

LAW, JUSTICE, AND ETHICS (LJE)

Resolution LJE-22-57

SUPPORT OF REPEALING “STAND YOUR GROUND” LAWS

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators has an extensive history of opposition to Stand Your Ground laws, passing resolution LJE-13-06 Opposing Stand Your Ground/Shoot First Law;

WHEREAS, Stand Your Ground laws upend traditional self-defense laws by allowing people to use deadly force even when they know they can safely walk away;

WHEREAS, these laws distort the public perception of lawful self-defense and promote vigilantism by encouraging people to shoot first and ask questions later, eroding community safety;

WHEREAS, Stand Your Ground laws undermine our justice system by altering criminal procedure in a way that makes it difficult for a person who invokes the law to be arrested, prosecuted, or convicted for using deadly force;

WHEREAS, these laws help people who kill, or harm others evade justice, as demonstrated by research which shows that in states that have enacted Stand Your Ground laws, justifiable homicide rates increased by 55%;

WHEREAS, passage of these laws makes it more difficult to even investigate a homicide, and impedes the duty of police officers to protect their community from a person that could be dangerous;

WHEREAS, the enactment of Stand Your Ground laws is linked to an increase in firearm homicide rates and a national increase of 150 deaths per month;

WHEREAS, these laws do nothing to deter crime, and allow criminals to avoid justice;

WHEREAS, in states with Stand Your Ground laws, those laws have a disproportionate impact on people with color, as evidenced by the fact that in cases where white shooters kill black victims, they are deemed justifiable five times more frequently than when the situation is reversed; and

WHEREAS, the enactment of Stand Your Ground laws has shown to be particularly deadly for young people and are associated with a 36% increase in monthly firearm homicide rates among young adults, a 45% increase in quarterly firearm homicide rates among adolescents, and a 52% increase in firearm homicide rates among Black adolescents.

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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) affirms its position in support of repealing Stand Your Ground laws;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL supports traditional self-defense laws, which respect a person's right to defend himself as well as the value of human life;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL encourages state legislators to introduce and pass laws repealing Stand Your Ground laws in the states where they are currently in effect; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

SPONSOR: Representative Chris Rabb (PA)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Law, Justice, and Ethics (LJE) Policy Committee

Ratified in Plenary Session: December 2, 2021

Ratification certified by: Representative Billy Mitchell (GA), NBCSL President