

1/19/21

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of [SB0276](#) to repeal the Johns Hopkins University private police force. I have lived and worked as an educator in Baltimore City for the past nine years, and am an alumnus of the Johns Hopkins School of Education Masters in Teaching program. I completed my teaching internship at the Henderson-Hopkins school in East Baltimore, the area in which JHPD would first be deployed. Through my experience as an educator, I've become intimately invested in the lives of my students and their families. I demand that Johns Hopkins's plans for policing be repealed for the health and well-being of the children that I have worked with.

The Middle East neighborhood where Hopkins police will be deployed is already heavily policed by Baltimore officers, and patrolled by Hopkins security. When I commuted to the Middle East neighborhood in order to complete my teaching internship for my Masters degree, I saw how militarized the presence of Johns Hopkins security officers already was near the medical campus. The first time I walked along Ashland Avenue, I was shaken to feel that I was in an area being colonized by Hopkins, for the interest of wealth and prestige, which hypothetically, according to the Hopkins lore, would eventually trickle down to long-time neighborhood residents. I'd heard heart-warming stories from Hopkins administration about collaboration and community-building between the institution and the community at large, but as I learned about Hopkins's work with the East Baltimore Development Initiative and the displacement of over 700 families from their homes in 2002, I saw things differently. During my walks, I didn't see many neighbors out and about or exchanging greetings not because there hadn't been deep connections and strong bonds, but because the neighborhood itself had been destabilized by Hopkins's actions.

And the militarized climate that Hopkins fostered extended beyond the streets. When I entered the Henderson-Hopkins school building each day, I was greeted by tight security and an extremely sterile atmosphere. The school itself, sponsored by Johns Hopkins, seeks to offer a "whole-brain" and progressive research-based approach to learning. Instead, in the classrooms found along its quiet hallways, primarily Black and lower-income students are taught to submit to directions and conform rather than assert their voice and choice through creative problem-solving. Voice and choice of those most affected has similarly had no place within Hopkins's plans for a private police force that will disproportionately affect the Middle East's long-time residents -- many of the families whose children I worked with. Instead of engaging in creative and collaborative problem-solving to foster a healthy environment for students and community members, Hopkins is pursuing policing despite its own renowned public health research and the input of community leaders who offer differing perspectives. Over 6,152 community members stated our opposition to the police force in [this petition](#) which has still not been acknowledged by Hopkins administration.

JHU has made multiple promises to the Middle East area around the medical campus, including the Minority Inclusion Agreement, which in 2002 promised 8,000 new jobs and a community reinvestment fund in East Baltimore. As of 2019, JHU has created about 1,500 new jobs—20% of what they promised. It is impossible not to see Hopkins policing as a continuation of Hopkins's extractive relationship to the areas, like the Middle East, in which its campuses are located. We want the University to place the funds that were intended for JHPD, and more, in the hands of communities, such as residents of the Middle East. Instead of embarking on new projects like JHPD, JHU should implement what they have already committed to and neglected to see through in the past. This transparency and respect is what safety truly looks like.

Best,

Suzanne Doogan