

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair
House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Lori Paine, Dr. Ph., R.N., M.S., Senior Director of Patient Safety
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Johns Hopkins supports **House Bill 126 – Peace Orders – Workplace Violence**. This bill would authorize an employer to file a petition for a peace order on behalf of its employee if the act occurred at the workplace. It also protects an employer from civil liability that may result from the failure of the employer to file a petition for a peace order on behalf of an employee. The bill also requires an employer to notify an employee before the employer files any petition. The ability to file a petition for a peace order is an important and useful tool to protect employees.

As the largest private employer in the State, Johns Hopkins takes the responsibility to create a safe work environment for its employees very seriously. One of the ways an employer can create a safe work environment is to eliminate an employee's exposure to a threat. Peace orders may stop workplace violence by preventing an employee from being exposed to a person who may cause them harm. This level of protection allows employees to feel safe at work, and therefore, to perform better.

Indeed, workplace violence remains an ongoing concern for staff at Johns Hopkins. For example, since September 2018, staff across Johns Hopkins' hospitals in Maryland have reported approximately 1,382 events of verbal and/or physical aggression and violence at the hands of patients or their family members. The occupational injury clinic treats more than 20 employees per month for injuries sustained in violent and aggressive events by patients. The Johns Hopkins Hospital security office alone has reported an average six to seven assaults by patients as reported by employees, since 2018. Johns Hopkins remains committed to creating a safe work environment for its staff.

The changes in House Bill 126 would be welcomed enhancements to the policies and procedures that Johns Hopkins already has in place to reduce workplace violence and to aid employees who feel threatened. Employees may not have the time or knowledge to file a petition for a peace order themselves or may be fearful to do so. The ability to file a petition for a peace order would allow us to use our resources further to protect an employee who is being targeted at work.

House Bill 126 would create another avenue for creating the safe work environment to which all employees are entitled. Johns Hopkins urges a **favorable report on House Bill 126 – Peace Orders – Workplace Violence**.

cc: Members of the House Judiciary Committee
Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary