

Testimony on House Bill 796  
Civil Justice Committee

Submitted by:  
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Chair Hambley and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to offer testimony in opposition to HB796. I am a suburban mom of three that is deeply troubled by the gun violence epidemic in this country. This is a public health crisis and we should be working together to minimize those killed or injured every year.

Let me start with this stark quote from a 2017 article, "Stand Your Ground Convictions Reveal Clear Racial Bias":

Can you shoot someone, claim self-defense, and get away with the murder? Maybe, maybe not—but your odds are a lot better if the person you attack is black.

That's the chilling implication of a newly published study<sup>1</sup>, which examines 204 cases involving Florida's controversial "stand your ground" law. It reports that, once a series of variables are taken into account, defendants in these cases were twice as likely to be convicted if their victim was white.<sup>2</sup>

In the wake of nationwide demonstrations started because of yet another needless black death, our Ohio representatives decide that this is the opportune year to consider this racist law. I am disgusted.

I am also shocked that this legislation has again been brought to a hearing. Several studies have shown homicides rates **increase** when states have Stand Your Ground laws.<sup>3</sup> Ohioans are already protected by the law for defending themselves. There is no "duty to retreat" unless there is a clear and safe way to do so. This law is not about self defense, it is about giving people the ability to kill legally.

We are midwesterners and we are known to be kind. If this law passes, we will also be known to be racist and comfortable with more lives, especially black lives, lost by gun violence.

The bait and switch happening at the Ohio State House right now concerning gun laws continues to erode trust in government. The power of the gun lobby is on full display.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0277953615300642>

<sup>2</sup> Jacobs, Tom. *PacificStandard*. Stand Your Ground Convictions Reveal Clear Racial Bias. 3 May 2017. <https://psmag.com/news/stand-your-ground-convictions-reveal-clear-racial-bias>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/stand-your-ground/violent-crime.html>

The hope is that Ohioans are too busy with the holidays, trying to place food on the table, or suffering from the pandemic to notice these sneaky tactics. We are watching. We watch because our children's safety, our communities' safety, our cities' safety and our state's safety matter to us. Moms in my neighborhood and across the state are tired of the gun violence epidemic in this country. We will remember who perpetuated it and who tried to end it. Please oppose HB796.