

Chairwoman Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, and Members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for hearing my support testimony for HB 245. (Adult Cabaret Bill)

I, Thomas R. Sanford, stand for the protection of Ohio's children. I live in Mercer County, in the city of Celina. I am an educator and City Councilman. My wife and I have served the youth in our area for decades in various capacities. I have 3 children and every intention I have is to make this world a better place for them.

My community has seen firsthand, the assertions of a "family friendly drag show" and the repercussions of allowing these events for fear of violating first amendment rights. The idea seems to be that the "art" of drag is celebrated rather than the "sexuality." This is simply not true in our experience. Video footage has been shown that children, even as young as approximately 8 years old, were handed \$1 bills to give to the "queen" for their performance. During the artful presentation, gyrating hips and "twerking" were also involved in front of cheering children. Vendors then sold pillows in the form of penises and a juvenile was shown in a picture holding the product. These are Celina's children!

All over the world, human trafficking, specifically sex trafficking, is on the rise and it is estimated that around 40 million people are currently "slaves"! Specifically, children are very vulnerable and impressionable. For decades our schools taught children "stranger danger" and to tell an adult when they feel a situation may not be appropriate. We instinctually know that people shouldn't be touching kids inappropriately, making them uncomfortable, or skirting their parents' set boundaries. Kids should not be sexualized for many reasons including, STD's, addiction, poor judgment skills, etc.

Therefore, our kids need as much protection as possible from potentially bad crimes happening to them. That's why we already have so many protections for kids. This is a no brainer to legislate that sexualized activities should be indoors in private establishments. First Amendment rights are guaranteed to citizens. Should I not be able to take my kids to a public park though because people want to dance sexually? Should I have to drive alternate routes in order to keep my kids' eyes pure? We need help from the state to support ordinances that protect our children.

Our families are under attack and the attackers claim it is their first amendment right to do so. Please clarify for us where our legal protections as parents start and stop for our children.

I urge the committee to vote YES on HB 245.