



Grossberg banned from strip club after inappropriate touching; also sought sex from dancer

By Alex Acquisto and Austin Horn

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The club owner and employees state that Rep. Daniel Grossberg had been kicked out of Foxy's Gentlemen's Club before ultimately being banned from the establishment. Alex Acquisto and Legislative Research Commission

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A Herald-Leader investigation into allegations of sexual harassment involving Rep. Daniel Grossberg, D-Louisville, revealed he intimidated and harassed multiple women in and around Kentucky politics. He also was allegedly aggressive and threatening toward dancers in a Louisville strip club.

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State Rep. Daniel Grossberg offered a dancer at a Louisville strip club \$5,000 to have sex with him about two weeks before he was banned for life for inappropriately touching another club dancer, the Herald-Leader has learned.


The Louisville Democrat has been [ensnared in a growing controversy throughout the summer](#) linked to his harassing, sexually charged texts and interactions with young women. Numerous Democrats around the commonwealth have called for his resignation, and [one of his accusers](#) said in a column published Thursday Grossberg is a potential risk to unsuspecting women.

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Six sources at Foxys Gentlemens Club say the married 45-year-old Grossberg was a familiar figure at the club. In fact, he had been kicked out at least twice because of drinking too much and grabbing the dancers.

But he crossed the line when he moved a dancer’s underwear and tried to touch her genitals as she was performing on stage.

“He was calling girls all kinds of names,” Foxys’ co-owner Milford Renfrow told the Herald-Leader. “Disrespecting the girls and grabbing them.”

After a club manager escorted Grossberg from the club to its parking lot off Berry Boulevard, he tried to use his status as a state legislator to get back in. When that failed, he warned he could close down the 24-year-old strip club.

“You don’t know who I am,” the club’s manager recalls Grossberg telling him. The freshman legislator also said he “could shut this place down.”


The manager who kicked Grossberg out that night said he was not swayed by Grossberg’s threats.

“I don’t care if you’re Donald Trump. I don’t care who you are,” the manager said he responded. “You can’t treat girls like this.”

To tell this story, the Herald-Leader conducted 13 interviews at Foxys over the past two weeks after receiving a tip from an anonymous exotic dancer that Grossberg was publicly harassing and acting inappropriately at a different Louisville club.

This story is based on independent interviews with Renfrow, as well as the club manager, two bartenders, two dancers and one of the dancer’s close friends who was told of Grossberg’s solicitation the night it happened.

The Herald-Leader is not publishing the names of those unidentified individuals because they fear physical retribution from Grossberg.

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In the gentlemen’s club business, it’s not unusual for patrons to be tossed out for being inebriated or violating a club rule, Foxys staff told the Herald-Leader.

But banning someone for life is rare, a remedy used only in extreme circumstances, they said.

In his 22 years in the business, Renfrow estimated that Foxys has permanently banned about five people each year.

“There’s guys that drink a little too much and try to push their luck,” he said. “To those guys, you say, ‘You’ve had a little bit too much to drink, but you can try it again tomorrow.’”

“Then there’s other guys where you have to say, ‘You’ve gotta get out and don’t ever come back.’”

Grossberg was one of those guys, he said.

“We don’t put up with guys like that.”

The new revelations from a strip club in an industrial neighborhood in Louisville, about a mile west of famed Churchill Downs, includes the first confirmed incident where Grossberg used his prominence as a state legislator to publicly threaten others, or, in the case of one dancer, to offer her money for sex, which is illegal in Kentucky.

When presented with the latest allegations, Grossberg on Thursday evening denied soliciting prostitution, or that he used his state representative status unethically.

“Like many people my age, I have been to adult clubs, including Foxy’s (sic). I have never solicited prostitution from anyone, nor have I referenced my office to gain advantage,” he wrote in a statement.

“The allegations get more outlandish with each story, but they won’t stop me from continuing to work tirelessly to serve my constituents.”



Over the past seven weeks, since the Herald-Leader published its first investigative story about Grossberg’s behavior, the legislator and his lawyer, Anna Whites, have steadfastly denied any impropriety.

The newspaper has reported accounts from six different women in Kentucky politics, including three who say his behavior over social media messages, texts and in-person encounters amounted to sexual harassment.

“I never, in my work, approached or crossed a line in my professional communications,” Grossberg said in a July 30 statement released through Whites after the first three women came forward.

And on Aug. 22, following another three women speaking up, Grossberg told the Herald-Leader via email that he denied “any allegations of . . . abuse of office.”

These latest allegations at Foxys come as Grossberg is under formal scrutiny from two separate investigations for alleged misconduct — one by the Legislative

Research Commission, the legislature's administrative arm, and another by the Legislative Ethics Commission.

Several Democrats have called for his resignation, which Grossberg has repeatedly spurned.

In late August, Gov. Andy Beshear, the top Democrat in the state, said Grossberg should give “[serious thought](#)” to resigning.

Elected to Kentucky's 30th House District in 2022, Grossberg currently remains on November's ballot, facing no opposition after having beat a primary challenger by 50 votes. He represents about 45,000 Louisville residents.

