

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

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Johns Hopkins supports **Senate Bill 105 – 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.

During the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, our health care workers continue to face the threat of workplace violence as they strive to deliver compassionate care to our patients. Despite their resilience, the pandemic has taken a physical and emotional toll on our health care workers as they fear for their own safety and that of their families. The need for this legislation is greater now than ever before.

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 reduce an employee's exposure to a threat. Employer filed petitions for peace orders will enable us to protect our workforce, create a safe workplace and allow our employees to feel safe and thus perform better.

Indeed, workplace violence remains an ongoing concern for staff at Johns Hopkins. **For example, since September 2018, Johns Hopkins' Maryland facilities have received over 2,600 reports of verbal and/or physical aggression and violence at the hands of patients or their family members. The occupational injury clinic learns of more than 25 injured employees per month as the result of violent and aggressive events by patients.** The Johns Hopkins Hospital security office alone has reported an average six to seven assaults per month by patients and visitors as reported by employees, since 2018. Johns Hopkins remains committed to creating a safe work environment for its staff.

Like last session's bill, the changes in Senate Bill 105 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.

Government and Community Affairs

Senate Bill 105 would create another avenue for creating the safe work environment to which all employees are entitled. Johns Hopkins urges a **favorable report on Senate Bill 105 – Peace Orders – Workplace Violence.**

cc: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Senator Charles Sydnor