

5/14/18

Dear Committee Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Leland, and distinguished members of the Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee,

I want to thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony today regarding my thoughts on House Bill 228. I am a concerned Ohio citizen and a member of Progress NW Ohio, a progressive citizen advocacy group. One of the issues that I and many others are concerned with is gun violence. I am very disturbed that the Ohio House is considering HB 228, a bill that I believe will have the exact opposite outcome as intended. It will make Ohioan less safe instead of more safe.

Unfortunately, HB 228, commonly referred to as Stand Your Ground legislation, would actually increase gun violence in Ohio, not reduce it. HB 228 would actually make it easier to commit homicide with no legal repercussions. Studies have repeatedly shown that this legislation makes communities more dangerous, not less. A Texas A&M study demonstrated that in 21 states, Stand Your Ground laws were associated with an 8% increase in homicides. In 2013, *The Tampa Bay Times* found that children and young people have been victims of these laws: 26 children and teens have been murdered in Florida since the inception of the Stand Your Ground law there in 2005. A 2016 Journal of American Medical Association study in which Ohio was used as a control, found that the law was associated with a 24.4% increase in homicide and a 31.6% increase in firearm-related homicide in Florida, when compared with states that did not have this type of law

In addition, these Stand Your Ground laws would have a devastating effect on communities of color and perpetuate racial injustice. Studies have shown that when white shooters kill black victims under Stand Your Ground, those homicides are considered justified 11 times more frequently than when the reverse is true. Also, in Florida, when the victim of a Stand Your Ground case is a minority, the murderer is half as likely to be convicted.

Furthermore, by reducing the penalties for carrying a concealed weapon in areas where it is forbidden, we will be encouraging CCW permit holders to be irresponsible. If Ohioans are to be trusted with the responsibility that comes with carrying a concealed weapon, there should be repercussions from not living up to that responsibility. There is no reason a CCW permit holder should accidentally carry a weapon in an area where it is forbidden. If anything, we should be increasing the penalties for such lack of responsibility in handling an instrument of death.

This bill could also create situations where people that instigate a confrontation can than kill the other person without having to first retreat.

We need to make it more difficult to murder each other, not easier.

Sincerely,

Steven Weit  
Opponent testimony