

Chairman George Lang, Vice Chair Phil Plummer, Ranking Member David Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Sarah Retchin and I received my Masters in Social Work from Columbia University's School of Social Work last month. I am also an Ohio State University Alumna and currently reside in Franklin County with my family. As both a member of this community and as a social worker, I am strongly opposed to HB 381.

As a social worker, it is my duty to promote evidence-based practice, whether in my direct work with individual clients, or in the pursuit of social justice advocacy. Evidence-based practice ensures that the treatments and services, when used as intended, will have the most effective outcomes as demonstrated by the research. The outcome HB 381 proposes—of increased public safety—is widely and repeatedly disputed by the evidence.

The nonpartisan RAND Corporation has continuously released evidence showing that stand-your-ground laws increase violent crime, specifically homicides, resulting with at least [30 people nationwide are killed each month](#). They found zero published peer-reviewed studies finding that these laws deter violent crime. In fact, in [79 percent of stand-your-ground cases in Florida](#), the person who claimed “stand your ground” could have retreated to avoid confrontation. Instead, the stand-your-ground law in place encouraged escalation of violence in these avoidable situations, and have specifically had a disproportionate impact on communities of color.

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. We can look to the mental health field for evidence explaining this phenomenon. University of Delaware psychologist [James Jones wrote in the American Psychological Association's magazine, Monitor on Psychology](#), "What we know from our research is that there is a lot of racial and ethnic bias in the judgment of (who constitutes a) threat, so it's important for us to show inherent bias in laws that use such a subjective criterion for self-defense."

If we want to promote public health and safety, we have to rely on the evidence. We are currently living in the middle of two public health crises—COVID-19 and racism. Just last month, [Franklin County declared racism as a public health crisis](#). We must support actions to build health equity, not systemically and systematically tear it down. The harm this bill would cause is continuously evidenced by its prior implementation. Let us not make the dire mistakes history has already exposed.

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