



State Representative Latyna M. Humphrey (OH-02)

### Sponsor Testimony

June 13th, 2023

Good afternoon Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan, and all other members of the Government Oversight Committee. I am here today to discuss HB 62, which will amend sections of the Ohio Revised Code to limit the locations where a person has no duty to retreat; in other words, to repeal the stand-your-ground law.

As you all know, on April 4th, 2021, Governor DeWine signed into law SB 175, eliminating a civilian's duty to retreat in public places outside their home or vehicle. Before the signage of this bill, Ohio Law allowed a civilian to act in self-defense as long as specific parameters were met:

1. They were not at fault for creating the situation;
2. There was a threat of imminent or immediate death;
3. There was not a reasonable means of retreat; and
4. The use of such force was appropriate.

Under SB 175, the duty to retreat was eliminated, and that the judge or jury is no longer required to consider whether a person could have retreated. Current law states that "A trier of fact shall not consider the possibility of retreat as a factor in determining whether or not a person who used force in self-defense, defense of another, or defense of that person's residence reasonably believed that the force was necessary to prevent injury, loss, or risk to life or safety." With that, I believe problems with the current law can be seen as evident.

According to Jama Network Open, a peer-reviewed medical journal, the enactment of SYG laws is associated with an 8-11% national increase in monthly homicide and firearm homicide rates. That is a shocking 58-72 homicides each month.

Furthermore, in Florida, the first state to enact a law such as this, in 68% of successful stand-your-ground claims, the person killed was unarmed. These statistics speak volumes. Almost 1/3rd of cases could have been avoided by walking away; the real victim was unarmed.

For centuries, states strictly limited the right to use deadly force in self-defense based on the principle that if you could spare a human life, it is your moral duty to do so.

The Stand Your Ground law was signed into law on April 4th, 2021, More Ohioans died from firearms in 2021 than almost any year on record, according to preliminary data from the Ohio Department of Health.

Let it be known—I truly believe in public safety, and I truly believe in self-defense, but I also believe in evidence-based approaches. I believe that SB175 was a huge change in our state's law that we should be willing to have conversations about re-evaluating whether or not SYG laws are working as intended.

I urge my colleagues to be open to having much needed discussions to help make Ohio safe for all Ohioans.