



National
Urban League



**MAYORS AGAINST ILLEGAL GUNS, NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE, VOTEVETS
RELEASE REPORT SHOWING ‘STAND YOUR GROUND’ LAWS HAVE
INCREASED HOMICIDES AND COMPLICATED PROSECUTIONS**

*Analysis Finds Sharp Jump in Homicides – Justifiable and Overall – After Passage of NRA-
Endorsed Legislation in Many States, With African Americans Affected Most*

Senate Judiciary Subcommittee to Hold Hearing on September 17th

The bipartisan Mayors Against Illegal Guns coalition, in collaboration with the National Urban League and VoteVets, issued a new report today showing that many of the 22 states with “Stand Your Ground” laws have experienced a striking increase in the number of justifiable homicides committed by private citizens in the years following their enactment.

The report was issued a day before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights is to consider the law enforcement and public safety implications of laws some critics call “Shoot First” statutes.

The report – *Shoot First: ‘Stand Your Ground Laws and Their Effect on Violent Crime and the Criminal Justice System* – provides a comprehensive review of a legal phenomenon that drew national attention after the shooting death of Trayvon Martin in Florida. The study details how these laws have tilted self-defense claims in favor of shooters, sharply increasing successful claims that fatal shootings were justified while boosting the overall homicide rates. The report also provides an analysis of the Stand Your Ground laws in each of the 22 states that have adopted them since Florida passed the nation’s first in 2005. The report is available at: <http://maig.us/186JLnh>.

According to the report’s authors, Stand Your Ground states have seen their “justifiable homicide” rate rise by an average of 53 percent in five years following their passage. Over the same period, states without these laws saw justifiable homicides fall by an average of five percent.

The report explains that this increase is not simply the result of more homicides being classified as “justifiable,” but also of an overall increase in firearm-related and overall homicides in Stand Your Ground states.¹ Texas A&M University researchers published a study in May 2012 that found passage of Stand Your Ground laws was associated with a seven to nine percent increase in total homicides, depending on the statistical method used.

"Our coalition joined with the National Urban League and VoteVets to give state legislators the tools they need to understand the impact Stand Your Ground laws have on prosecutions and public safety," said Mayors Against Illegal Guns Co-Chair and New York City

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. "We hope the results will encourage them to review these laws to determine whether they're helping their communities, or making the public less safe."

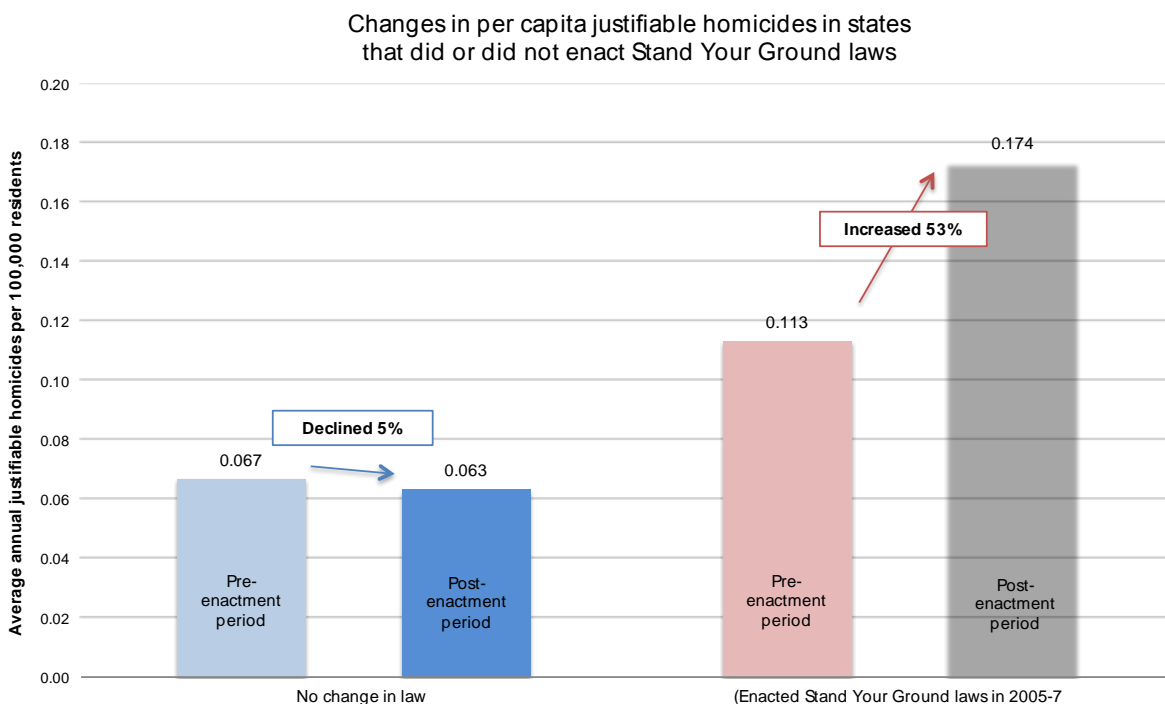
"We need common-sense gun laws in this country that will help reduce violence and keep our neighborhoods safe," said Mayors Against Illegal Guns Co-Chair and Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino. "This study offers vital insight into how we can improve our laws to ensure the safety of the American people."

