



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MAINE

Loring House

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Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is John Hennessy and I represent the Episcopal Diocese of Maine. I am offering testimony on behalf of Episcopal Peace Fellowship in **opposition** to LD 1138 – An Act to Ensure the Right to Self-defense Exists Outside the Home by Removing the Requirement to Retreat.

The Episcopal Peace Fellowship – Maine chapter believes Stand Your Ground laws encourages people to resolve issues with violence. If we have laws that inevitably provide potential ambiguities for people who pull the trigger because they are afraid, then we are playing a dangerous game with human life.

As Christians how are we to respond to such a law?

In God's plan for creation, humans were to live together in peace and harmony. But, then, humans fell into sin. Because of sin, humans no longer lived in peace and harmony with each other. "Sin, the rupture in our relation with God, profoundly disrupts creation." In seeing the way things are, the church must see the Stand Your Ground law for what it is—a law that propagates the use of violence in our society.

As Christ cried out from the cross, the church must also lament that there are those among us for whom violence is a daily reality. But as Christ's death and resurrection serves as a protest against the harsh realities of life such as sin and death, we must also protest against this daily reality of violence. This protest includes the conviction that it is wrong to answer violence with more violence. Now is the time for freedom and respect in our country's deliberation of the issues facing it. [1]

The Rev. Kelly Brown Douglas writes, "Stand-your-ground culture alienates people from the very goodness of their own creation. It essentially turns people in on themselves as it sets people against one another. This culture promotes the notion that one life has more value than another life. This is a culture that thrives on antagonistic relationships as signaled by the very idea of 'standing one's ground'". [2]

And with Stand Your Ground, standing for what it believes and seeing Stand Your Ground for what it is—a law that propagates violence—the church must say no to this violence as part of its witness to God's yes for peace.

Please vote no on this bill.

[1] [For Peace in God's World](#)

[2] [Stand Your Ground](#)