

Stand Your Ground testimony 12-1-20

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Representing self Oppose legislation: HB 248, especially its revised version

*I am a 47-year resident of Ohio, concerned with the proliferation of guns and the deaths which they have enabled.*

*I am strongly opposed to both HB 248, and its proposed substitute. The many changes this bill seeks to make to Ohio's already lax gun laws are absolutely appalling to me. Once again it appears as though Ohio legislators are more than ready to throw away science and common sense to expand the rights of Ohioans to intimidate and kill one another.*

*Expansion of Stand Your Ground rights, lowering of the conceal carry age to 18, and reducing regulations for those who are allowed to carry guns in schools are all very troubling, and are likely to increase murders in Ohio, as they have in other states that have expanded Stand Your Ground provisions. Given the extensive changes proposed, the timing of this hearing, during a lame duck session when most Ohioans are relieved that elections are over and are focusing on making ends meet while preparing for the holidays, is an affront to democracy. Such extensive changes to laws that affect life and death deserve more public discussion in the "light of day," not behind-the-scenes maneuvering.*

*The proposed changes also are an affront to the thousands of protesters who filled Ohio's streets this last summer calling for an end to indiscriminate brutality and deaths. It was only a few years ago that this body passed Ohio's Conceal Carry Law, claiming that the training and registration requirements would assure safe handling. Then you lessened the training requirements; now you want to expand the right to conceal carry to 18 year olds, who brains are not even fully developed.*

*According to the University of Rochester Medical Center, "It doesn't matter how smart teens are or how well they scored on the SAT or ACT. Good judgment isn't something they can excel in, at least not yet. The rational part of a teen's brain isn't fully developed and won't be until age 25 or so.*

*In fact, recent research has found that adult and teen brains work differently. Adults think with the prefrontal cortex, the brain's rational part. This is the part of the brain that responds to situations with good judgment and an awareness of long-term consequences. Teens process information with the amygdala. This is the emotional part.*

*In teen's brains, the connections between the emotional part of the brain and the decision-making center are still developing—and not always at the same rate. That's why when teens have overwhelming emotional input, they can't explain later what they were thinking. They weren't thinking as much as they were feeling.*

*I am sure you proponents for this change in the law have said that 18 year olds can go to war, and are taught safe practices in the military. But in the military, they are also highly supervised. Most of the 18-*

*year-olds who will apply for conceal-carry permits will never have been in the military, nor will they be under anyone's supervision when they are carrying. And let's face it, a lot of indiscriminate drinking goes on among 18-21 year olds, lowering their ability to make rational decisions.*

*So I strongly oppose extension of conceal carry permits to 18-year-olds.*

*The proposed law also seeks to discourage businesses from disallowing concealed weapons on their premises, while at the same time giving businesses greater latitude to shoot anyone of whom they are fearful, rather than trying to retreat first. In an average month, at least 30 people nationwide are killed as a result of such latitude. There are no studies that show Stand Your Ground laws deter crime, but we do know that Stand Your Ground laws are used disproportionately against communities of color.*

*Ohio's laws are currently strong enough to allow gun owners the ability to protect their property. Please don't give the hot-heads an excuse to shoot African-Americans because of racist fears. It is always better for a gun owner to retreat, saving two lives, including their own.*

*Postponing deliberation of HB 248 and its myriad of changes to Ohio gun laws would better serve Ohioans. Better yet, throwing HB 248 into the trash can forever, will save lives.*