

Testimony on HB 796  
Ohio House Civil Justice Committee

Submitted by:  
Marcia R. Silver, MD, FACP

Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to HB 796.

I am an Ohio resident and voter and emeritus Professor of Medicine with many years of experience working in a trauma hospital in Cleveland, Ohio. I have seen too many victims of gun violence– the damage done by gun violence is horrible. Contrary to our emotional responses, the EVIDENCE clearly shows that more guns lead to more gun violence.

All Stand Your Ground laws are dangerous, but this legislation being considered in Ohio is extreme. It would remove the responsibility to even consider de-escalating or walking away before using a firearm to shoot and kill in public places. This will inevitably turn simple misunderstandings into permanent tragedies.

The Stand Your Ground provisions of this bill are based on emotion and contrary to evidence of effectiveness. (see <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/stand-your-ground.html>, <https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-inherent-danger-of-stand-your-ground-laws/> and <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/corej/StandYourGroundReport.pdf>).

In 79 percent of Florida Stand Your Ground cases, the person who claimed Stand Your Ground could have retreated to avoid the confrontation. In 68 percent of cases, the person killed in these disputes was unarmed.(1)

Nearly 60 percent of those Floridians who claimed Stand Your Ground had been arrested at least once before the day they killed someone. About a third of those defendants had been accused of violent crimes, including assault, battery and robbery. (2)

If those reasons aren't enough, consider that when travel returns to normal, people considering going to Ohio — whether to attend college, open a business, or visit as a tourist — will be less likely to visit a state where rates of gun violence are higher and reckless gun owners are empowered to shoot to kill in public.

Please OPPOSE HB 796 for the safety and health of Ohio citizens, to prevent further violence, and protect our democracy.

Thank you.

Marcia Silver, MD, FACP

References:

1. Spitzer, RJ. Stand your ground makes no sense. New York Times. May 4, 2015. <https://nyti.ms/2CcMW4y>
2. Stanley K, Humburg C. Many killers who go free with “stand your ground” law have history of violence. Tampa Bay Times. <https://bit.ly/2LhL51v>.