

## OPPOSITION TESTIMONY ON HB 796 STAND YOUR GROUND

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Chairman Hambley and Committee,

- It is shameful that this body is trying to ram through this dangerous legislation without even giving Ohioans (the majority of whom oppose Stand Your Ground) a chance to respond, even in writing. And to do it in the midst of a pandemic, when no one should be traveling to Columbus unless absolutely necessary, is unforgivable.
- In my career as a Feeding and Swallowing Specialist at Akron Children's Hospital, I cared for many children who had been shot. It is a heartbreaking sight. Gun shots cause a massive amount of tissue damage and require on average 9 times more units of blood to treat than other types of injuries. I have treated children whose entire jaw has been shot off and 2 year olds with gaping wounds to the abdomen that require the placement of a tube for feeding. And these are the lucky ones who survive. I'm sorry to be so graphic but this is the reality you would see if you had been able to come into those hospital rooms with me. And to face the parents. American children die by guns 11 times as often as children in other high-income countries (12). According to the Brady Center, 21 American children are shot every day. Almost **7,900 children and teens are shot every year** and 1,584 children and teens die from gun violence. Makes me think of the headline I saw in The Jacksonville Newspaper: "**5-year-old dies after being caught in crossfire during fight over \$180, Jacksonville sheriff says**". Is that what we want for Ohio? To be like FL?
- In Ohio, as in the nation as a whole, more than 60% of the children who die by gunfire, die from Gun Homicide, usually by being caught in crossfire during adult shootings.
- And many of the nearly 40,000 adults we kill with guns annually are parents so their children endure a lifetime without their mother or father. So I can truly say that I am for any law that will make Ohioans (particularly women and children) safer.
- But HB 796 WILL NOT. During my time at Akron Children's I also was a published medical researcher. I know how to read research. And on this issue, the research is clear. Stand Your Ground laws increase gun homicides. Listen to this finding from The Rand study, Sept. 12, 2019. "The RAND review concluded there was "moderate" evidence—the second strongest level of evidence—that **stand your ground laws are associated with an increase in homicides**. At least four additional studies meeting RAND's standards of rigor have reinforced the finding that "stand your ground" laws increase homicides. Researchers from the National Bureau of Economic Research estimate found that **at least 30**

## **Americans are killed each month in the U.S. as a result of Stand Your Ground laws. (2)**

- No rigorous studies have found that “stand your ground” laws prevent violent crime or promote legitimate acts of self-defense. (10. National Bureau of Economic Research)
- Stand Your Ground also has a disproportionate impact on communities of color. In this time of outrage over the murder of George Floyd, NOW is the time you want to pass a bill that will further fuel racial tensions and increase the disproportionate burden of gun violence on communities of color? Research shows that when white shooters kill Black victims, the resulting homicides are deemed justifiable 11 times more frequently than when the shooter is Black and the victim is white. In Ohio, Black Americans are 14 times more likely to die from Gun Homicide than white people (vs. 10 times more likely in the rest of the country!). So if the general rate of shootings goes up due to Stand Your Ground Laws (as stated above) then the gap of black versus white deaths from shootings widens (11).
- **Stand Your Ground laws encourage escalated violence in situations that could be defused in other ways.**  
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% of cases, the person killed in these disputes was unarmed.(6)**
- So the dramatic scene that many people see in their heads of an innocent victim reaching into her purse, whipping out her shiny gun and waving it at her attacker or blowing him away exists mostly in the movies. The reality is that in almost 70% of the Florida cases, the unarmed person was killed. 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.(7)
- I hope you will look at my list of references below. Every fact above is properly cited. All of my references are from published research papers, many are peer reviewed medical Journals or Government sources such as FBI or CDC.

Vote NO on HB 796, Stand Your Ground. Thank you.

### References:

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