"These laws can have deadly consequences, particularly for African Americans," said Marc H. Morial, President and CEO of the National Urban League. "We need our elected officials to reform these policies to make sure we're doing the right things to reduce unjustified shootings and save lives."

"The findings in this report aren't surprising, given that these laws give anyone with a gun more permissive rules of engagement in America's communities than our troops have on the battlefield," said Jon Soltz, a two-tour veteran of the Iraq War and chairman of VoteVets.

In states that passed these laws between 2005 and 2007, the justifiable homicide rate was 53 percent higher in the years after passage of the law than in the years preceding it. (See Figure 1 below.)

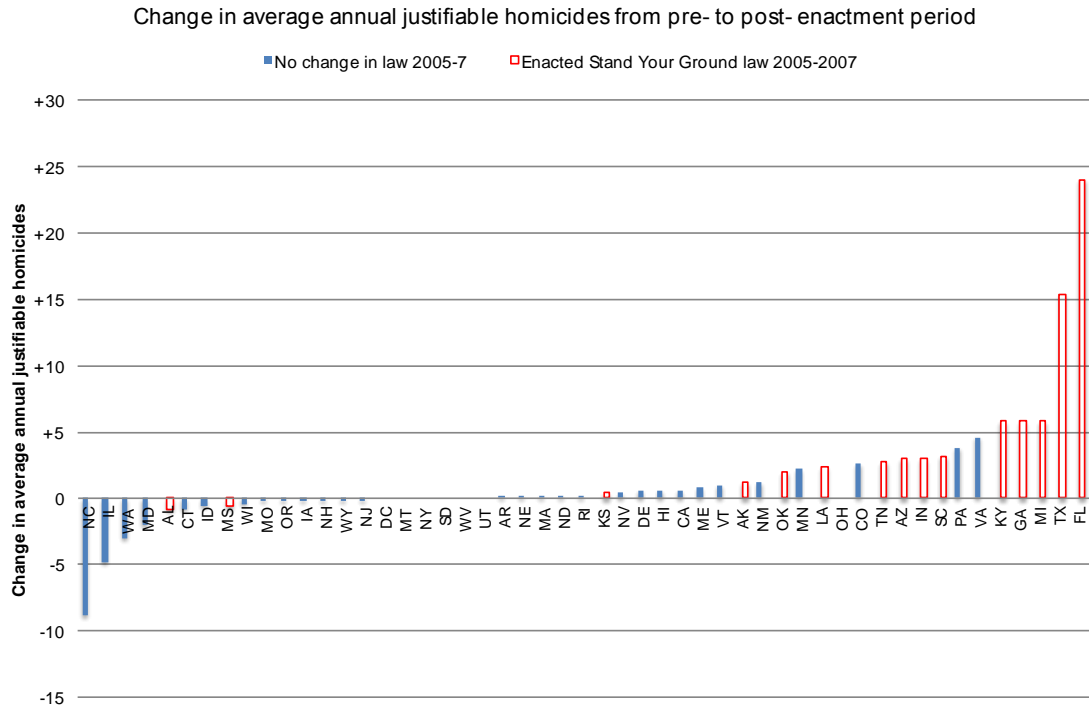
Figure 1



Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports, Supplementary Homicide File
Enacted new SYG laws 2005-7: AK, AL, AZ, FL, GA, IN, KS, KY, LA, MI, MS, OK, SC, SD, TN, TX
Did not change law: AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, HI, IA, ID, IL, MA, MD, ME, MN, MO, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NV, OR, PA, RI, UT, VA, VT, WA, WI, WY

