

SB 383 Stand Your Ground

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Mr. Chairman and Committee members,

I am strongly opposed to SB 383, Stand Your Ground. This bill is likely to increase murders in Ohio, as it has in other states.

The very timing of this hearing is an affront to the thousands who are dying in this pandemic. Few, if any, of us can travel to Columbus to testify against this dangerous bill at this time.

This summer, our streets were filled with thousands of people protesting police brutality towards black Americans. Gun violence disproportionately affects African Americans. In 2019 in Ohio, 13,577 people died of gun violence. Sixty percent of these were African American. This bill allows people to shoot anyone who makes them nervous, even if the victim is unarmed. Unfortunately, many white people find a black man in a hoodie threatening. Black Americans will pay a high price if Stand Your Ground is enacted.

It is alarming that our Legislature seems anxious to increase gun deaths in Ohio with this legislation. Ohio saw a 58% increase in gun deaths from 2009 to 2018, compared to the average rise for other states which was 10%. Our gun homicide rate went up 27% in the first 6 months of 2020, which according to Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley, was not associated with COVID. And credible research studies (ex: Rand Study) show that Stand Your Ground is associated with an increase in gun homicides in states that have this law.

SB 383 is not needed. Gun owners already have adequate ability to protect their lives and property. Please don't give the hot-heads an excuse to shoot African-Americans because of their own racist fears. It is always better for a gun owner to retreat, saving two lives, including his own. Throwing this bill into the trash can will save lives.

Thank you,
Constance Rubin