

## Testimony against House Bill 228, "Stand Your Ground" Provision

To Chairman Roegner, Chairman Becker, and Ranking Member Leland, my name is Tess Stuber and I'm here today to speak on behalf of March for Our Lives Ohio, State of Ohio Youth Activists and the youth of this nation that want to end gun violence.

We urge you to say no to House Bill 228.

This bill introduces increased safety hazards into our communities by allowing citizens to use lethal force in our public spaces when they feel they are at risk. But the definition of this risk is unclear. The introduction of this bill would increase discrepancies between the necessary use of firearms and the unnecessary. In states that have introduced Stand Your Ground gun legislation, the number of homicides that are declared justified without due process has greatly increased. For example, after the introduction of Florida's Stand Your Ground law, the average number of killings deemed "justifiable" jumped from 12% to 36%.

This poses an even greater risk to communities of color in our nation. In states with Stand Your Ground gun legislation, cases with white shooters and black victims are deemed justifiable 36% of the time opposed to states without Stand Your Ground laws where they are only deemed justifiable 29% of the time. The legislation of this system already favors white citizens over the citizens of color in cases of gun violence and Stand Your Ground bills only increase the injustice of this system.

House Bill 228 seeks to protect the citizens of the state of Ohio but in fact, it will do just the opposite of that. Homicide rates in states with Stand Your Ground Laws increase from 7% to 9% according to research conducted by Texas A&M. That's 500 to 700 more homicides per year. This bill would put the blood of these citizens on your hands. This is why we urge you to vote no on House Bill 228. You have the opportunity to save your fellow Ohioans.

With the unclear definition of what it means to feel threatened, the burden of defense is put on the prosecution. They are deciding the value of someone's life. Rather than evaluating the laws of this state. House Bill 228 puts unnecessary discrepancies in our system. We as a nation were built on a system of "innocent until proven guilty". This a system that crumbles under Stand Your Ground laws. You have the power to prevent the murders of innocent individuals.

We are the future of this nation with the intent to protect ourselves in our communities. You have the power to give us that protection by saying no to this bill. If you choose not to protect us then we will vote for representatives that will. You are called representatives because you are supposed to represent the people. We are the 4 million new voters in this nation and we will vote for our lives.

Please vote for our lives by voting no on House Bill 228. We beg of you to protect us. Thank you for this opportunity.