

To the members of the committee considering HB 381:

I oppose HB 381. The state of Ohio already has laws to protect citizens who resort to violence as a means of self-defense, and traditional self-defense laws state that when confronted with danger, the priority for safety is to Run or Hide, with Fighting Back to be held as a last resort when those are not available options. The addition of an unnecessary "Stand Your Ground" law does nothing to protect citizens, and there is abundant evidence to show that such provisions actually correlate to increases in violence. Analysis of Florida's homicide and gun violence data following its 2005 implementation of "stand your ground" legislation found that in 79% of Florida cases, the person who claimed Stand Your Ground could have retreated to avoid the confrontation, and that in 68% of these incidents, the person who was killed was not armed. I would be remiss not to mention that these "stand your ground" laws have led to the disproportionate murders of black Americans (such as Trayvon Martin and Ahmaud Arbery, to name two highly-publicized examples, but acknowledging that there are many others). With the current focus of the American people on the unjustified killings of people of color in America, it is in very poor taste that Ohio is even *considering* a stand your ground law. We've seen that these laws increase the likelihood of violence in communities and have a disparate negative impact on people of color. Please do not support this legislation. Ohio does not need to advance the toxic culture of "vigilante justice." Listen to the people you were elected to serve, and do the right thing by opposing this bill.