

**Testimony on Senate Bill 237**  
**Government Oversight and Reform Committee**

Senator William P. Coley, II Chair  
Senator Matt Huffman, Vice Chair  
Senator Hearcel F. Craig, Ranking Member

Submitted by Laura Robertson-Boyd

**Chair Coley, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Minority Member Craig, and the members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee:**

My name is Laura Robertson-Boyd. I am a resident of Bexley, Ohio. I am submitting testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 237.

Recently I was shopping for groceries for my family at my neighborhood Kroger. It was 2:00 pm on a Tuesday afternoon when I was in the checkout line. An argument broke out between a man and a woman in the self-checkout line. Screaming and shouting ensued. As the argument got more heated, I could hear the man and woman threatening to get their guns to settle the dispute. I could hear a call for security over the loudspeaker, but the security guard never came. No other Kroger employees intervened. The man eventually started walking away toward the exit of the store saying, "I don't want to hurt you." The woman chased after him, shouting that he was "lucky" her gun was in her car, but she intended to get it. I do not know what happened when they reached the parking lot. I had no intention of leaving the store with my groceries until the area had been secured as safe. All I can remember thinking is: I'm really grateful that after years of allowing the open carry of guns in Kroger stores, the Kroger Corporation finally reversed course after the tragic mass shooting in Dayton on August 4 last year and finally began asking customers to leave their guns at home (1). If either of those two individuals had been carrying a loaded gun in the store that day, the argument might have had a very different and deadly outcome.

If SB237, commonly known as a "Stand Your Ground" bill, were enacted into law and the duty to retreat in public places is no longer required--even though there may be a safer alternative to resolving disputes--what looked like a heated argument in the self-checkout line at Kroger could have turned deadly in an instant. The shooter could get away with murder by claiming self-defense, and innocent grocery shoppers could be killed or injured in the process - just because we need to go to public places like grocery stores to feed our families. Indeed, research on the impact of Florida's Stand Your Ground law shows that in 79 percent of the cases where Stand Your Ground was invoked, the shooter could have retreated to avoid the confrontation (2)—just as happened, thankfully, in the grocery store incident I witnessed.

The bottom line is: SB 237 would put children, families, and communities at risk by making Ohio a "Stand Your Ground" state. Stand Your Ground laws upend traditional self-defense laws, encouraging armed vigilantism and giving civilians in public places more leeway to shoot than the U.S. military gives soldiers in war zones (3). Lawmakers should put the safety of their constituents first and reject SB237.

Sincerely,

Laura Robertson-Boyd

1. Coolidge, A. (2019, September 3). Kroger changes gun policy, asks shoppers not to openly carry firearms. The Cincinnati Enquirer. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y53v9psx>
2. Spitzer, R. (2015, May 4). Stand Your Ground Makes No Sense. The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/s66zx2>
3. Soltz, J. (2012, April 10). George Zimmerman Had More Legal Authority to Kill Than Our Troops Do at War. Think Progress. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2axdo19>