

Written Testimony in Opposition to Proposed Restrictions on Drag Performances: HB249

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Abigail Beausir, and I am submitting this testimony in opposition to legislation that would restrict drag performances for individuals under the age of 18.

I serve as a board member for Glisten, formerly GLSEN, a national organization dedicated to ensuring that LGBTQ+ students are able to learn and grow in safe and inclusive school environments. Through this work, I regularly hear from young people about the importance of having spaces where they feel seen, valued, and safe to express themselves.

Each year, our organization hosts a youth prom specifically designed for LGBTQ+ young people who may not feel safe or welcomed at their own school dances. At this event, drag entertainers often participate as performers and hosts. Their presence is not only joyful and celebratory—it is deeply meaningful to the youth in attendance. Drag is an art form rooted in creativity, self-expression, and performance. The entertainers who participate in these events present age-appropriate material that reflects the music, humor, and culture young people enjoy.

For many LGBTQ+ youth, school environments can feel isolating or unsafe when it comes to expressing their identities. Events like LGBTQ+ youth proms provide an affirming space where they can celebrate who they are without fear of judgment or harassment. The drag performers who participate often serve as positive role models—demonstrating confidence, creativity, and authenticity. Young people frequently express admiration for them as artists and community members.

Legislation that broadly restricts drag performances for minors risks misunderstanding what drag actually is and how it functions in community spaces. Drag, like theater, dance, or comedy, exists across a wide spectrum and can be tailored appropriately for different audiences. The performances at youth-centered events are designed with care and responsibility to ensure they are suitable and supportive for young attendees.

Rather than restricting artistic expression and safe community spaces, we should focus on ensuring that all young people—especially LGBTQ+ youth—have opportunities to gather, celebrate, and feel supported.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Abigail Beausir