

Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Sandra Fiehrer. I am a concerned Ohioan, mother and community volunteer from OH 86. This is the first time that I have sent testimony to the House. I am writing today because I am vehemently opposed to HB 381 and so are my family and my neighbors.

In the middle of a global pandemic, it's shameful that your priority is to expand gun rights over gun safety against the wishes of the majority of 11.7 million Ohioans as you head to recess. While protests blanket the people's statehouse, Ohio, and this nation over racial inequality and police brutality against the black community, how misaligned can your intent be? I've collected signatures to close loopholes in Ohio's background check law in counties throughout my congressional district (OH4). In fact my home county, Union, was only 28 signatures from achieving our petition goal when Governor DeWine enacted the "stay home" order and paused our petition. Veterans, gun dealers and gun owners tell me they support background checks for all. I'm a gun owner and the last thing that I want is to have more guns in unsafe hands on the street.

HB 381 "Stand Your Ground" or "Shoot First" laws have been shown to actually increase homicide rates by eliminating our duty to de-escalate or retreat in public spaces. These laws made it difficult to charge Trayvon Martin and Ahmaud Arbery's killers. At a time when we, as a nation, are facing our racial bias, this is an unconscionable move on your part. We have seen with our own eyes that law enforcement uses deadly force inappropriately and disproportionately! Now you want to allow Ohio citizens to do the same?

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights found that "the same racial biases that have permeated our criminal justice system cannot be separated from this issue. When you consider the racial disparities in the selective prosecution and sentencing that have been amply documented in the literature, is it any wonder that a law like "Stand Your Ground", which in effect grants both powers to an individual under the guise of self-defense would suffer such maladies?"

Ohioans already have a right to self-defense.

With everything that's going on in Ohio, how is this a priority for you?

This legislation will not improve criminal justice and it will make my family and neighbors less safe in public spaces.

[https://www.vox.com/2019/9/27/20887403/stand-your-ground-laws-homicides-crime-self-defense?fbclid=IwAR0Q68IGY7oEEOMqaVqiwe9\\_Lm\\_bmzHyYO\\_6kAaigbTy5WHrTx-xMCss2Bo](https://www.vox.com/2019/9/27/20887403/stand-your-ground-laws-homicides-crime-self-defense?fbclid=IwAR0Q68IGY7oEEOMqaVqiwe9_Lm_bmzHyYO_6kAaigbTy5WHrTx-xMCss2Bo)

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/arbery-case-exemplifies-abuse-stand-your-ground-damage-broad-systemic-n1212816>

[https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2020/04-06-Stand-Your-Ground.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0ztbUjQ99sUbfUTCH3ae-F94eEA\\_-PANuiLXSico1VsVEVJcNQnuoaaWI](https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2020/04-06-Stand-Your-Ground.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0ztbUjQ99sUbfUTCH3ae-F94eEA_-PANuiLXSico1VsVEVJcNQnuoaaWI)

I have talked about "Stand Your Ground" with many neighbors, voters in our precincts and Ohioans signing the background check ballot issue. Their answer was always the same: "Are you nuts?"

So I ask, are you?

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.