

Mary Anne Crampton
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June 8, 2020

Re: OH Criminal Justice Committee HB 381 Hearing June 9, 2020

Dear Chair Rep George Lang and Members of the Criminal Justice Committee -

I am writing to you to express my embarrassment for Ohio and my opposition to the scheduled hearing for HB 381 aka the Stand Your Ground bill. It is shameful, that in the face of protestors marching to save the lives of black Americans on the statehouse steps, in communities across the Ohio and the entire United States of America, Ohio lawmakers are even considering a bill that will result in the death of more Ohioans of which a disproportionate number will be black.

Ohioans ALREADY have the right to self defense! This bill removes the obligation to NOT use deadly force if you can avoid it. Existing law respects both a person's right to self-defense and the sanctity of human life. It recognizes that it is always better to avoid taking a life if there is a safe and clear alternative. Stand Your Ground laws upend traditional self-defense by allowing people to shoot to kill in public, even when they can safely walk away from the danger.¹

Black Ohioans will be impacted disproportionately by this proposed Stand Your Ground bill. When white shooters kill Black victims, the resulting homicides are deemed justifiable 11 times more frequently than when the shooter is Black and the victim is white.² Controlling for other factors—such as who initiated the confrontation and whether or not the victim was armed—Florida Stand Your Ground cases with minority victims are half as likely to lead to conviction, compared to cases with white victims.³

With absolutely NO evidence that Stand your Ground laws deter crime, how can it be that some Ohio legislators could turn a blind eye to clear evidence that more Ohioans will die by gun if this bill becomes law?

Please oppose this very dangerous bill.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne Crampton

¹The common feature found in Stand Your Ground laws is the elimination of any duty to retreat. Generally, Stand Your Ground laws also modify criminal procedure and self-defense law in other ways that dramatically expand the circumstances under which a person can use deadly force. See, e.g. Fla. Stat. § 776.012(2).

²Roman J. Race, justifiable homicide, and Stand Your Ground Laws: Analysis of FBI Supplementary Homicide Report data. Urban Institute. 2013.

³Ackermann N, Goodman MS, Gilbert K, Arroyo-Johnson C, Pagano M. Race, law, and health: Examination of 'Stand Your Ground' and defendant convictions in Florida. Social Science & Medicine. 2015; 142: 194–201