

Testimony on House Bill 381  
House Criminal Justice Committee

Submitted by:  
Lyndsey Dudley

Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to HB 381. I am writing to you today as a mother of an 8 year old son and a 6 year old daughter, and a concerned Ohioan. I worry about gun violence every day. Every. Single. Day. When I drop my children off at Elementary School, I say a prayer for their safety. When I watch the news every morning, day after day, I see more deaths from gun violence and more families torn apart. And today, as we witness protesting in our streets and generational trauma on full display, the LAST thing we need to be doing is passing legislation that puts our black neighbors at more risk, as Stand your Ground laws do. Looser gun legislation is not the answer.

Today I write to share my opposition to HB 381 as it puts our families and our communities at risk by making Ohio a "Stand Your Ground" state. These laws disregard traditional self-defense laws, encouraging armed vigilantism and giving civilians in public places the opportunity to shoot first, think later. Lawmakers should put the safety of their constituents first and reject HB 381.

States that enact Stand Your Ground laws see an increase in firearm homicide rates. Previous studies show in an average month, at least 30 people nationwide are killed as a result of Stand Your Ground laws. These laws lead to an escalation in violence in situations that could be defused in other ways.

Stand Your Ground laws also have a disproportionate effect on communities of color. When white shooters kill black victims, the resulting homicides are deemed justifiable 11x more frequently than when the shooter is black and the victim is white. This is not just, and we should not be passing legislation that puts our minority community at an increased risk.

Bottom line: Stand Your Ground laws do not deter crime. Despite the testimony you have heard from supporters of this bill, there are no studies that associate broadening self-defense laws with deterring crime. Please reference the following source for valuable data re: my points above and concerns about similar legislation:  
<https://www.rand.org/blog/2019/09/stand-your-ground-laws-increase-violence.html>.

Shouldn't we be creating laws to curb gun violence, to make Ohioans safer? Nothing about this law makes me feel safer. Nothing in this law leads me to believe that gun

violence and gun deaths will decrease across our state and that our communities will experience less carnage. Can we agree that this should be a goal of this governing body?

I expect our legislators to find solutions to the multiple forms of gun violence—from suicides to mass shootings, domestic abuse killings, and other forms of homicide—that are on the rise in Ohio, as elsewhere in the US. Gun violence is an epidemic in America. Passing laws like HB 381 are dangerous. Period.

Please show up for Ohioans and vote NO on HB381. Please show up for your constituents. Please show up so that generations to come don't have to live in a world where Active Shooter drills are normal. They are not. None of this is. Please oppose this law, for the safety of your constituents.

Respectfully,

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