

Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Caroline, and I am a resident of Summit County. I am a rising senior at Vanderbilt University studying Psychology and English. I am strongly opposed to HB 381.

A 2016 study by Cheng and Hoekstra shows that broadening self-defense is *not* associated with decreasing crime. In fact, Stand Your Ground laws are associated with increases in homicides, as we have seen in Florida and Georgia and is summarized by Everytown Research. Specifically, Florida saw a 32% increase in firearm homicide and a 24% increase in overall homicide after Stand Your Ground was implemented. Why would you implement a bill that is *known* to increase homicide?

Importantly, this exact bill is what allowed George Zimmerman, the murderer of Trayvon Martin, to walk away freely. It made it infuriatingly difficult to charge Ahmaud Arbery's murderers just last month. Not only this, but Ohioans already have a right to self-defense. Enacting this bill removes the obligation NOT to use deadly force when someone seems "threatening" in a public space. And unfortunately because of racial biases and centuries of White supremacists conditioning Americans to see the Black body as a threat, history shows us that this will endanger Black Ohioans. This bill is horrifically dangerous, a death sentence for people of color in Ohio, particularly Black Ohioans.

By allowing people to shoot and kill in public when they could safely walk away, HB 381 enables modern-day lynchings. Not only this, but it allows murderers, specifically White murderers of Black victims, to walk away without charges. This is racist and despicable, perpetuating white supremacy. According to Everytown Research, White murders of Black victims are deemed justifiable 11 times more often than when a Black individual shoots a White individual. In addition, Florida Stand Your Ground cases with white victims are twice as likely to end in convictions than those with minority victims. Why are you valuing Black lives less than White lives?

Lastly, I am abhorred by the fact that you are holding a hearing for this bill as Ohioans are protesting for an end to police violence just outside our statehouse and across the state. It is insensitive and shameful. This bill is a death sentence for Black Ohioans. (Black Lives Matter, Defund the Police).

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on the dangerous, harmful, inherently racist HB 381.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,  
Caroline Crawford