

Linda Harvey Testimony on HB 245

House Criminal Justice Committee

Thank you so much for permitting me to submit testimony in favor of HB 245, to enact a law providing more robust protection against obscene performances in Ohio and the harm to children.

I am president of Mission America (www.missionamerica.com) and I also serve on the board of Protect Ohio Children (www.protectohiochildren.net). I have also been a radio talk show host at the Central Ohio station, The Word Columbus, for 15 years. My articles appear in many publications across the Internet and one of the topics I cover frequently is the culture's impact on youth.

When children observe adults in sexual situations/performances, it has an extremely detrimental effect. In their formative years, minors are very impressionable and even if they don't initially vocalize the negative impact, seeing adults demonstrating eroticism is very unsettling. These are the people children need to be able to rely on and yet they are demonstrating behavior foreign to a child's experience and emotions. Frankly, children view such performances with sometimes vocal, sometimes silent angst.

And well they should.

The child exposed early to adult sexual expression is more likely to become prematurely interested in the subject before having the emotional maturity to make wise decisions. Their interest also sets them up to be targets for sex trafficking and molestation. This is one of the reasons obscene images are illegal for distribution to children. Do we want more Ohio children to become emotionally hardened users and abusers of other people, often other minors? Criminal sexual assailants are highly likely to have been exposed early to sexual material, performances and situations.

Males who dive into sexual material at an early age are much more likely to commit sexual crimes, and women and children are the most frequent victims.

And the pretense of biological males to be females, or biological females to be males and then to perform before children is another whole level of confusion for children, a clear assault on their view of adults as stable and dependable. Again, they may not express what they are feeling, but children are agitated by gender distortion and when combined with an erotic performance, children are often quite frightened. Yet in today's climate, they often perceive they aren't supposed to say anything about their agitation, so it gets buried.

And one has to wonder why any adult wants to do this. It is at the very least, reckless and at worst, evidence of that adult's instability. There's no good reason for such a person to be allowed a platform to perform for children.

It is imperative that state laws treat children tenderly, and not succumb to progressive pressures to act as if they are small adults. They are not, and our laws have traditionally bent in preference to child protection, and in recognition of their developmental stages, we withhold certain rights and privileges until majority, as well as affording certain protection because minors are easy to influence.

Innocence is a real thing and it's not a discardable annoyance. It's vital to the development of adult maturity, to becoming a person who is not a utilitarian user and abuser of others.

House Bill 245 will be a very positive defense for minors against exposure to harmful, explicit shows and performances.

I urge you to provide stronger protections against obscenity and to pass House Bill 245.