

January 19<sup>th</sup>, 20201

To: Senator William C. Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

I write to you today to express my enthusiastic support for SB0276, a bill that would repeal provisions relating to the establishment and maintenance of a Johns Hopkins Police Department.

As a member of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health community, a member of the Baltimore community, and an individual who has previously been a victim of a crime, I understand that increasing the police presence in Baltimore will only serve to make the city a less safe and less equitable place to live. Police violence is an urgent public health crisis facing our country, which disproportionately targets individuals identifying as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and people of color. Indeed, police violence is a leading cause of death for young men, particularly young Black men, who face a 1 in 1,000 lifetime chance of being killed by police.<sup>1</sup> For comparison, this is approximately 10 times higher than the risk of dying in a motor vehicle crash in our country, yet receives starkly less public health attention.<sup>2</sup>

Members of the Johns Hopkins community and other academic communities have demonstrated the harms of policing to the population.<sup>3</sup> In addition, they have demonstrated the importance of stronger and more integrated health systems, safe and stable housing, accessible food, and high-quality education to the health and wellbeing of the population. Establishing a private police force is not an evidence-based solution to violence in Baltimore; it is an attempt to exert power and control that is rooted in white supremacist methodologies. Already, the University has disbanded its accountability board for the private police, and has limited the avenues for individuals to provide feedback. As student, I have witnessed the myriad ways that racism and white supremacy continue to manifest at Hopkins, from micro-aggressions manifested by professors and staff, to differential targeting of students of color by university security, to the relatively low representation of American students of color within the student body. Allowing the university to establish a private police force would only increase racism manifested by the university, while making it a more dangerous place for students of color.

As you consider my testimony, I urge you to favorably support SB0276.

Sincerely,

Anne D. Smith, MPH

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<sup>1</sup> Edwards F, Lee H, Esposito M. Risk of being killed by police use of force in the United States by age, race-ethnicity, and sex. PNAS. 2019;116(34):16793-16798. doi:10.1073/pnas.1821204116

<sup>2</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Information 2018 data. Available at: <https://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/Main/index.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Jackson D, Fahmy C, Vaughn M, Testa A. Police Stops Among At-Risk Youth: Repercussions for Mental Health. Journal of Adolescent Health. 2019; 65(5): P627-632. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2019.05.027>