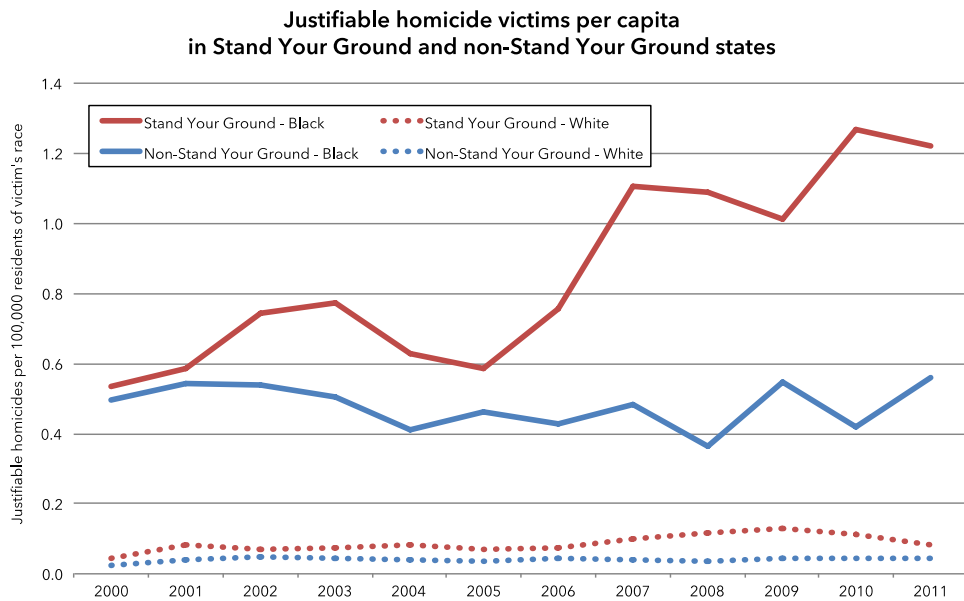
The jump in justifiable homicides was particularly large in some states: the average annual number jumped by 200 percent in Florida, 54 percent in Texas, 83 percent in Georgia, 24 percent in Arizona and 725 percent in Kentucky. (See Figure 2 below.)

Figure 2



A new analysis of demographic data also indicates that the increase in justifiable homicides has disproportionately affected the African-American population. The number of both black and white justifiable homicide victims has increased in Stand Your Ground states, but because the rate of victimization among African-Americans was already much higher before enactment of Stand Your Ground laws, the subsequent increase has also been more dramatic. (See Figure 3 below.)

Figure 3



Enacted new SYG laws 2005-7: AK, AL, AZ, FL, GA, IN, KS, KY, LA, MI, MS, OK, SC, SD, TN, TX
 Did not change law: AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, HI, IA, ID, IL, MA, MD, ME, MN, MO, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NV, OR, PA, RI, UT, VA, VT, WA, WI, WY

About Mayors Against Illegal Guns

Since its creation in April 2006, Mayors Against Illegal Guns has grown from 15 members to more than 1,000 mayors from across the country. The coalition has more than 1.5 million grassroots supporters, making it the largest gun violence prevention advocacy organization in the country. Co-chaired by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, Mayors Against Illegal Guns has united the nation's mayors around these common goals: protecting communities by holding gun offenders accountable; demanding access to crime gun trace data that is critical to law enforcement efforts to combat gun trafficking; and working with legislators to fix weaknesses and loopholes in the law that make it far too easy for criminals and other dangerous people to get guns. Learn more at www.MayorsAgainstIllegalGuns.org.

About the National Urban League

The National Urban League (www.nul.org) is a historic civil rights and urban advocacy organization dedicated to economic empowerment in historically underserved urban communities. Founded in 1910 and headquartered in New York City, the National Urban League has improved the lives of tens of millions of people nationwide through direct service programs that are implemented locally by its 95 Urban League affiliates in 36 states and the District of Columbia. The organization also conducts public policy research and advocacy activities from its Washington, D.C. bureau. The National Urban League, a BBB-accredited organization, has a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, placing it in the top 10 percent of all U.S. charities for adhering to good governance, fiscal responsibility and other best practices.

About VoteVets

Founded in 2006, and backed by over 360,000 supporters, the mission of VoteVets.org is to use public issue campaigns and direct outreach to lawmakers to ensure that troops abroad have what they need to complete their missions, and receive the care they deserve when they get home. VoteVets.org also recognizes veterans as a vital part of the fabric of our country and will work to protect veterans' interests in their day-to-day lives. VoteVets.org is committed to the destruction of terror networks around the world - with force when necessary - to protect America. While non-partisan, the group is the largest progressive organization of veterans in America.