



## **Durbin lays out witnesses for ‘stand your ground’ hearing; Trayvon Martin family among them**

**By: [Natasha Korecki](#) - September 13, 2013**

U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) released a list of witnesses for Tuesday’s “Stand Your Ground” hearing in Washington and among them — family members of Trayvon Martin.

Durbin has come under criticism for a letter he sent to companies this summer asking if they’ve supported the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) which has pushed for the adoption of legislation that’s based on Florida’s “stand your ground” law.

Durbin’s office announced that testifying at the hearing will be Sybrina Fulton, mother of Trayvon Martin; Lucia McBath, mother of Jordan Davis; William Meggs, State Attorney, Second Judicial Circuit, Tallahassee, FL; Ronald Sullivan, Clinical Professor of Law, Director of the Criminal Justice Institute, Harvard Law School; John Lott, President, Crime Prevention Research Center; Ilya Shapiro, Senior Fellow, CATO Institute.

“It changes the criminal law regarding self-defense and provides immunity for certain uses of deadly force,” the letter Durbin sent to companies stated.

“Although ALEC does not maintain a public list of corporate members or donors, other public documents indicate that your company funded ALEC at some point during the period between ALEC’s adoption of model “stand your ground” legislation in 2005 and the present day,” the letter states. “I acknowledge your company’s right to actively participate in the debate of important political issues, regardless of your position, and I recognize that a company’s involvement with ALEC does not necessarily mean that the company endorses all positions taken by the organization. Therefore I am seeking clarification whether companies that have funded ALEC’s operations in the past currently support ALEC and the model “stand your ground” legislation.”

Editorial boards lit up with criticism following his sending of the letter, saying it bordered on intimidation.

“We’re trying to find out if ALEC’s members and supporters agree with the model “stand your ground” law that ALEC promoted. It’s as simple as that,” Durbin’s spokesman Max Gleichman said. “Stand your ground” laws based on ALEC’s model law have led to higher homicide rates in states that have passed them, created significant racial disparities in justifiable homicide cases, and raise serious civil rights and public safety concerns. For us not to have a national debate on “stand your ground” laws is the definition of irresponsible.