



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on July 22, 2013

Calls for Florida Boycott Following Zimmerman Verdict

The verdict in the George Zimmerman case has provoked an array of varying responses since it was announced on June 13.

Following a string of [protests](#) that took place in over 100 cities on Saturday, angry lawmakers and other groups have launched a campaign to encourage others to [boycott](#) the state of Florida, similar to the boycott campaign that was staged against Arizona in response to its immigration law. Opponents of verdict are calling upon the Department of Justice to file a civil rights case against George Zimmerman.



In some cities, protesters were met by those who supported the verdict.

The protests came a day after President Barack Obama called an unscheduled press conference at the White House, wherein he suggested that the United States was still not a “post-racial society.”

In his comments on Friday, Obama also urged all Americans to try to understand the Martin case from the perspective of African-Americans.

“There is a history of racial disparities in the application of our criminal laws,” the president said. “A lot of African-American boys are painted with a broad brush. If a white male teen was involved in the same kind of scenario ... both the outcome and the aftermath might have been different.”

Critics of the verdict have blamed Florida’s “Stand Your Ground” law, even though that specific law was not cited by the defense. But Florida’s governor has indicated no interest in changing the law.

Florida’s governor, Rick Scott, who met sit-in demonstrators outside his office in Tallahassee on Thursday, said he supports the Stand Your Ground law and has no intention of convening a special legislative session to change it.

President Obama, however, found an opportunity to suggest that the law should be revisited.

“I think it would be useful for us to examine some state and local laws to see if they are designed in such a way that they may encourage the kinds of altercations and confrontations and tragedies that we saw in the Florida case,” he said.

As mentioned above, opponents of the verdict are calling for a boycott of Florida’s economy similar to the one launched against Arizona following the passage of Arizona’s immigration law. According to the *Huffington Post*, the boycott [cost](#) the state of Arizona approximately \$141 million in lost meeting and convention business in just the seven months after Governor Jan Brewer signed the immigration bill into law:

Businesses have lost lucrative contracts and conventions have relocated, performers called off concerts, and cities and counties in about a dozen states passed resolutions to avoid doing business with Arizona.

Fox News notes a significant difference between the compelling incident that provoked the Arizona



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boycott, however, and that which has caused the Florida boycott:

While Arizona had passed first-of-its kind legislation against illegal immigration when the uproar started over that state, Florida is hardly unique. At least 22 states have “stand-your-ground” laws — which allow people to use deadly force to protect themselves often without any compulsion to retreat, and are at the center of the post-verdict controversy.

And in the case of Zimmerman, his attorneys didn’t even use the law as part of their defense.

But even as Florida is just one of many states with SYG laws, Reverend Jesse Jackson called Florida an “apartheid state” during a CNN interview last week and indicated he would consider launching an economic boycott against the state if the Justice Department does not file federal charges against Zimmerman.

Likewise, three members of the Congressional Black Caucus have taken up the [call](#) for a boycott.

One such member is Rep. Bobby L. Rush of Illinois, who wore a hoodie on the House floor last year in support of Trayvon. Rush recently stated that the Zimmerman trial reminded him of a lynch mob.

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich criticized Rush on CNN’s *State of the Union* for what Gingrich perceives to be Rush’s misguided priorities.

“You have a congressman who represents the most violent city in America, you have a congressman who represents the city in which 500 people were killed last year, 74 percent of them African-Americans,” said [Gingrich](#). “You have a congressman whose own district is bleeding who puts on a hoodie as a symbolic act, but he doesn’t do anything about the gangs in his own district.”

And not every member of the Congressional Black Caucus is in agreement about a boycott.

“I think that many of us understand that sometimes when we call for those kind of economic boycotts, the impact on some of our communities can be really tremendous, and so I want to examine that first,” [Rep. Donna F. Edwards](#), Maryland Democrat, said on [Fox News Sunday](#).

Still, Edwards took the opportunity to challenge calls by columnist Dr. Ben Carson, who said that Americans need to “tone down the rhetoric and recognize that we the people are not each other’s enemies.”

“But [Dr. Carson](#), really to be clear, there are deep systemic problems that really impact African-Americans in the system that have to be addressed, and I think the president spoke to some of those. And so we can’t ignore that,” [Edwards](#) said.

Some have already begun to boycott.

One week after George Zimmerman was acquitted, performer Stevie Wonder [announced](#) that he would be boycotting the state of Florida, as well as all other states with Stand Your Ground laws. That would include his home state of Michigan. Wonder is joined by other performers, including Mary Mary and Dionne Warwick.

MoveOn.org has been gathering signatures on a petition supporting a boycott, asserting that Florida is “not a safe place to vacation.”

And members of California’s Legislative Black Caucus have called for a repeal of the Stand Your Ground law in Florida while simultaneously calling for a boycott in the meantime.

But despite some public outcry over the Zimmerman verdict and Florida’s Stand Your Ground law, the



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law continues to enjoy a great deal of support nationwide.

A recent Rasmussen Report poll [shows](#) that 45 percent of Americans support Stand Your Ground laws, while 32 percent oppose them.



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