

Adrienne Wagner  
December 7, 2020  
Testimony on House Bill 796  
House Civil Justice Committee

Dear Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to write to you in opposition to HB 796. I am writing today as a concerned private citizen, a parent, an employee of a local family-owned business, and a community member.

I oppose this bill because it will make Ohioans less safe, by encouraging the escalation of violence in public places when such violence is avoidable. As you know, multiple independent studies and different data sets reinforce the relationship between Stand Your Ground laws and an increase in firearm homicides. There are no studies that show Stand Your Ground laws are effective in deterring crime. Please consider your duty to the safety of your constituents and do not advance this bill.

As you also know, data show that Stand Your Ground laws disproportionately negatively impact black people. Multiple peer-reviewed studies have reached this conclusion. We know that, in states with Stand Your Ground laws, white Americans who kill black Americans successfully claim self-defense 36% of the time. Meanwhile, black Americans who kill white Americans successfully claim self-defense just 3% of the time. The combination of Stand Your Ground legislation and racial bias is deadly for black people. This is unjust and unfair, and it has no place here in Ohio.

The truth is, current Ohio law already provides justice with regard to self defense. **No proponent of this bill has identified a single court decision in our state wherein the application of a duty to retreat resulted in an injustice.**

Please reject HB 796.

Thank you,

Adrienne Wagner