



# City of Celina, Ohio

ONE OF THE BEST 100 SMALL TOWNS IN AMERICA

Jeffrey S. Hazel  
Mayor

October 2025

Chairman Jim Thomas  
Members of the Ohio House Judiciary Committee

Re: HB 249  
Indecent Exposure Modernization Act

Honorable Members:

Thank you for allowing me to submit this letter in support of HB 249, the Indecent Exposure Modernization Act, which is currently receiving testimonies and written correspondence.

I am a 4<sup>th</sup> Term Mayor of the City of Celina and have a deep understanding of our community at large. Further, I am also a husband of 44 years, father of 4 children, and 7 grandchildren. I currently serve as a Board member of the Celina Planning Commission, Mercer County Health District Advisory Board, an Executive Board Member of the Ohio Mayor's Association, Celina-Mercer County Chamber of Commerce, a member of Celina Rotary and West Ohio Christian Chamber of Commerce, and a multi-business owner in Celina with manufacturing, service, and retail operations. My wife and I currently employ 22.

For the past 5 years, our community was chosen by a local to host a Small-Town Pride event in our lake front Bryson Park District on a Saturday during designated Pride Month. For 4 out of 5 years, the local Pride event organizers have hosted a Drag Show as "entertainment" for adults and children of all ages to watch with uninhibited and uncensored views. While this event continues to result in divisive and emotional community reactions, the ultimate concern is how to protect our community's children from exposure to obscene and lewd performances, and adult imagery.

While I am a staunch supporter of the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment of the United States Constitution, I also firmly believe there must be moral limits to the "freedom of expression" targeted to juveniles who are not only unable to vote, but are not capable of mature analysis of such adult-style performances. I certainly acknowledge that parental right is fundamental, but must be coupled with responsibility of nurturing and raising a human being. Celina City Council and Administration were provided a video that was taken in 2022 for the Drag Show that occurred where Adults and children alike handed "dollar bills" to drag performers as a way of "voting" for their favorite performer, which is akin to "tucking" bills at an adult strip/dance club. In 2023, one such performer gave a performance in which he twerked, thrust his hips, and gyrated on the ground where he revealed a tight-fitting thong that was displayed with his butt cheeks exposed for

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all to see. Additionally, a local group retained an investigator that found 2 Drag Queen performers scheduled for the 2023 had recent arrest records, one of which was for prostitution.

While we recognize any individual can go online to sites such as YouTube, Instagram, and or Snapchat to view any level of pornographic or sexually-suggestive content with virtually no filter, we also recognize our collective moral duty to protect the innocence of children in their formative years. I urge you to support HB 249 to prevent such mature themes from being held in public places. HB 249 needs to be enacted at the earliest opportunity to help protect our children's innocence and prevent exposure to that which is only appropriate for adults.

Celina is fortunate to have 3 parks, totaling 135 acres that contain baseball/softball and soccer fields, basketball courts, multiple playgrounds, zip lines, shelter houses, walk paths, community pool, and a Splash pad for our community and the thousands of visiting family, friends, and tourists. Our Bryson Park District is located on the north shore of Grand Lake that serves our city of nearly 11,000 residents. We have strong family ties and values that are important throughout Mercer County and our local community; and our parks and other public spaces should be safe spaces for our children.

Freedom of expressions through adult performances and adult imagery are certainly protected under the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment, but need to be in adult establishment where minors are not present. While adults can choose to freely participate or view such lewd and lascivious behaviors, our inherent duty is protecting children from exploitation and the robbing of their innocence, whether mental or physical, and is a matter of utmost importance.

Thank you for your service to all citizens of Ohio and your time and consideration today of my written testimony in support of HB 249.

Serving Others,

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