



Office of the Speaker  
**THERESE M. TERLAJE**

*I Mina'trentai Sais na Liheslaturan Guåhan* | 36th Guam Legislature  
Committee on Health, Land, Justice and Culture

**Legislature Committee on Justice Invites Public Testimony on Stand Your Ground Bill**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (March 21, 2022 – Hagåtña, Guam)-** The Legislature's Committee on Health, Land, Justice and Culture will be holding a virtual public hearing to receive testimony on Bill No. 12-36 (COR), introduced by Senator Joe S. San Agustin, which is an Act to expand the Castle Doctrine justification in the law for acts of self-defense, and eliminate "the requirement for retreating before the use of force in the face of imminent danger." The virtual hearing will be held on **Wednesday, March 23, 2022, at 9:00am**, utilizing the Guam Legislature's Zoom meeting platform.

Under Guam law, deadly force may be used in self-defense under threat of death, serious bodily injury, kidnapping or criminal sexual conduct, under certain conditions. When self-defense is claimed, the prosecution must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that self-defense did not occur. If someone who is experiencing a threat can easily retreat, the person should retreat, and is not allowed to engage in deadly self-defense. Under the Castle Doctrine, there is a presumption of reasonable fear and this duty to retreat does not apply if this person is in their dwelling, vehicle, or place of work. Bill 12-36 (COR) would extend the presumption and remove the duty to retreat if the person is in any location that a person has the right to be in.

In the 35th Guam Legislature, the Committee on Justice held an Informational Briefing with the Office of the Attorney General and the Public Defender Service Corporation to evaluate Self Defense Law on Guam, which found that because the prosecution must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that self-defense did not occur, Guam's current self-defense law is already more robust than most other states in the nation.

Please contact the Office of Speaker Therese M. Terlaje at (671) 472-3586 or email [senatorterlajguam@gmail.com](mailto:senatorterlajguam@gmail.com) to register to provide live testimony. Written testimony may also be submitted via email and will be made available to all in attendance of the hearing.

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*\*For transmittal of official Messages & Communications to the Guam Legislature to be distributed to all Senators,  
please send to: [speaker@guamlegislature.org](mailto:speaker@guamlegislature.org)*

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Link to Informational Briefing on the Right to Self-Defense on Guam:

[https://www.guamlegislature.com/Committee\\_Reports\\_35th/Committee%20Report%20on%20Informational%20Briefing%20on%20the%20Right%20to%20Self%20Defense%20on%20Guam.pdf](https://www.guamlegislature.com/Committee_Reports_35th/Committee%20Report%20on%20Informational%20Briefing%20on%20the%20Right%20to%20Self%20Defense%20on%20Guam.pdf)

Resources on Stand Your Ground legislation:

[https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/diversity/SYG\\_Report\\_Book.pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/diversity/SYG_Report_Book.pdf)

<https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/guns-in-public/stand-your-ground-laws/>

<https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/Stand-your-Ground.pdf>

<https://www.usccr.gov/files/pubs/2020/04-06-Stand-Your-Ground.pdf>