

Representative George F. Lang, Chair

Phil Plummer, Vice Chair

Criminal Justice committee

Tuesday June 9th, 2020

Opposition to H.B. 381 Enact modifications to law regarding self-defense

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Valerie Kirk. I am a concerned citizen of Groveport. I am here representing myself. I strongly oppose House Bill 381. Ohioans already have robust rights to self-defense, such as ORC 2307.601 No duty to retreat residence or vehicle. We need only look at other states who have passed Stand Your Ground legislation to know why it is bad for Ohio.

In 2015, in response to the unlawful murder of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black child, the American Bar Association released the National Taskforce on Stand Your Ground Laws. It revealed that these laws increased homicides and did not decrease other types of crime; fostered a shoot-first mentality, especially when an armed confrontation involved people of different races; endangered police officers' lives; and deprived victims and innocent bystanders of justice by rewarding shooters with criminal and civil immunity. Additionally, these studies showed that race influences when someone feels justified to use lethal force, and influences the courts: a white shooter who kills a black victim is 350% more likely to be found justified in the use of lethal force than if the same shooter killed a white victim.

Stand Your Ground laws have a proven track record of encouraging vigilantism and being applied unevenly based on race. These laws only serve the long tradition of impunity that historically follows the unprovoked killing of Black men in America. To pass such a law is to say that you do not care about the lives of Ohio's Black citizens. To try to push through such a law during a time when cities across America, and around the globe, are protesting the unlawful murder of Black Americans is monstrous and brings shame to the Ohio House of Representatives.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on the dangerous H.B 381. Again I thank you for this opportunity to testify.

This concludes my testimony.