The night Grossberg was banned

Grossberg was a familiar figure in Foxys. But only a few were aware he was an elected official, and they only knew because he told them.

After the 2023 holidays, in early winter, Grossberg visited Foxys for the last time.

With others in the club, the lawmaker sat very close to the main stage and watched a dancer that he had previously expressed interest in perform on the stage.

He began tipping her.

“Then, eventually, he just moved my bottoms all the way to the side, and he tried to, like, touch me,” the dancer said.

She said she moved away just before he could touch her crotch.

“He just moved my bottoms all the way to the side . . . but I moved before he could,” she said. “Then I turned around and I'm like, ‘What's up? Don't do that.’”

She said he tried to play it off as “just trying to tip” her, but she recalled Grossberg didn’t have money in his hand.

The night shift bartender remembers the then-20-year-old dancer’s reaction.

“Her face was white,” the bartender said. “She was angry, scared, and she was like, ‘He needs to go. He touched me.’”

Security and the manager were notified, and Grossberg was quickly escorted out.

This was not the dancer’s first threatening interaction with Grossberg.

Roughly a week before Grossberg was banned, he came into the club and ordered a drink. Frustrated that dancers weren’t paying attention to him, he waved a wad of \$20s and \$100s at that same night shift bartender — the same one working the night he was banned.

“He was upset,” the bartender said.

Minutes later, she retreated to the dancers’ locker room and told them, “There’s a guy with a lot of money here.”

She called a few over to the bar, and Grossberg insulted them, calling one “ugly” and another “fat,” the bartender told the Herald-Leader.

“You can’t talk to the girls that way,” the bartender told Grossberg.

The dancer Grossberg would days later try to grab on stage approached him at the top of the hour, when patrons are expected to tip dancers \$1 for a short “dollar dance.”

When she finished, Grossberg refused to tip her, instead sticking his leg and arm against the bar stool next to her, trapping her between his body and the bar, she said.

“I tried to push him, and then he grabbed my arm. Then I literally said, ‘Unhand me.’ Like, I told him to let me go. He kind of, like, fought against me, but like I nudged with my arm and he let go,” the dancer said.

On the night Grossberg was banned for good, the dancer was purposely “avoiding him because of the last time” she saw him. She and the bartender said Grossberg appeared “visibly frustrated” because of that.

“He even got mad at me,” the bartender said. “And was like, ‘You need to bring her over here,’ and I was like, ‘Look, she doesn’t want to sit with you.’”

Grossberg offers \$5,000 for sex

Two weeks before he inappropriately touched the on-stage dancer, Grossberg offered to pay another dancer \$5,000 to have sex with him. Prostitution is a crime in Kentucky.

A fellow dancer with whom she shared what happened, as well as a male friend who gave her a ride home that night, corroborated the dancer’s story.

“I’m like, ‘We don’t do sex,’ the dancer, 21 years old at the time, recalls telling Grossberg that night. “This is a strip club. You get a dance.”

Grossberg did not relent.

He repeatedly asked her how much money it would take for her to have sex. His offer eventually went up to \$5,000, she said. In return, she would have to perform in a violent sexual fantasy he described to her in detail.

“He told me that he worked with Kentucky government, and he kind of talked about how he worked more heavily with the police and stuff,” the woman said. “Then he offered that if I did do it, he could guarantee me immunity from certain things.”

The dancer said she believed that “certain things” meant criminal charges for prostitution, at the least.

She said he told her to give him a list of up to five names, including her own, and he would make sure they all were kept out of legal trouble. After the dancer rebuffed him several times, the conversation ended.

Grossberg bought her a drink and said he’d be in contact again.



And on subsequent nights when Grossberg came to the club when she was working, “I just stayed away from him.”

Previous allegations against Grossberg

Since July 30, the Herald-Leader has published three stories detailing Grossberg's interactions and communications with young women, all of whom are involved in the commonwealth's political scene.

Six women have argued the married legislator has improperly used his stature to intimidate, harass and make them feel uncomfortable through sexually charged electronic messages and in-person interactions.

Whites and Grossberg have offered several defenses, including claiming that some texts did not reveal "sexually harassing or inappropriate" material. Her client also has been "picked on and bullied for months," she said.

Grossberg's actions, texts and direct messages have been misinterpreted or "taken out of context for the purposes of media stories," Whites said. The accusations have been "unfounded," they have insisted.

"I deny any allegations of sexual harassment or abuse of office," Grossberg emailed to the Herald-Leader on Aug. 22. "I sincerely apologize to anyone who felt uncomfortable because of something I said or wrote."

In defending Grossberg, Whites previously has said the lawmaker has a "neurodivergent diagnosis," placing him on the autism spectrum, which means his brain processes information differently.

The Herald-Leader has [also reported Grossberg was the subject of campus controversy at Grinnell College](#) in the early 2000s when he penned a satirical advice column that seemingly tried to play off a reputation he'd gained for making women uncomfortable at the Iowa college.

In his "Sketchy Dan" column, he recommended that "lonely," "horny" and "creepy" young men aggressively pursue women on campus, even if the women weren't interested.

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