thing to do.

Let me now turn to briefly address a second, but closely related topic, with you.

Sin is constantly evolving; it is finding new ways to kill, steal, and destroy individuals, relationships, and society. So to keep pace, the law must also evolve.

I strongly support HB 249 which I believe clarifies and puts into writing the intent that lawmakers had years ago when they were shaping the indecent exposure and obscenity laws.

It is absolutely necessary to protect unsuspecting individuals and innocent children from witnessing lewd, perverted, and overly sexualized performances. By law, adults have the freedom to exercise their rights to this type of entertainment in specified locations. But it does not belong in public spaces where children may be present.

As an example, current law does not allow children into theatres to see a movie rated NC-17. The theatre itself does not pose a unique danger to children, but, according to the accepted values in our society, the content of the movie does pose a danger to children.

In a similar way, laws have been established to keep children out of places such as adult cabarets. Again, the building may not pose a unique threat to children, but the content of the performance in an adult cabaret does.

Let me further illustrate. It is absurd to believe that children are only harmed if they go to a strip club, but not harmed if what happens in a strip club is brought to them. The places in our communities where children visit and play should not be places where they are exposed to sexually-themed adult entertainment.

Jenni, a member of my church, experienced this first hand. She was taken to the pride parade in Fairborn, Ohio by adults who she thought she could trust. Jenni was appalled by what she witnessed and deeply harmed by the evil she saw that day.

Legislators, it is your responsibility to produce laws that protect our children from obscene, sexually-themed performances, regardless of where it takes place.

May God give each one of you wisdom as you examine, write, and edit the laws in an attempt to keep pace with ever-evolving sin and evil. It is for these reasons that I hope that each one of you will vote to move this bill forward.

May God bless each one of you.

I would be happy to take any of your questions at this time.