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Testimony for SB0276

Position: Support

In a political moment that has laid bare the cruelty and corruption of our law enforcement systems, it is crucial that we recognize the true needs of our campus communities. In the City of Baltimore and across our State, we need *less* policing, not more.

I graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park in May of 2020. UMD has its own police department, UMPD, which sends out alerts at least once a week about criminal activity in the area but never seems to resolve any crimes, from robberies to sexual assault. In all my time at UMD, there has been one instance where UMPD has informed us that a suspect has actually been caught and taken into custody.

What's more, UMPD polices criminal activity in the surrounding, predominantly Black and Latinx communities more than it policed the heinous criminal activity in the university which funds it. Despite the fact that a UMD student died on Route 1 after leaving a frat party *and* there were date rape drugs found in her system, no one was charged with her drugging or death. The fact that sexual assault and hazing continue at UMD shows that UMPD does not exist to reduce crime at the university, but instead to permeate the communities of color nearby.

Rather than having a police force devoted entirely to policing a community, universities in Maryland would do well to redistribute police budgets to sexual assault hotlines, mental health programs, and other student and community support services within its departments. For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on SB0276.