

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Synenberg, and members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 249. My name is Khris Goins, and I'm a parent of three children from Pataskala.

I'd like to begin by noting that under current Ohio law, specifically Ohio Revised Code §2907.39, it is already illegal to take minors into adult entertainment establishments. We all agree that parents have a duty to protect children from explicit content, and that standard is already built into law. HB 249 doesn't strengthen that protection, it duplicates it. What it *does* risk, however, is undermining the First Amendment rights of Ohioans by introducing language that is vague, overbroad, and open to misuse.

The bill's language could unintentionally criminalize everyday expression, people simply dressing or performing outside traditional gender norms. A woman wearing a pants suit, or a man wearing a skirt, could technically fall under this ban depending on how a local prosecutor interprets it. That's not protecting children; that's government overreach into how people choose to express themselves or earn a living.

I've attended many drag performances, both in family-friendly public spaces and in adult-only nightclubs. These are two completely different settings, just like a PG movie differs from an R-rated one. I would never take my kids to an adult nightclub, nor would I want others to. But I have taken them to parades and community events where drag performers contribute joy, color, and inclusion, and to library story hours where the focus is on reading and creativity, not adult themes. Parents already make responsible choices about what's appropriate for their children, that's a family's role, not the government's.

I believe in protecting families *and* protecting freedom. This legislation, as written, does neither. Instead, it risks punishing ordinary Ohioans, including veterans, business owners, and taxpayers, for self-expression that harms no one. As Republicans, we pride ourselves on limited government, personal liberty, and ensuring the law is clear and enforceable. HB 249 fails on all three counts.

I respectfully urge the committee to oppose this bill, or at the very least, ensure its language is narrowly focused on conduct already covered under existing obscenity laws, not clothing, identity, or performance art. Ohio doesn't need redundant laws, it needs fair and constitutional ones.

Thank you for your time and for your service to the people of Ohio.

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