

Testimony on Senate Bill 383

Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Submitted By:

Dion Green

Chair Coley, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Craig and members of committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to HB796. My name is Dion Green. I am a citizen of Ohio and resident of Montgomery County. I am here to oppose this Stand Your Ground bill because last year I had to suffer losing my father in my arms in the middle of the street due to the mass shooting in the Oregon District, which killed my father and claimed the lives of 8 other innocent victims. Since that tragedy, the citizens of Ohio have been calling on you to Do Something to reduce gun violence. But this bill would only lead to more gun violence, and it would put me, as a black man, at risk of being a victim of gun violence yet again.

By eliminating the duty to retreat when it is safe and reasonable to do so, this bill would allow people to justify killing someone by claiming that they are “standing their ground.” In the black and brown community we would see an increase in deaths relating to gun violence. As described in a July 2020 report by the Southern Poverty Law Center, “Stand Your Ground Kills: How These NRA-Backed Laws Promote Racist Violence”:

Law enforcement and prosecutors have at least initially cited Stand Your Ground laws in determining not to arrest the killers of other young men and boys of color, including Trayvon Martin, Jordan Davis, Jamonta Miles, Daniel Adkins, Jr., and more recently, Ahmaud Arbery, to name only a few... These laws suffer from pervasive racial and gender bias in their application, deepening disparities in the legal system and disproportionately justifying the use of violence by people who are white and male against people who are not.¹

I pray that we can come up with a better solution, instead of granting a person the right to take someone else’s life because they feel uncomfortable and react out of fear instead of thinking of an alternative and retreating from a confrontation if it is safe to do so.

I urge you to vote no on SB 383. Think about the lives we are going to save by not passing this bill. Thank you for your time and for listening to my testimony, and God Bless.

Respectfully submitted,

Dion Green

¹ https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/_stand_your_ground_kills_-_how_these_nra-backed_laws_promote_racist_violence_1.pdf