

## ***The Florida Task Force on Citizen Safety and Protection***

Public Hearing at the DeSoto Middle School  
420 East Gibson St.  
Arcadia, Florida 34266  
Tuesday, July 10, 2012 8:00AM to 9:00PM

**Chairman: Lieutenant Governor Jennifer Carroll**

**Vice Chairman, Reverend Dr. R. B Holmes, Jr.**

**Members of the Florida Task Force on Citizen Safety and Protection**

Madam Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Florida Task Force on Citizen Safety and Protection.

Good Afternoon and Welcome to Desoto County; and thank you for including us in your schedule of hearings.

My name is Ed Johnson. I reside at 6077 SW CR-760, Arcadia, FL 34266; telephone 863-494-0781.

I strongly support the **Stand Your Ground Law**.

On December 6, 2011, the day before my 67<sup>th</sup> birthday, at around 8:15 AM in the morning, I was car-jacked. I was headed down to my south grove to turn on an irrigation pump to water some young orange trees. I found a car, with two occupants, parked on my property in the roadway alongside one of my old groves. I asked them what they were doing in my grove. I got three different stories from the male occupant, who was now outside the car and approaching my truck. I was standing on the ground behind my truck door.

As I started call the Desoto County Sheriff's Department, he reached through the window, grabbed my arm and knocked my cell phone from my hand to the ground; he grabbed it off the ground which prevented me from completing my call to the Sheriff's Department. The male assailant turned towards the woman sitting in the parked car and yelled (in a loud and commanding voice) "**Get My Gun! - Get My Gun!**." As she turned towards the driver's seat, I knew I was in imminent danger and turned and ran for my life, expecting to be shot at any moment. I escaped into my old orange grove and hid while they stole my truck and left. I walked a half a mile to my home to report the crime and give the Sheriff's Office a description of my assailant and his companion.

The Desoto County Sheriff's Department was at my home in minutes. They put out a bulletin and within an hour, the pair was captured by the Charlotte's County Sheriff's Department. Both Departments are to be highly commended for their efforts.

I made a near-fatal mistake that morning. I have a "concealed weapons permit", but I was not armed. I never thought that I would be in imminent danger on my own property in the morning part of the day.

I served eighteen months in Vietnam in the United States Marines. I have been shot at with small arms, machine guns, rockets, mortars; and unknowingly traveled over a land mine, which was detonated behind us. I know the difference between danger and imminent danger. I thought I was going to be shot that morning; and I was in no position to defend myself, other than turn and run for my life and hope he could not get in a fatal shot. You can run and pray at the same time; and my praying was much faster than my running.

Our law enforcement agencies are stretched to the limits; and there are no additional tax dollars to give them. It is therefore necessary that we be able to defend ourselves, our families and our property, on the spot. Had I been armed that morning, I assure you things would have been much different. I have since corrected that error.

We need the **Stand Your Ground Law** to protect us from **evil people**. I encourage you to protect and strengthen this law and allow us to protect our families and ourselves when needed. We have a right to be safe and secure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today; you have an awesome responsibility before you.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

Thank You, Ed Johnson

**A Condition Needing Clarification:** If an assailant is running away from you and you perceive that he is attempting to obtain a weapon to use against you, is the use of deadly force against a such a person justified?