

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 612

Honoring the life of 17-year-old, Trayvon Martin, urging the State of Florida and others to repeal the Stand Your Ground law, and admonishing involved parties to pursue full investigations into all homicides, regardless of defenses asserted by the offender.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 30, 2012

Mr. CLEAVER (for himself, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, and Ms. WILSON of Florida) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Honoring the life of 17-year-old, Trayvon Martin, urging the State of Florida and others to repeal the Stand Your Ground law, and admonishing involved parties to pursue full investigations into all homicides, regardless of defenses asserted by the offender.

Whereas on February 26, 2012, Trayvon Martin, an African-American youth, was horrifically shot and killed while walking from his local 7-Eleven in Sanford, Florida, because he was viewed as “suspicious” by George Zimmerman;

Whereas Zimmerman, a self-appointed, untrained neighborhood watch volunteer, admitted to police that he shot Martin in the chest;

Whereas Zimmerman raised a “self-defense” claim and Martin, as the deceased victim, was unable to rebut such claim;

Whereas Zimmerman was never charged for the crime and was released by the Sanford Police Department soon thereafter;

Whereas despite the numerous pieces of evidence, including a 911 call made by Zimmerman, Martin’s final phone conversation which occurred during the course of the crime, the numerous calls made to 911 by nearby neighbors who heard the incident, and Zimmerman’s troubling legal history, the Sanford Police claimed they did not have enough evidence to detain Zimmerman and subsequently released him;

Whereas Zimmerman’s unfounded assumptions and racial bias led to the use of deadly force;

Whereas a month after the crime, Zimmerman remains free and still bears a concealed weapons permit and the legal right to carry a gun;

Whereas Trayvon Martin’s brutal death and the inconceivable fact that his killer remains free should not be ignored;

Whereas the Sanford Police Department and its Chief, who is on temporary administrative leave while the case is being investigated, have faced a firestorm of criticism over the handling of the shooting;

Whereas this case sets a horrific precedent of vigilante justice and compromises the integrity of the legal system;

Whereas the Department of Justice will investigate all facts and circumstances leading to Trayvon Martin’s death and consider Federal criminal prosecution of George Zimmerman based on Federal civil rights statutes;

Whereas over 2,000,000 signatures have been collected on an online petition demanding Zimmerman's arrest and justice for Martin's family;

Whereas Florida's Stand Your Ground law has been criticized by both the legal and law enforcement communities;

Whereas 21 States have passed and implemented Stand Your Ground laws;

Whereas Stand Your Ground laws dramatically and recklessly expand the right of citizens to use deadly force in self-defense, and have been the subject of national scrutiny in the wake of Trayvon Martin's death;

Whereas the Stand Your Ground laws were drafted by organizations, corporations, and individuals that ignored advice from experts explaining that such laws would compromise public safety, disproportionately impact communities of color, and would result in offenders circumventing prosecution;

Whereas an attempted expansion of the Stand Your Ground laws doctrine has resulted in the collaboration of the National Rifle Association (NRA) and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which promotes conservative public policy by affecting change in State legislatures;

Whereas ALEC drafts model legislation for its members to champion and advance in their home States;

Whereas ALEC used Florida's Stand Your Ground law as a template in its push to broaden the Castle Doctrine nationwide; and

Whereas the 2005 passage of Florida's Stand Your Ground law resulted in similar statutes being passed in 16 other States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) admonishes any State, local agency, or offi-
3 cial acting to obstruct an open investigation or fail-
4 ing to fully execute their official duties in the inves-
5 tigation of the events surrounding the death of
6 Trayvon Martin;

7 (2) condemns all relevant parties for their roles
8 in proposing Stand Your Ground legislation and
9 similar legislation that compromises public safety
10 and the integrity of the prosecutorial system;

11 (3) condemns unfounded reliance on Stand
12 Your Ground laws to protect actions that extend far
13 beyond historical use of self-defense;

14 (4) urges any State legislature considering
15 Stand Your Ground legislation to reject such pro-
16 posals; and

17 (5) urges the repeal of the Stand Your Ground
18 law in every applicable State, including Florida.

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