

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Nirmala Sandhu, and I'm representing the members of the Southwest Idaho Chapter of NOW, the National Organization for Women.

I'm here today to speak in opposition to Senate Bill 1313.

Senate Bill 1313 is simply unnecessary and could have serious unintended consequences. A recent study by a Texas A & M University team found that states with Stand Your Ground laws actually increased the homicide rate by 7 to 9 percent compared to states that do not have this law. This suggests that Stand Your Ground laws make the cost of lethal force cheaper, thereby producing the opposite of a deterrent to murder.

Idaho law already recognizes a person's right to use force, including deadly force, to defend one's self whenever the use of force is reasonable under the circumstances. In addition, Idaho laws do NOT include a duty to retreat before using deadly force in self-defense, but the decision to kill someone instead of walking away has to be reasonable.

Senate Bill 1313 would distort the law to allow a person to shoot to kill in public, even when they could easily have walked away. This Stand Your Ground bill upends the traditional notion of self-defense because it explicitly allows people to shoot to kill an alleged assailant in public despite there being a clear and safe alternative.

The US military has strict Rules of Engagement that soldiers must follow when protecting themselves in war zones. The bottom line is that our military feels it is always better to de-escalate potentially violent situations before someone is killed. Stand Your Ground laws abandon that core principle and encourage unnecessary violence by allowing everyday conflicts to escalate into deadly shootings.

And finally, as a person of color myself, I am particularly disturbed about the disproportionate effect Stand Your Ground laws have on communities of color. We would like to believe Idaho welcomes all but we know that this is not uniformly true as evidenced by the reactions of significant numbers of people in Twin Falls to the refugees there and the resurgence of white supremacist organizations throughout the country, including Idaho. Whites are already far

more likely to be found justified in killing blacks by 250% compared. But in Stand your Ground states, this figure jumps to an incredible 354%.

For these reasons, I am asking you to reject Senate Bill 1313.

Thank you.