



GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT
AND REFORM
COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 21 Jan 2020

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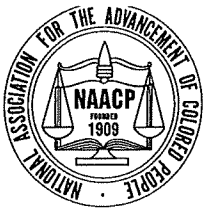
Testifying on Bill Number: SB 237

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

Special Requests: _____



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

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Testimony Opposing SB 237

Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

I bring you greetings from the oldest and boldest civil rights organization, your Columbus NAACP. I am Brandi Slaughter and I serve as the chair of the political action committee. Thank you Chairman Coley and Ranking Member Craig for the opportunity to testify.

For more than a century the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has worked to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination. Inspired by the force and commitment of The Call of 1909, which denounced the growing oppression of people of color and mobilized thousands to work to bring this discrimination to an end, today, the NAACP seeks to prioritize this work through six NAACP game changers that address the major areas of inequality facing African Americans that are the focus of the NAACP's work: economic sustainability, education, health, public safety and criminal justice, voting rights and political representation and expanding youth and young adult engagement.

I stand on the shoulders of my ancestors, fresh off of honoring the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, to express our opposition to SB 237. In line with our public safety and criminal justice game changer, the Columbus NAACP views this legislation as open season on Black lives. Enacting SB 237 would present a license to target and kill black people. Stand Your Ground essentially makes it legal to shoot one's way out of any situation that feels threatening. Unless law enforcement authorities can prove that's an invalid explanation from a shooter, a resulting homicide can be deemed justifiable under the law, and the shooter is immune from criminal and civil prosecution.

To some that might sound dramatic, however in the states which have enacted stand your ground legislation there have been reported increases in homicides and injuries, with a disproportionate impact on communities of color. An analysis by the Urban Institute found 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. According to an article that appeared in *Social Science and Medicine*, controlling for other factors—such as who initiated the confrontation and whether or not the victim was armed—Florida Stand Your Ground cases with minority victims are half as likely to lead to conviction, compared to cases with white victims.

Couple the data, which the fact that racial tensions are at a high in our country. The Pew Charitable Trust released the results of a survey that explored the public's views about the state of race relations and racial inequality in America. Among the report's key findings, most Americans say it's now more common for people to express racist or racially insensitive views; more than four-in-ten say it's more acceptable.

This is an opportunity for real leadership. Ohio doesn't need to open the door to modern day lynching of black people. We fear that SB 237 does just that. Dr. King once remarked, that "In spite of temporary victories, violence never brings permanent peace." We should follow the example that Dr. King left us, one of peace and of nonviolence. Please vote NO on SB 237. I welcome any questions you may have.