

**Testimony for SB 1313: Senate State Affairs
Monday Feb. 26 @ 8am**

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RE: SB1313

Good Morning, Chairman Siddoway, Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning. This is difficult and worthy work and I applaud you for it.

My name is Melanie Flitton Folwell. I'm a fourth generation Idahoan, proud to be raising a fifth generation. I'm also a small business owner, community volunteer, and currently president of the Parent Teacher Organization at Whitney Elementary School.

I'm here today because of my love for my home state and its children, and my deep concern about the dangerous impact that SB1313 would have on Idaho.

SB 1313 urges the kind of reckless and combative vigilantism that will be deadly for our state's youth. We don't even need to speculate about the impact: Stand Your Ground laws have hurt children and teens in every state where they've passed. Homicide by gun increases. Overall crime remains unchanged. No one is safer, and more children are violently killed.

Everyone in this room was once a teenager. Many of us have teenagers of our own, or grandchildren who are teens, and I think we can all agree that every kid in Idaho deserves the chance to grow up, deserves the chance to move around their community without fear of being shot and killed, deserves a chance for a little bit of the youthful freedom that we all enjoyed.

Under the language of this bill, if a teenager is in the wrong place at the wrong time, or acting in a way that another person deems suspicious or threatening or criminal, they could be shot. In fact, this law would empower and protect vigilante shooters in public places.

I think of my own teen years, growing up in rural Caldwell, where summer nights would find my friends and I laughing and talking, walking along darkened neighborhood streets, maybe even toilet papering the occasional tree. We certainly never intended to scare anyone, but if we had, I wonder: would we have deserved to be shot at? Would we have deserved to die?

If Idaho law already protects the right to defend one's life, family and home with deadly force, why expand that law to a dangerous degree? Why increase the number of gun homicides in our great state? And why put our precious youth at unnecessary risk?

I implore you this morning to vote NO on SB 1313. Idaho doesn't need it, and some of our children won't survive it.

Thank you,
Melanie Flitton Folwell