

4/25/2021

Despite what many critics may lead you to believe, it is my opinion that Stand Your Ground laws save lives. Whose lives you ask. The answer is simple, innocent, law abiding citizens, who under the Constitution of the United States have an unwavering right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Stand Your Ground Laws are not a license to kill as many of the top Google results will tell you. They are in fact a license to live. In the absence of such laws, citizens have an obligation, or a duty to retreat if the opportunity arises. This in its very essence is an inept inability to defend oneself from harm. In fact, the very fear of being prosecuted for defending one's life can often lead an individual to not act, even if legally justified. This can lead to unnecessary harm or even the loss of one's life. It gives those that wish to do harm to others an unfair advantage.

One of governments primary responsibilities is to provide for the safety and security of its citizens. To do this, varying police forces, federal, state, and local exist. Unfortunately, in some of the most rural communities in our country, like much of our great state of Maine, police response can take an extremely long time. In the absence of law enforcement, and when in immediate threat of harm to oneself or others, Mainers deserve to be protected. Not just from a violent offender seeking to do them harm, but from unfair prosecution for nothing more than staying alive.

No law-abiding citizen takes joy from inflicting harm on another, nor do they go about their day seeking out an excuse to use deadly force. Rather they seek solace in knowing that if something terrible does occur, they have a legal right to protect themselves from the acts of evil

individuals. Unfortunately, our existing laws do not favor the law-abiding citizen. Instead, they rig the game in favor of the bad people our government is supposed to protect us from. Why must a citizen's right to justified self-defense end when they leave their home? They should enjoy life and liberty, no matter where their busy life takes them.

Maine is one of the safest states in the nation. We are home to countless gun owners who lawfully carry concealed firearms for protection against those that might wish them or someone they encounter harm. Strengthening our state's Stand Your Ground laws will further serve as a deterrent to those that otherwise might commit violent crimes against our citizens and also protect innocent individuals from unwarranted prosecution in the event that they must make that difficult decision to take a life so that they may keep theirs.

**Cameron Hinkley**

Buckfield, ME