

Sandra Ison
Testimony on Senate Bill 237
Senate Government Oversight Committee
Senator William P. Coley, II, Chair

Chair Coley, Vice Chair Huffman, and other members of the Senate Oversight Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on SB237. I come to you today to testify as a gun owner, as a constituent of Senator Coley and House Representative Candice Keller, and as a girl who grew up shooting and hunting—a country girl who grew up in rural Madison Township in Butler County. A place one would think was safe from gun violence. However, on February 29th 2016 my world changed when a child brought a loaded gun into the school cafeteria and open fired. I was so very lucky my son was not there that day, but his friends and teachers were. I fell to the floor and prayed for so many, begging God please not Dakota, or Noah, or Robbie, or so many other staffers I have known all my life, please God don't let it be Justin or Joel or Cindy... so many names. It was a horrible day. I relive that day often in my head with guilt that I did not list out prayers for the children who were shot. I thought gun violence could not touch me twice and yet again in my life it did, when I woke to texts after the Oregon District mass shooting. I immediately called my children to make sure they were OK. I was shocked and shaken, however, when I found out Logan Turner from Tuesday night trivia at the Barrel was one of the victims. These experiences in addition to the recent decision to arm teachers in Madison schools are the reason I am here today to testify against SB 237.

I am here because this Stand Your Ground bill would do the opposite of reducing gun violence. We know that because of Florida's experience with Stand Your Ground. The implementation of Florida's Stand Your Ground law was associated with a **32 percent increase** in firearm homicide rates and a **24 percent increase** in overall homicide rates. Researchers also found a **75 percent increase** in justifiable homicide rates and an estimated **22 percent increase** in unlawful homicide rates. Florida's Stand Your Ground law was associated with bringing violence into suburban counties that were previously considered safe. Their Stand Your Ground law had the most negative impact on neighborhoods that initially had the lowest homicide rate. In 79 percent of Florida Stand Your Ground cases, the person who claimed Stand Your Ground could have retreated to avoid the confrontation. Ohio has taken a stand as a pro-life state, and I cannot think of a more pro-life issue than reducing Ohio deaths by gun violence.

Stand Your Ground laws have shown time and again to increase homicide rates and gun violence, and with armed teachers this could lead to potential deaths in our schools from armed teachers and children having school yard fights. Our children and friends are already dying or living with lifelong disabilities due to gun violence. The armed teachers' rules of engagement are based on Ohio Law. This law would remove the duty to retreat and give armed teachers the right to shoot to kill if a child were becoming physically aggressive. In effect, this law would give them the right to declare open season on children in our schools, and we all know children can be hot-headed at times. So I am asking our legislators to be consistent: I am asking you to be pro-life and do the right thing for Ohio and say NO to Stand Your Ground. No more of our children and residents need to live with the trauma and dangers posed by gun violence. Be pro-life, stand consistently for what you say you support, and say no to Stand Your Ground for Ohio.