

TO: Chairman Lang, Vice Chairman Plummer, and Ranking Member Leland

FROM: Students for Gun Legislation

Dear Chairman Lang, Vice Chairman Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee-

I am submitting this testimony today in opposition of HB 381, the Stand Your Ground bill.

We strongly oppose this bill, and urge you to vote against it.

Our largest concern is the 'stand your ground' addition to Ohio law. The bills purport to clarify the right to self defense and defense of others. Persons would be presumed to have acted properly if they claim they were suffering or 'about to' suffer violence. The prosecutor instead of the defendant would now have the burden of proving that the accused did not act in self defense. Four incidents come to mind; the man that killed the neighbor boy when he walked across his lawn because of a history of feuding with the family, a young boy that was considered a threat for cutting through a backyard at night with friends, and a young man that was an exchange student on a scavenger hunt but because of his nationality was perceived as a threat when he knocked on someone's door. All were shot at by fearful homeowners, two died. A few years ago a 14 year-old was killed while stealing a car. The defendant was not charged because the boy was driving the car towards him and therefore the man was considered to have acted in self defense. There was an alternative. This man could have stayed in the house but chose not to. A duty to retreat if one can safely do so. He now lives with the fact that he killed a 14 year-old over a car. And of course none of us can forget the killing of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman who was frightened by someone not like himself walking through the neighborhood. The prosecutors needed to show Zimmerman was not acting in self-defense to find him guilty. They didn't and Mr. Zimmerman has continued to use poor judgement in the years that have followed resulting in more violence.

We strongly urge you to vote NO on HB 381.

Respectively,

*Ethan Nichols*

*Executive Director | Chief Strategist*

*Students for Gun Legislation*