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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**VERDICT IN GEORGE ZIMMERMAN TRIAL SPOTLIGHTS NEED FOR
STRICTER CONCEAL CARRY LAWS AND A ROLLBACK OF STAND YOUR
GROUND LAWS**

New York City, New York – July 14, 2013: Yesterday's not guilty verdict in the trial of George Zimmerman was tragic and spotlights the need to change the gun laws that made Trayvon Martin's death and George Zimmerman's acquittal possible. The February 2012 shooting by George Zimmerman of the unarmed teenager was a direct result of the Florida "Stand Your Ground" law that legalizes vigilante homicide and enables and encourages America's culture of violence.

Twenty-five states, including Florida, have "Stand Your Ground" or "Shoot First" laws with provisions that generally allow the use of deadly force in self-defense with no duty to retreat when outside the home. According to the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, since Florida passed its law in 2005, and other states have followed suit, the FBI has reported a steady rise in "justifiable homicides" around the country, from 238 in 2006 to 278 in 2010, despite the fact that violent crime fell by 13.2% during the same period. The result of this "Shoot First" law is that young people of color are often targeted as criminals.

In addition, states with weak concealed carry (CCW) handgun laws like Florida allow individuals like George Zimmerman, who was previously charged for resisting arrest by a police officer and had a restraining order for domestic violence, to continue to carry a hidden loaded handgun in public.

Every state now has some form of conceal carry law. But states like New York have much tighter requirements for obtaining conceal carry permits than states like Florida. In April, the US Senate narrowly defeated an amendment that would have forced states that issue CCW permits to recognize every other state's permits, eviscerating state authority to restrict who may carry guns within their borders. Leah Gunn Barrett, NYAGV's Executive Director said, "The Trayvon Martin case is not an isolated one. We must work to tighten conceal carry laws and to roll back 'Stand Your Ground' laws. If George Zimmerman had not brought a concealed handgun into the confrontation with Trayvon Martin, a confrontation George Zimmerman provoked, the teenager would still be alive. Guns in volatile social situations only lead to more death and tragedy."

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