

Testimony on House Bill 381  
House Criminal Justice Committee

Submitted by:  
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Members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to HB 381.

My name is Dr. Pamela Warrick. I am a psychologist from Westerville, OH. I am also a mother and a very concerned citizen. I currently have a gun in my home and I come from a family of gun owners. I support the Second Amendment and an individual's right to responsible gun ownership.

I am writing in Opposition to HB 381 The Ohio Stand Your Ground Act, provisions of which include:

- Establishes that a person is justified in using or threatening to use **reasonable** force, including deadly force, in the following situations:
  - When the person **reasonably** believes that such force is necessary to defend the person or another from any actual or imminent use of unlawful force;
  - When the person **reasonably** believes that such force is necessary to prevent or halt the commission of a forcible felony;
  - **Even when an alternative course of action is available.**

While I do believe that every citizen should have the right to self-defense, this legislation is completely irresponsible, as it clearly encourages the use of firearms in perceived critical situations, resulting in a "shoot first and ask questions later" mentality. As a psychologist, I understand the vast differences in perceptions of individuals as to what is "reasonable" behavior in stressful situations. What seems "reasonable" to one may result in catastrophic mistakes and irreparable harm to another. Research shows that "stand your ground" laws are clearly associated with increased firearm injuries and homicides.

Research also shows that "stand your ground" laws have a clear disproportionate negative impact on minorities and people of color. Do the names George Floyd, Trevan Martin, Brianna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery ring a bell? These are just three of the scores of innocent citizens who have been murdered for the "reasonable threat" of being black. Do we really want to incite more violence when our country is being ripped apart at the seams because of these senseless killings? I respectfully submit that passage of HB 381 would be an act of moral turpitude. I beseech you to vote NO on this bill and send a message to the citizens of Ohio that Black Lives Do Matter.