

To the Judiciary Committee Members:

My name is Megan and I am a Hilliard resident, but also a part of our local healthcare and LGBTQIA communities. I have been to numerous drag shows and family friendly drag story times. Each show has been an expression of art, resilience, love, and acceptance. **Drag is art.** I personally know drag performers that have found a sense of belonging, community and a reason to continue on. **Drag saves lives.** I've been at family friendly events where kids sing along in awe of the colorful performing lip synching to a Disney beat or in a beautiful dress while reading a story. I've seen young kids recognize themselves in those drag queens – someone who enjoys wearing dresses or playing with makeup – and the tears in their parents eyes watching the interaction. **Representation matters.**

History has told us that oppression benefits no one. The LGBTQIA community is not grooming young children. Banning drag, anti-transgender legislation and the never ending attacks on the LGBTQIA community IS grooming America's youth. Those actions loudly shout that the only way to be a 'correct' human is to fit inside this box that is selected for you – anything outside of that is wrong, is a sin. That is grooming. That is oppression. Moving forward with H.B No. 249 will harm Ohioians.

I urge you to not move forward with H.B No. 249. Stop wasting time and money on legislation that does not better Ohio. Instead, let's work together to tackle the rising healthcare costs, stagnant wages and poverty that is stifling the growth of our communities.

Thank you,

Dr. Megan Perkins.