

Columbus, June 3, 2020

To the chairman of the Criminal Justice Committee, Mr. George F. Lang,

My name is Carolina López-Ruiz. Thank you for letting me present this testimony. As speak as a wife and mother, educator, and US citizen who has travelled the world quite a bit; as a citizen who is appalled at the political division over guns and gun rights and regulations in our country. We should all strive to achieve a safer, peaceful society for ALL. House Bill 381, the so-called “Stand your Ground” bill does NOTHING to take us in that direction. Ohioans already have self-defense rights. Laws like this are not only unnecessary but *immensely* dangerous. This is simply a license to kill, be it for the police of private citizens. In a time when the country is torn apart by the persistent problem of violence and repression against minorities, the last thing we need is to implement laws that will *encourage* senseless attacks on civilians, and which will make *more difficult* to charge aggressors, who may provoke or misrepresent incidents where innocent people get shot, brutalized, and in many cases killed.

The current self-defense law is perfectly adequate and sensible. We need to encourage those who diffuse tension, not those who thrive on escalating tension and taking advantage of it to keep weaker members of the society in fear. We all know who the imagined targets of those who want this bill are. It is not me, a white woman and professor, or you, upper-class legislators. It is, generally, not their fellow white men. How does Bill 381 take us in the direction of peace, even of democracy and equality under the law?