



Written Testimony on House Bill 249

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Cincinnati Collaborative Arts Association LLC, doing business as Passion Productions

Chairman Jim Thomas and members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for allowing us to testify today. We are the co-producers of a 10-year running live performance production company, Passion Productions, based in Cincinnati, Ohio. We strongly oppose House Bill 249 - the Indecent Exposure Modernization Act.

We find this bill, its language and its intentions, to be highly discriminatory towards members of our community, transgender individuals, professional performers, and Ohioans that pursue freedom of artistic expression.

While it may seem that the intent of this bill is to protect children, the language makes it clear that the safety of juveniles is being used as a tool to criminalize drag performers and, it could be argued, transgender and intersex people living their daily lives. Drag artists performing family-friendly acts are not a danger to juveniles. We also do not believe that the mere presence of drag artists, transgender or gender nonconforming individuals are a danger to juveniles. To state this as a fact is an act of discrimination against transgender and intersex Ohioans.

Furthermore, the bill uses the term "prurient interests" consistently, which is defined as "an excessive, shameful, or morbid interest in sexual matters, nudity, or excretion, as opposed to a normal, healthy interest in sex." Drag performers, burlesque dancers, go-go dancers, and other performance artists take offense to the implication that what they are artistically portraying is shameful, morbid, abnormal or unhealthy. To apply this term to a performance is wholly subjective. It is not the duty of our legislature to aim to place such a label on artistic expression, and subsequently use such labels towards the execution of criminal consequences.

We ask that you consider our testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.