**Council on American-Islamic Relations, Columbus, Ohio**

4242 Tuller Road, Suite B2 Dublin,

Ohio 43017

Telephone: 614-451-3232 Fax: 614-451-3222

**www.cair-columbus.com**

TO: SENATE GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT AND REFORM COMMITTEE

FROM: COUNCIL ON AMERICAN-ISLAMIC RELATIONS, COLUMBUS OHIO CHAPTER

DATE: December 4, 2018

RE: OPPOSITION TO HB 228

Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Member Schiavoni, and members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee - my name is Usjid Hameed and I am the Public Affairs Coordinator for the Columbus Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Ohio (CAIR-Columbus). CAIR is America’s largest civil liberties and advocacy organization for American Muslims. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to present opponent testimony on Substitute HB 228.

CAIR-Columbus opposes this Bill because it expands circumstances under which a person has no duty to retreat. If passed, Ohio would become a “stand-your-ground (SYG)” state. As numerous opponents of this Bill have pointed out, these provisions will lead to an increase in gun deaths and will have a disproportionate impact upon Ohioans of color.

Both of these concerns have manifested in Florida. According to a report from The Journal of the American Medical Association, Florida saw a 75% increase in justifiable homicides in the decade following SYG’s passage.[[1]](#footnote-1) In addition, a study from the Washington University School of Medicine found that “there indeed is a quantifiable racial component in the impact of the SYG law in Florida; namely, a suspect is twice as likely to be convicted of a crime if the victim is White, compared to when that victim is not White.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Given that the American-Muslim community in Ohio is comprised mostly of people of color, including many African Americans and African immigrants who are victims of anti-Black and anti-Muslim bias, CAIR-Columbus is certain that this Bill, if passed, would lead to an increase in “justified” gun homicides in our community. Although the Bill seems racially neutral, statistics have shown us that the consequences of its passage would be otherwise. Ohio must ensure that its most marginalized residents are treated equally and fairly under the law.

It is also important to emphasize that organizations such as the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association, the Ohio Association of Police Chiefs, and the Ohio State Highway Patrol have all testified against this Bill, further illustrating its problematic nature. These organizations present very credible concerns as they have a deep understanding of the criminal justice system, public safety, and have experience working with law enforcement professionals.

The opposition to this Bill is widespread and clearly reflects that its passage would be detrimental for our state. CAIR-Columbus strongly urges the committee to vote against Sub. HB 228. This concludes my testimony. I am also happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

Thank you.

Usjid Hameed



Public Affairs Coordinator

CAIR-Columbus

1. Lisa Rapaport. "Murders Surge in Florida in Decade after `Stand Your Ground' Law." Reuters. August 14, 2017. Accessed November 30, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-homicides-standyourground/murders-surge-in-florida-in-decade-after-stand-your-ground-law-idUSKCN1AU1QL>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Abuse, Violence And. "Florida's 'Stand Your Ground' Convictions Have Racial Bias." Institute for Public Health. September 13, 2015. Accessed November 30, 2018. <https://publichealth.wustl.edu/projects/floridas-stand-your-ground-convictions-have-racial-bias-2/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)