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able wearing a dress in public and being punished as a result. "I'd be concerned about somebody labeling that as drag and shutting it down. And where would that line be for everybody? Are they going to ban Bugs Bunny and Mrs. Doubtfire?"

"I think that the language is purposefully vague so that they can discriminate against trans people," Hall added. "That's why I feel as members of the queer community we really have to band together to protect each other."

In light of what's happening nationally, local organizations and production companies have been rallying around drag artists.

Justina Sotelo, events coordinator for Chico-based nonprofit Stonewall Alliance Center, said: "It's beyond disheartening to see the drag community weaponized, especially considering this community has been the backbone to so many queer and LGBTQ+ spaces by promoting self-love, acceptance, joy and true authenticity."

"We fully support and love our drag king and queen community," she continued. "We have hired these

Sierra Hall, through their drag king persona LoverBoy, has been able to further explore their gender expression and identity.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SIERRA HALL/LOVERBOY



Drag queen Miss Ruby Alexander performs at Hypnotique Productions' show *Eden* at Mulberry Station in February 2022.

PHOTO BY MADESON RUBEL

talented performers in the past, and will continue to hire, spotlight, promote, uplift and, of course, wholeheartedly back them."

Similar sentiments were also shared publicly on social media by Duffy's Tavern, which hosts The Stardust Revue Shows: "Duffs and the many other supporting local venues LOVE our queens and kings. To hell with legislation and any notion to the contrary."

Nicholson-Dick, who performs

with The Malteazers, said the troupe has found a welcoming, supportive home at Gnarly Deli.

"Drag is part of Hypnotique," Judge added. It's important for the public to see drag artists to promote "more visibility, more acceptance and awareness."

"There will always be a home for drag within my company," Partain said. "I am a very proud supporter of the drag community, and I'm not going to stop."

Drag brings joy to people, Garcia said—he sees it on their faces and hears it in their laughter when he and his fellow drag queens, kings and "drag things" perform. Plus, it's not uncommon for local shows to be sold out or standing room only.

"I think I was put on this Earth to make people happy," he said. "I love making people smile and feel loved. And it brings me a lot of joy to do that."

Moving forward, Solorio Ocegueda said that people can protect themselves and others in marginalized communities by voting and donating to LGBTQ and civil rights organizations.

More than ever, he encouraged fellow performers to "celebrate your drag."

"Highlight drag and make it more visible. Don't let it go back into the shadows."