

June 2, 2020

Chairperson George F. Lang, Criminal Justice
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Opposition to HB 381

Chairman Lang and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Michele Mueller. and I am a resident of Harrison, Ohio. I am a volunteer lead with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, as National Chapter Liaison for the Gun Sense Action Network. I came into this movement right after the Sandy Hook mass shooting, but what has keeps me fighting is the everyday loss of life that kills 100 people a day, and the constant barrage of dangerous gun bills introduced in Ohio, that do nothing to help save more lives. In fact, I have watched

I am opposed to HB 381, Stand Your Ground, and its sweeping rollback of public safety laws in our state. Ohio already has a self defense law, the Castle Doctrine, that works as intended. This bill will upend centuries of traditional self-defense doctrines and threaten public safety by encouraging armed vigilantism. It is a solution searching for a problem. There is no need to create a culture of “shoot first, asks questions later,” including no duty to retreat, when there is a clear safe way to do so. Additionally, the research is clear; Stand Your Ground Laws do not deter crime. Instead this law disproportionately affects communities of color, and are associated with increase in homicide rates. A study at Texas A&M found that 21 states Stand Your Ground laws are associated with a clear increase in homicides, resulting in 600 more homicides per year. Another study by Mayors Against Illegal Guns found that justifiable homicide rates increased by 53% in states with Stand Your Ground laws, while they decreased by 53% in states without these laws. In fact, after Florida passed Stand Your Ground, it’s justifiable homicide rate tripled and was linked to a 32% increase in firearm homicides.

I am at a complete loss for why now is the time to pass a bill that would not only weaken our gun laws, but pass a bill that disproportionately affects communities of color, as Ohioans are literally marching for black lives, outside of this Statehouse. Black Americans are ten times more likely than white Americans to die by gun homicide. We should instead focus on other policies that actually reduce gun violence and save more lives. Start with closing the dangerous loopholes that exist in Background Checks now, and pass SB 184 for all gun sales, instead. Closing these dangerous loopholes are the single most important action you could take to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people.

I respectfully urge this Committee to vote **NO on HB 381**.

Thank you for giving me the time to hear my testimony.

Michele Mueller