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House Committee on Rules
Re: HR 3 – Testimony in Support

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chair Drazan and Pham, and members of the Committee on Rules:

My name is Nik Yanchar and I would like to provide testimony in support of House Resolution 3.

By way of background, I am an attorney and have been practicing in Oregon for over a decade. But more importantly, I am a proud LGBTQ+ gay man and I also hold our country's first LL.M. (Masters of Laws) in Gay Rights Law that I earned in 2012. I mention that aspect to my past to say that I have specifically studied and researched the historical treatment of the LGBTQ community in American culture, including drag culture, and up through 2012 (and on my own since), studied and researched where we have come as a society in all respects.

Historically, and not surprisingly, since early 1800's (yes, drag goes back that far) drag has been used to push social constructs, point out societal problems, and help promote a sense of community to those that it touched. Of course it has evolved (which I won't go into a history lesson here), but suffice it to say that recognizing the historical significance of black drag in Oregon is important for the same reasons drag was occurring in the 1800's—recognize the struggle, trials, and tribulations of the black drag community; celebrate the accomplishments and recognitions within that community; and make a point that this body sees the black drag community having made a historical impact in Oregon.

Drag is not only important for culture, growth, and acceptance, but also for individuals to see representation of themselves in the public eye. Black drag in Oregon has been exactly that, for all races both in Oregon and across the states. While opponents of this measure may see this as a waste of time, I implore you to think outside the box and realize that there is a strong and vibrant community inside and outside of Oregon that this Resolution impacts, which may include individuals within your Districts. Those that have witnessed or heard of the amazing and tremendous accomplishments of all the Black Drag entertainers and public figures they became, look to Oregon as a place of acceptance, evolution, and support. This body is tasked with making decisions for all Oregonians and supporting this will do just that. By voting against this measure, you are voting against history that you cannot change, but must recognize as truth.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nik Yanchar', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Nik Yanchar