

Testimony in Support of SB0276

Jack Lewis

I am writing to you in support of SB0276, to repeal Hopkins' private police.

The people of the Johns Hopkins community, the city of Baltimore, and the entire state of Maryland have made our voices loud and clear – now we call upon our elected officials to turn the will of the democracy into political action. The people have protested in the streets, in university buildings, and from far and wide to demand an end to this police force. The will of the people can also be seen in the community petition with thousands of signatures, all demanding this repeal. A private police force would add violence to our community, division between neighbors, and prevent the conditions for true safety.

Black and Brown students, faculty, and staff at Johns Hopkins and residents of Baltimore City have been clear: They are already disproportionately targeted by law enforcement and see a Hopkins police force as a threat to their safety and the safety of their friends and families. Police don't make our communities safer. Instead, they put lives at risk and will only deepen the divide between Hopkins and the surrounding community. The establishment of a private police force exacerbates long-standing wounds, compromising any partnership with residents. It is hard to overstate the devastating impact that negative interactions between the Hopkins police and community partners would have. We need divestment from police and investment in the community.

In this historic moment, as the country reflects on the harm police continue to inflict on Black and Brown communities, we have a chance here to change for the better. If you care about public safety for all, if you want to support the people of Baltimore, and if you hear the chorus of voices outside your windows- vote yes on this bill. Thank you.