

My name is Jordin Manning and I was born and raised on the east side of Cleveland, Ohio. The buckeye state is all I have ever known. I have written this testimony to oppose HB 249, a bill intended to restrict drag performances and criminalize those who partake in gender nonconforming performance in a space where children *may* be present. This is not a bill that is meant to protect children, but rather a bill meant to waste tax dollars on something that the money could go elsewhere. Enforcing this bill means the average civilian would be subject to violating procedures in order to ensure that they are performing appropriately. The vague language would only be ammunition for harassment, putting even those who do not perform in danger. As a gender nonconforming person, I do not find it effective to further put tax dollars toward what would turn into a harassment campaign for people who are simply trying to live their lives, nor further limit the talented shows put on in my communities. This bill only further limits theaters, choruses, libraries, bars and other businesses and would put so many Ohio businesses in a financial bind. With prices rising due to inflation and the minimum wage only rising at a snail's pace, this would only do harm economically to Ohio. Ohio's children are already protected by existing obscenity laws. Performers in Ohio are well versed in what is or is not appropriate for certain audiences and stages as is. If this bill is passed, there will be a precedent set that Ohioans cannot practice their freedom of speech and expression - something we fought for and continue to fight for. Lawmakers, I urge you to protect the people of Ohio and do not allow any more tax dollars be wasted on these ventures and instead put the money into the pockets of Ohioans that write your paychecks by producing jobs, advocating for higher paying, livable wages and protecting our first amendment rights. Not give in to fears and waste another cent on Americans harmlessly living their lives; which is their God given right standing on American soil.