

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee,

In addition to earning a Master's degree from Portland State University in the field of media studies (with a focus on the entertainment industry), I have over a decade's worth of experience working as a live show producer, disc jockey, host, stand-up comic, event promoter and consultant for a wide array of outlets encompassed under the "entertainment" umbrella, with a general (but not limited) focus on the adult entertainment industry. I have worked in over fifty different night clubs, venues and bars that feature on-stage entertainment, as this has been my primary source of income for the last decade. I consider myself a respected member within the Portland adult entertainment industry, as well as many non-adult-related circles (stand-up comedians, disc jockeys and producers) throughout the Northwest.

Repeatedly, across various and unrelated clubs, venues and bars, I have witnessed an approach and attitude taken by venue owners, staff and management toward live entertainers, one that reflects several disturbing and recurring trends. Falling somewhere into the gray area between "W-2 employee" and "1099 contractor," entertainers are often denied rights traditionally granted to both classifications of worker. You have heard, or will hear, testimony today from females who work within the adult entertainment industry, and I will briefly echo their concerns regarding harassment, coercion, mistreatment, illegal fines, lack of resources and/or general mistreatment by management. I have seen accounts of this, first-hand, on dozens (if not hundreds) of occasions, and it is often my reason for leaving employment at a club.

However, it is of important note that these concerns are not restricted to the adult entertainment industry, nor are they to be seen as exclusive concerns on behalf of those who work in adult entertainment establishments. Rather, these are concerns related to performers of all ages, backgrounds and genres. Since Oregon is home to more adult entertainment establishments per capita than anywhere else in the United States, said establishments tend to epitomize the paradigms of entertainment venues of all varieties in Oregon, adult-related or otherwise.

That being said, having worked with live musicians, stand-up comedians and other non-adult-entertainment varieties of performer, I have witnessed, on an equal level to that which occurs in strip clubs, harassment, denial of compensation, dangerous working conditions, and in some cases, physical threats toward entertainers on the part of ownership and/or management. Although a handful of mainstream live entertainment venues tend to be run by competent, capable and caring people, it is still somewhat shocking to consider that these venues are not the norm. The term "paying dues" in stand-up comedy, for instance, no longer means "honing your craft and networking with the right people," it means "do a show at that venue in Medford with nails sticking out of the stage, no toiletries and a manager who refuses to pay out what was agreed."

Of note, entertainment venues are virtually off-the-radar when it comes to issues that don't concern the OLCC, and expanding on this point, it is disturbing that the liquor control commission does a better job protecting the drinking public, than our legal system does to protect those performing on stage inside of these bars. Theoretically, if an under-21 stripper fell over and hurt herself on stage, the biggest concern of most club owners would be that she was drunk, and that the club would be fined by OLCC, not whether or not the entertainer was hurt, or if the club provides a safe environment for her.

Further, many live entertainment venues in Oregon feature traditional "strip club" fare on certain nights, while hosting all-ages entertainment (including family-friendly fare) on other nights. The same stage that a teenage Battle of the Bands tournament is held on may also contain an attachment for a removable dancer pole.

The concerns expressed by those testifying today do not reflect merely the concerns of a fringe group, nor are they limited to issues of free speech or performance art. Rather, the concerns expressed here reflect a group of contract employees who, as a result of being part of a vocational fringe group ("entertainment") and the counter-cultural stigma attached to the most vocal subsection of said group ("adult entertainers"), have had their rights overlooked and dismissed by the legal system as an issue of free speech in performance art, when in reality, these are issues of human rights, specifically those humans who work in the Oregon entertainment industry (adult or otherwise).

At a construction site, where contract employees partake in their duties, signs are posted regarding treatment of workers, often times including hotlines or other third-party resources to report mistreatment, illegal working conditions or other concerns. There is no logical, legal or moral reason to deny entertainers the same rights, simply because of the stigma attached to the most vocal group. It is understood that not everyone enjoys the liberal, adult-oriented counter-cultural free-for-all that is often associated with our state's biggest city, and from this it is understood that the concerns of strippers and their DJs may not hold the highest priority in the average person's daily agenda. However, when one considers that the legislation being proposed today would no more exclusively represent adult entertainers than legislation regarding grape production would exclusively represent winemakers, it is erroneous to conclude that performer's rights is an issue limited to one specific brand of Oregon entertainer.

As a stand-up comic who performs for all-ages crowds, an uncle of nephews who perform in Christian rock bands, an event host for G-rated entertainment and, yes, a retired strip club disc jockey, I see the legislation being proposed today as not only necessary, but irrefutable in terms of worthiness, humanity and common sense. Adult entertainers are not the group who stands to benefit the most from this legislation, we are simply the group that has felt the biggest sting from the lack of it.

Thank you for your time,

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