

**Testimony on Senate Bill 383**  
Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee  
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Submitted by:  
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Chair Coley, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Craig and members of committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to SB 383. My name is Mandy Rothgerber and I am a resident of Hudson, Ohio. I am also saddened, confused and frustrated as it is two weeks before Christmas and we are gathered together to talk about death when this season no matter your religious affiliation generally is a celebration of life.

This bill, according to its name, "Expands locations at which a person has no duty to retreat." If you don't have the "duty to retreat" when you can do so safely, that makes it a "stand your ground" bill. Stand YOUR ground reeks of a white supremacist belief that this very ground we all stand on belongs to the person holding the gun. Supporters of this bill are not only backing the impulsive nature of shooting a living, breathing human being, even when there is the possibility of safe retreat from a confrontation; they are also backing their belief that there is a social order to which the rest of us must adhere. This order is woven through history with women and black and brown peoples' lives being valued as less than. Truly if these groups of people were valued then this bill would not be being proposed not only during a pandemic but in a year that has seen more racial strife than since the civil rights movement.

I do not oppose guns, but I believe in gun SENSE laws. I have been to hearing after hearing regarding gun legislation since I lived in Kentucky. I know that Stand Your Ground has been pushed by extremist gun groups in Ohio for some time. I ask myself, what good is it for me to give testimony quoting research by any number of sources, when you don't care that the other side offers no research or reason to pass this bill whatsoever? What cases or research have you seen that show a need for passing this bill? Has there been a single case in Ohio where someone was wrongly prosecuted for murder when they were acting in self defense? No, you have not heard any, because traditional self-defense law works just fine. There is only a duty to retreat when it is safe to do so. There is NO proof that passing Stand Your Ground decreases crime or saves lives. So why the continued push for it?

Gun violence is a public health issue for America and for Ohio, where gun deaths have increased by 54% between 2009 and 2018 (compared to 18% across the whole US). Logically speaking, the lawmakers who value Ohians' lives won't push for a law that could potentially kill even more Ohians, right? My belief is that the only lawmakers who TRULY value Ohioans' lives, are the ones who OPPOSE stand your ground. Don't we want once and for all to acknowledge that looser gun laws AREN'T WORKING FOR AMERICA, FOR OHIO.

Resorting to gun violence and "standing your ground" leaves the final word with the survivor. Wouldn't someone who values life, one who is PRO LIFE, absolutely despise and disagree with a

law like Stand Your Ground that allows you to take a life when there is another option, like walking or driving away from a confrontation?

Encouraging the use of excessive force is the last thing the citizens you are supposed to protect need. Especially black and brown citizens. You have a DUTY TO PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE. We cannot achieve life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness if we are willing to shoot and kill each other out of fear.

Lastly, for the white proponents of this bill, please pretend for a moment you're NOT white. Let's put you in a store with a racist on the clock. You're a black man now. Let's say your phone starts ringing and you reach for it suddenly. But since you are not white this movement to grab your phone agitates the racist worker and they shoot you. Their word against yours, the dead person. The racist makes up lies about you to law enforcement and your life is snuffed out. Because you are black. Because angry gun extremists want a reason to kill. THIS is Stand Your Ground.

Please do the right thing this Christmas season, this time to celebrate life in a year we have witnessed so much death. Please say NO to SB 383.