

Testimony Supporting SB0276
Bentley Addison, Student at Johns Hopkins University
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My name is Bentley Addison. I am an undergraduate student at the Johns Hopkins Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, a Baltimore City resident, and a registered voter in Maryland's 43rd district. **I am testifying today to urge the committee to support SB0276: private institutions of higher education should not be permitted to establish police forces.**

First, a greater police presence in the communities around Hopkins property would have a marked increase in danger for students of color and non-Hopkins community members, who would be actively surveilled, targeted, and arrested based on police profiling that they do not belong at Hopkins or are already criminals. We've seen, in June 2018, a Portland State University police officer shoot and kill a 45-year-old Black navy veteran who was breaking up a fight. The man killed, Jason Washington, had a registered and legal concealed carry permit on him. The officers faced no criminal charges.

As a Black student on campus, I am scared. So many of my peers have been murdered by police, and thousands more have been intimidated or profiled. We must not allow private universities to, on exaggerated cause, inflict this kind of damage on communities they serve.

Since Columbine the police presence in schools has skyrocketed, but police have never managed to actually stop a school shooting. There is reason to believe that a greater police presence would increase the insecurity of students and residents, who would then have little recourse to question, challenge, or seek redress from a private force that Hopkins is forcing onto the city, rather than working with the city to directly address the issues that actually contribute to crime, such as rampant inequality and economic segregation.

Finally, Private police will erode community trust that universities need to fulfill their mission. Johns Hopkins' relationship with Baltimore is already fraught because of decades of abuses and misdeeds on the part of the University.. If the University operates a private police force -- one that carries guns and arrests city residents -- this will further poison its relationship with Baltimore. Residents may be reluctant to seek educational opportunities, medical care or participate in research at Johns Hopkins if they think their lives will be threatened by a campus police force.

For all these reasons, I support SB0276.