

Maine(void)  
Regarding HB249  
3/17/26

To the Judicial Committee,

My name is Maine(void), and I write to you as a resident of the state of Ohio and a local drag entertainer who is very terrified of the prospect of HB249 passing and the negative impact that it will have on Ohioans. I stand in very strong opposition to any sort of ban on drag performances in public spaces, and I hope that my story will help you to understand why.

I have been a performer for as long as I was able to speak, but I began my drag career in 2024. Prior to starting drag, I managed to make numerous accomplishments as a choral singer, including but not limited to singing in front of the National Christmas Tree, opening for the Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall, and placing silver in my choir's category in the World Choir Games. However, upon completing high school, I lost the connections that led to the opportunities that I had previously. With no creative outlet to explore my artistic vision, I fell into a depressive episode that forced me to temporarily drop out of college. It was through finding drag and beginning to perform that I was able to find a sense of community that I had lost when I finished high school. Being able to explore original ideas through drag allowed me to regain the mental health that I needed in order to be able to finish college with an engineering degree. Drag allowed me to make so many friends both in and outside of Ohio, and has given me the opportunity to travel within the state. Drag has allowed me to teach people about the wonders of science through my drag persona, and none of this would be possible if drag had been banned from public viewing.

I know that my life has changed for the better because I did not have to go to adult cabaret venues in order to find drag. Being able to see drag in public venues showed me that there are people like me out there that can experience happiness and joy. There are people out there that have beautiful art to share with the world, and it is their first amendment right to be able to share that art with whoever wants to see it. Through drag, I was able to see my friend get back into Irish step dancing after his experiences with being disabled made it impossible for him to dance for about a decade. I got to see another friend deliver an amazing story where they get turned into a life-sized muppet. I get to see countless performances where my friends make people laugh, or cry, or feel strong emotions. And it all happens in front of audiences that are meant to see the performances. It makes no sense that because these performances are done as characters whose genders are different than the sex of the performer, then that should mean that it's somehow sexual and can't be done in public or in the presence of a minor.

The fact of the matter is that as a drag community, we already take many measures to ensure that no minors are present for performances that should only take place in front of an adult audience. These performances happen at night, at venues that check the IDs of everyone that comes in. And countless measures are taken to ensure that performers are not violating any laws regarding their state of dress or violating any sort of public decency laws. When a show or a

program is oriented towards an audience where minors may be present, even more measures are taken to ensure that the performances are age appropriate. We have laws and accountability measures within the community that ensure that the concerns that this law attempts to address are meaningfully addressed. And at the end of the day, this will hurt so many more people than it will help. It makes no sense to make performances illegal based on if the performer is adhering to gender expectations. Would a man get in trouble for wearing a kilt because “men don’t wear skirts?” Would a woman get in trouble for wearing pants because “women shouldn’t wear pants?” Would Tyler Perry get in trouble for playing Madea when he comes to tour his movies? Would people be banned from performing Mrs. Doubtfire because the premise is a man dressing as a woman to see his kids? Would productions of Hairspray be banned because Tracy’s mom is usually played by a man in women’s clothes? The law does not instill a lot of confidence that harmless dress-up is separated from someone being indecent in the presence of a minor.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my concerns. I hope that my testimony has given some thought to consider when it comes to this bill, and that this bill dies in committee. Your consideration of these matters are appreciated, even if I believe that your approach to the solutions are flawed.

Sincerely,  
Maine(void)