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Dallas Students Rally for Justice in Teen's Death

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FOX 4 News

Adapted for Web by Tracy DeLatta | myFOXdfw.com

DALLAS - A chorus rang out Friday in Dallas as people protested what they see as an injustice following the shooting of an unarmed black teen in Florida.

Public outcry is spreading across the country and locally it spread across the campus of Paul Quinn College.

"We want justice for Trayvon," people chanted.

Trayvon Martin was a 17-year-old Florida boy who was killed by a neighborhood watch captain. He had gone to the store to buy a pack of Skittles and iced tea, but apparently 28-year-old George Zimmerman thought his was a threat because he was wearing a hoodie.

The man claimed he shot Martin in self defense, which is allowed under Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law.

"It had nothing to do with 'Stand Your Ground.' It had everything to do with racism and hate," said State Rep. Helen Giddings, who attended Friday's rally.

The protestors marched with symbolic packages of Skittles and hoodies. They wanted to show that a hoodie does not make a hoodlum.

"If I put my hoodie on I could be scary looking, if I don't have my tie," said Paul Quinn College President Dr. Michael Sorrell.

"It's just great that people are gathering around for this," said Quincy Stith Jr.

The Stith family from Wichita, Kan. is on vacation in Dallas and heard about the rally on the radio. They brought their teen son.

"For him to see that you have to stand for something and you have to fight for some things," said Quincy Stith Sr.

State Sen. Royce West told the crowd he would fight to change the Texas self defense law "in order to limit the application of the castle doctrine in situations like this."

When it comes to self defense in Texas, first there's the castle doctrine that says when someone unlawfully and with force enters or attempts to enter your home you have the right to use deadly force to protect yourself and your property.

"Home, car or place of business, then you have a presumption that you have a reasonable belief and can use deadly force," said Toby Shook, who was in the district attorney's office when the castle doctrine became law in Texas.

But Shook said in Texas you can't start a confrontation and finish it.

"You can't chase someone down, start the altercation and then claim self defense," he said.

In the Florida case it is clear that Zimmerman pursued Martin after a police dispatcher told him not to. A witness told reporters he believes he saw Martin on top of Zimmerman at one point during the confrontation, but few other details about the incident have been released.

Zimmerman has not been charged with any crime.

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