



Mothers of Trayvon Martin, Jordan Davis to testify at Senate 'Stand Your Ground' hearing

by [Joy-Ann Reid](#) - September 16, 2013

Trayvon Martin's mother Sybrina Fulton speaks during a rally honoring Trayvon Martin organized by the National Action Network outside One Police Plaza in Manhattan on July 20, 2013 in New York City. Demonstrators have gathered in various cities across the country to protest the acquittal of neighborhood watchman George Zimmerman and press for his federal prosecution in the shooting death of teenager Trayvon Martin. (Photo by Kena Betancur/Getty Images)

Sybrina Fulton and Lucia McBath will testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights. The hearing, according to a notice on the Senate Judiciary Committee website is entitled "'Stand Your Ground' Laws: Civil Rights and Public Safety Implications of the Expanded Use of Deadly Force."

Tallahassee, Florida-based state attorney William Meggs, and Harvard Law School professor and director of the Criminal Justice Institute Ronald S. Sullivan, Jr. are also expected to testify, along with a senior fellow from the Libertarian Cato Institute and John R. Lott, Jr., Ph.D., President of the Crime Prevention Research Center in Swarthmore, PA.

Fulton is the mother of Trayvon Martin, whose shooting death and the acquittal of his killer, George Zimmerman, on second degree murder and manslaughter charges touched off more than a year of controversy regarding Florida's "stand your ground" laws and similar laws across the country. (Zimmerman didn't use "Stand Your Ground" as his defense, but it was referenced by one of the jurors in the case in interviews after the verdict, and it altered Florida's jury instructions in cases like Zimmerman's.)

A foundation founded by Fulton and Trayvon Martin's father, Tracy Martin, is working to amend "Stand Your Ground" laws in Florida and in the more than 20 other states with similar laws.

George Zimmerman said he shot Martin in self-defense.

McBath's son, Jordan Davis, was shot to death on November 23, 2012 at a Jacksonville gas station as he sat in a car with three friends. Michael Dunn is expected to use the "Stand Your Ground" self defense law in his upcoming trial for Davis' killing. Dunn is expected to go to trial in January.

The judiciary committee is chaired by Sen. Dick Durban (D-Illinois). The five Democratic committee members include Sen. Al Franken of Minnesota, Chris Coons of Delaware, Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, and Mazie Hirono of Hawaii. Blumenthal has been outspoken in favor of stricter gun laws, following the Sandy Hook shooting last December, in which 26 elementary school children and their teachers were killed by a lone gunman. The four Republicans on the committee include South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham, who is up for re-election in 2014, John Cornyn of Texas, Orrin G. Hatch of Utah, and Texas Senator Ted Cruz, the committee's ranking member.

Sources close to the Martin parents tell theGrio they expect tough questioning from Cruz, who in April, along with Kentucky Republican senator Rand Paul, and Utah Senator Mike Lee, wrote a letter to the Senate leadership vowing to filibuster any attempt to pass a gun control law. Cruz took credit when the Manchin-Toomey bill, which would have strengthened some gun control measures, failed in the Senate this spring.

The hearing is expected to begin Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.