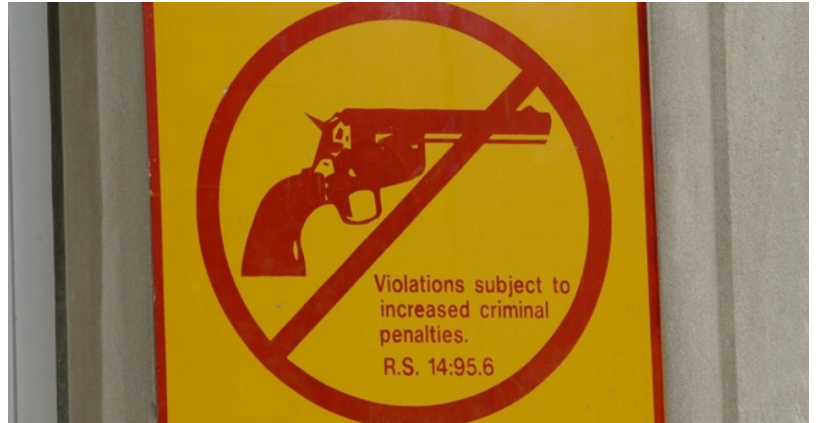




Written by [Alex Newman](#) on May 10, 2012

Democrat Anti-Self-Defense “Trayvon Amendment” on Hold, For Now

Federal legislation sponsored by “progressive” Democrat lawmakers, dubbed the “Trayvon Amendment” to play on people’s emotions in the wake of the now-infamous Florida shooting, would aim to bully state governments into restricting self-defense rights by withholding federal taxpayer funds. The controversial attack on individual and state rights was withdrawn from the House floor this week for being “out of order.” But it is not dead yet.



“Stand Your Ground” laws, which recognize the rights of citizens to protect themselves from serious threats with deadly force instead of having a duty to retreat, exist in about two dozen states. And despite an alleged “controversy,” manufactured by the establishment press, according to recent polls, [the vast majority of Americans — more than two thirds, in fact — support the concept.](#)

But after the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin by Neighborhood Watch captain George Zimmerman earlier this year, anti-gun zealots [seized the opportunity](#) to advance their agenda by exploiting the tragedy. Anti-self-defense politicians and much of the so-called “mainstream media” jumped on the bandwagon, too, referring to Florida’s [popular](#) self-defense protections as “shoot-first” laws.

Of course, if Zimmerman’s story is true — he claims Martin was on top of him slamming his head into the ground, and witnesses and other evidence appear to corroborate the story — then Zimmerman had no way to retreat. Therefore, killing Martin would have likely been justified even under older self-defense laws.

On the other hand, if Zimmerman started the confrontation, as prosecutors alleged by charging him with second-degree murder, then “Stand Your Ground” would probably not even apply in the case, according to legal analysts.

Still, for certain Democrat politicians, the incident represented a crisis that could not be allowed to go to waste. “Shoot-first laws make prosecutions harder because they presume the use of deadly force is reasonable,” alleged Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) on the House floor Tuesday while seeking to justify the “Trayvon Amendment.” Apparently he was not very familiar with the law or how it functions, though it is true that in America everyone is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

According to experts on firearm laws and the laws’ effects, “Stand Your Ground” does not allow murderers to go unpunished. “The wild speculation that the laws give broad license for vigilantes to go around recklessly shooting people are a totally irresponsible caricature,” explained renowned author and gun-law expert John Lott, citing statistics showing the benefits of strong self-defense protections. “Ultimately, it is judges or jurors who determine what constitutes a reasonable fear under such a law, not the person who fires the gun.”

The so-called “Trayvon Amendment,” which the anti-gun Democrat coalition sought to pass as part of a Justice Department funding bill, would have stripped 20 percent of the federal tax dollars flowing to



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state and local governments under the controversial Byrne crime-grant program. The unconstitutional scheme offers Americans' taxpayer money back to police forces and prosecutors after it flows through D.C. and emerges with strings attached.

"‘Shoot-first’ laws have already cost too many lives.... Federal [taxpayer] money shouldn't be spent supporting states with laws that endanger their own people," [claimed](#) House "progressive caucus" co-chairs Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Rep. Ellison in a statement, alleging that in Florida, self-defense deaths — presumably of would-be criminals — had tripled since Stand Your Ground was adopted. "This is no different than withholding transportation funds from states that don't enforce seat-belt laws."

The effort was temporarily withdrawn when its sponsors learned it was likely to be ruled out of order based on House debate rules, the *Washington Times* [reported](#). But Rep. Ellison promised to bring it back up at a more "appropriate" time, supposedly in honor of Trayvon Martin's death. Critics, however, are fighting back.

"These rabid anti-gunners are demanding that states put the law on the side of armed criminals, or else," [noted](#) the non-profit National Association for Gun Rights, saying the coalition of extremist Democrats had launched an "all-out war" to destroy the individual right to defend oneself. "Will you take action right now to oppose the destruction of Stand Your Ground self-defense laws?"

Despite arousing fierce opposition, however, analysts [called](#) the anti-self-defense measure a piece of "political theatre" with virtually no chance of approval anyway. And even the "progressive" lawmakers who sponsored the controversial amendment understand that the likelihood of it passing through the GOP-controlled House is extremely low.

But a spokesperson for Rep. Grijalva [told](#) Politico that the dubious scheme was partly about sending a message. It is also, of course, about trying to create a lesser-of-two-evils dilemma for citizens using the force of government, making them decide whether they prefer the right to self-defense or the return of their hard-earned tax dollars extracted by the federal government, the far-left Congressman's communications director explained, not mentioning that government could use this same tactic to strip Americans of every right.

Some pro-Constitution activists, however, see the situation as a possible opportunity to raise awareness about the problems inherent in allowing the federal government to use taxpayers' wealth to bludgeon their own state governments into submission. Especially in the realm of law enforcement — the area that would be primarily affected by the "Trayvon Amendment" — Congress has no constitutional authority to meddle with or fund local and state police.

"You can always tell when a political party is out of intellectual ammo," [noted](#) conservative attorney and blogger John Hinderaker, adding that the sponsors' claims about increased deaths were almost certainly false. "Laws relating to self-defense are entirely a state concern. This is one of many areas where the federal government has no legitimate role."

Aside from constitutional concerns, pragmatically speaking, activists say law enforcement should be [accountable to local taxpayers and communities](#) — not out-of-touch politicians and bureaucrats in Washington. The same applies to education, development, energy, and a broad array of other fields in which the federal government has unconstitutionally injected itself into state and local affairs.

The full "Trayvon Amendment" [states](#): "Provided, That upon a determination by the Attorney General that a State has in effect a law allowing an armed person to confront an unarmed person in public and shoot to kill even if the confrontation could have been safely avoided, the Attorney General shall



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withhold 20 percent of the amount that would otherwise be allocated to that State under section 505 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968.”

But even before the threats, some state leaders began to consider the policies. In Florida, a task force set up by Republican Gov. Rick Scott is [currently reviewing](#) the state’s self-defense laws and will eventually make recommendations. Another body set up by a Democrat State Senator concluded its inquiry last week, proposing broad changes to the Sunshine State’s “Stand Your Ground” law but stopping short of calling for it to be repealed outright.

While the most extreme efforts to restrict freedom in the wake of Trayvon Martin’s death will likely be consigned to the dustbin of history, shameless opportunists are not yet finished trying to exploit the tragedy for political gain. “Progressive” lawmakers, for example, apparently have some other measures planned for the not-too-distant future. And anti-gun activists, undeterred by the facts, have not given up the fight just yet.

Related articles:

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