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Support SB 296

Missouri Senate Bill 295: Protecting Children from Adult Cabaret Performances

Missouri Senate Bill 295 (SB 295), introduced by Senator Brattin, proposes significant changes to Missouri law aimed at restricting the exposure of minors to adult cabaret performances. The bill amends *Section 573.010 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri (RSMo)* and adds a new *Section 573.520*, defining the offense of engaging in an adult cabaret performance and establishing penalties.

Key Changes to Missouri Law

SB 295 introduces several notable legal modifications:

1. Definition of "Adult Cabaret Performance":

- The bill defines "*adult cabaret performance*" as entertainment that includes topless dancers, exotic dancers, strippers, or male or female impersonators performing in a manner appealing to a prurient interest, outside of traditional adult cabaret establishments (*Section 573.010(2)*).
- This definition broadens the scope of regulation to include performances in public spaces or venues accessible to minors.

2. Prohibition on Locations for Performances:

- Under *Section 573.520(1)*, the bill makes it unlawful to conduct an adult cabaret performance on public property or in any location where it could be viewed by someone who is not an adult.

3. Penalties for Violations:

- A first offense for engaging in such performances is classified as a Class A misdemeanor, while subsequent offenses are elevated to a Class E felony (*Section 573.520(2)*).

4. Preemption of Local Ordinances:

- The bill explicitly preempts any conflicting local ordinances or regulations adopted before August 28, 2025, and prevents future enactments that conflict with its provisions (*Section 573.520(3)*).

How SB 295 Protects Children

The primary goal of SB 295 is to shield children from exposure to sexually explicit content through the following mechanisms:

1. Restricting Public Exposure:

- By prohibiting adult cabaret performances on public property or in places accessible to minors, the bill ensures that children are not inadvertently exposed to inappropriate content.

2. Clear Legal Definitions:

- The detailed definitions in *Section 573.010* provide clarity on what constitutes an "adult cabaret performance," helping law enforcement and courts enforce these restrictions effectively.

3. Deterrence Through Penalties:

- The establishment of criminal penalties serves as a deterrent for individuals or entities considering such performances in prohibited locations.

4. Uniform Statewide Standards:

- By preempting local ordinances, the bill creates consistent statewide regulations, preventing loopholes that could allow such performances in certain jurisdictions.

Conclusion

Missouri Senate Bill 295 represents a concerted effort to protect children from exposure to sexually explicit performances by regulating where and how such content can be presented. Through its precise definitions, location restrictions, and enforcement mechanisms, the bill aims to create safer environments for minors across the state while ensuring uniform application of the law.

We strongly urge the passage of SB 295, which provides essential protection for the children of Missouri against harmful, age-inappropriate performances.