

January 19, 2021

## Testimony SUPPORTING SB0276

Dear members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am submitting this testimony to urge you to SUPPORT SB0276, Johns Hopkins University – Police Department – Repeal.

To whom would the Johns Hopkins University Police Department be accountable? The answer is in the question: an elite, wealthy private institution that doesn't pay property taxes to the city of Baltimore. It's like something out of a dystopian novel. In the city of the Gun Trace Task Force, the city where human beings named Mya Hall, Tyrone West, Freddie Gray, and many others have died at the hands of police, the last thing we need is a group of armed officers even less accountable to the good of the communities they operate in. This is why a broad coalition of students, staff, community members, and organizations came together to oppose this private police force before it even materialized: we knew that far from making us safer, it would inflict harm on the most marginalized of us. A vote for this bill is a vote for the safety and dignity of Black people, people of color, homeless people, trans people, disabled people, and homeless folks. People without whom Baltimore would not be Baltimore.

I'll never forget the day I logged on to social media and saw the pictures of 80 police officers coming to arrest 7 protesters at JHU's Garland Hall, the door smashed in, the misgendering and verbal abuse directed at a trans woman. According to the Police Commissioner, this was an "appropriate response" to the sit-in (because no one was beaten or run over). To me, it just further illustrated the danger inherent in policing, the way it stifles dissent and democracy. Even in front of the cameras, even on its best behavior. This is exactly why the Johns Hopkins Police Department must be repealed.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony.

Sincerely,

Emile Feldenzer