

## **WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL - HB 381: STAND YOUR GROUND**

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

Thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony today. My name is Emily Swanson, I am a small business owner, attorney, mother of two children and currently reside in Westerville, Ohio. I have been an Ohioan for most of my life. There are not enough words to explain how strongly I oppose HB 381: Stand your Ground.

I want to begin by saying that the timing of this hearing could not be more tone-deaf to the needs of your constituents who you drove past or walked past while they protested outside the doors. As all evidence has shown, we need to be moving away from this idea of individual's arming and protecting themselves as though they are in some self-appointed militia and begin putting our energies towards ways we can build a better criminal justice system for everyone with clear alignment and attention on how that system needs to work for Black, Indigenous, and People of color. Your committee has a lot of work to do and this house bill is not that work.

As an attorney, I cite the American Bar Association who has clearly stated that Stand Your Ground laws do not do what they purport to accomplish. Instead, they increase homicides, do not deter serious crimes, and create even more racial disparities in the criminal justice system. These types of laws are the very epicenter of white privilege and the current rhetoric of "I get to do what I want how I want." And people die. People die over and over and over again. And all the thoughts and prayers will not bring them back.

You are going to get a lot of statistics today from a lot of people, so I will not waste your time with more. I am hopeful you have done your research. We are in a time where you can listen. We are in a time where you can learn. We are in a time where you can make history by helping all of your constituents, not just the ones who have your ear but the ones who don't have the voice they should. You can begin responding today by saying "we have listened, we have heard."

Please vote NO on Housebill 381.

Thank you for your time.

Emily Swanson  
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