

Civil Justice Committee

Opposition Testimony on HB 796, Stand Your Ground

Submitted by: Sheri Cody

Chairman Hambley and members of the committee,

I must object to the rushed timing of the first hearing on HB 796. It is almost impossible for a health care provider like myself to hear about and respond to a bill in less than 24 hours, especially in the middle of the COVID pandemic.

As a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesiologist in Stark County, I am urging you to vote no on this bill. As a professional, I have been involved with hundreds of emergency situations. I can tell you that years of training and retraining are required to remain calm and handle extremely stressful situations. A Stand Your Ground approach simply encourages people to react to a stressful situation or argument by shooting first and asking questions later. The current Ohio law already provides adequate legal protection for someone who truly has to protect themselves when attacked, if there is no other reasonable way of leaving the situation. Research shows that even thoroughly trained police officers shoot far less accurately when in a stressful situation. When arguments escalate into violence, innocent bystanders are often unintended victims. In Florida, where they enacted Stand Your Ground laws, 67% of the victims were not even armed! As a CRNA I have seen the devastation of gunshot wounds and the chance of any innocent person being shot is enough to make me oppose this bill.

I urge you to vote no on HB 796.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheri Cody, RN, BSN, CRNA