

No to Stand Your Ground for Ohio!

We live in a society of shoot first and ask questions later. I whole heartedly agree with and am thankful for the right to bear arms, and of course self-defense protections. However, when it comes to “standing my ground” and responding with deadly force, I can easily decide to escalate an aggressive encounter instead of retreating. That’s not how communities and societies become better. It’s a license to kill. I am a believer in the mantra that “Past performance predicts future behavior”

The unknown variables will always be:

Was deadly force necessary?

What determines the severity and definition of threat? It is different for everyone.

Who was the aggressor?

What happens when a 2020 Trayvon Martin is walking down the street and a 2020 George Zimmerman approaches him as an “aggressor” and Trayvon feels like he must prepare for an altercation? The two begin to fight and Trayvon defends himself to the degree that he out fights Zimmerman. Zimmerman is armed and Trayvon is not. Ohio’s “Stand Your Ground” law will say Zimmerman had the right to defend himself. Gun advocates will say, “Trayvon should’ve been armed.”

Unarmed African American men are disproportionately killed by trained police officers who “felt threatened” or thought their suspect was going for a gun and it was a cellphone or even a wallet as we saw in the murder of Amadou Diallo. The 23-year-old man scheduled to start college, who had never even had a parking ticket. So, if trained professional police officers get it wrong, how would a citizen who may or may not be upset about a situation get it right? The climate we live in currently, in the United States, is not safe for relaxed gun laws. There are people living among us who consider themselves one step down from law enforcement. To some, they are heroes. To others they are vigilantes. Where’s the Data on Self Defense Shootings and how can you prove Stand Your Ground won’t increase violent crimes? Isn’t that what we’re hoping to do as a society? See violent deadly crimes decrease?

People have confrontations every day. Parking spots, you’ve seen it. Remember Michael Drejka, in Florida, who started an issue with a Black family about a handicap parking spot. Markeis McGlockton was protecting his wife from the anger and aggression of Drejka about the parking spot. McGlockton pushed Drejka to the ground to get him away from their vehicle. Drejka immediately pulled out a handgun and shot and killed him. Stand your Ground was working for Drejka and the Pinellas County Sheriff was not going to press charges. However, some surveillance video had captured the confrontation. McGlockton was seen in the video backing up and turning away when Drejka shot him. Thank goodness for the video, which was responsible for the conviction of Drejka, but there’s a six-year-old child without his dad and a young widow learning to live without her husband because of a vigilante or a wanna be police officer who couldn’t control his temper.

A more recent case of "Stand your Ground" gone bad is the case of Ahmaud Arbery who was gunned down while minding his own business. He was attacked while jogging and had no choice but to fight back. So "Stand your ground" legitimizes shooting a person who you started a fight with, but they were able to defend themselves a little too well, maybe better than anticipated and Ohio lawmakers are okay with the loser of the fist fight to just shoot that person? What kind of logic is that? The average citizen is not hyper aggressive and just looking for a fight to start because they know they're armed anyway.... But there's always a few of those citizens who are looking for a fight.

This law is bad for Ohio and it would be disproportionately egregious for African Americans. There are too many cases to cite here, where Black men are feared just because they're Black.

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Leronda Jackson

Ohio