

Dear Legislators of Maryland,

I'm a current postdoctoral research fellow at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and registered voter in the state of MD (District 42A). I am writing to **support SB0276**, which would repeal the provisions allowing our university to establish a private police force.

**A Hopkins police department would be a threat to safety on and around the school's properties, an irresponsible use of resources, and insufficiently accountable to the public, as well as setting a dangerous precedent for the privatization of local policing.** The consequences of excessive use of force and racial discrimination at the hands of an armed police force, as we are too often reminded, are deadly. In particular, I fear for the safety of Black and Brown members of our community. Faculty, students, and community members have been asking our university's administration to stop this initiative for the last two years with no sign of reconsideration.

The previous legislation (which SB0276 seeks to rectify) permits the proposed Hopkins police to operate armed police not only on campus but also in quite large areas surrounding the campus where there are diverse communities, setting the stage for many private citizens who are not affiliated with Hopkins to be unduly targeted and potentially caught up in operations. In fact, **there is an extensive history of university police departments harming citizens in the community:**

Tyrone West murdered by Morgan State Police and Baltimore Police during a traffic stop:  
<https://www.afro.com/5-years-after-brothers-death-tawanda-jones-still-fights-for-justice/>

Racial profiling by the University of Chicago Police: <https://www.berkeleyside.com/2019/07/03/ucpd-handcuffing-of-11-year-old-boy-prompts-criticism-campus-response>

UCPD detain two Black children: <https://www.berkeleyside.com/2019/07/03/ucpd-handcuffing-of-11-year-old-boy-prompts-criticism-campus-response>

University of Cincinnati police killed Samuel Debose, an unarmed Black man, in 2015:  
<https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2015/08/06/family-sam-dubose-left-behind-wrestles-loss/31211597/>

Unarmed black woman shot at Yale University: <https://www.oregonlive.com/portland/2019/12/psu-to-pay-1-million-to-family-of-jason-washington-shot-and-killed-by-campus-police.html>

Community member shot and killed by Portland State University police:  
<https://www.oregonlive.com/portland/2019/12/psu-to-pay-1-million-to-family-of-jason-washington-shot-and-killed-by-campus-police.html>

Racial profiling and excessive use of force by UPenn police department:  
<https://www.thedp.com/article/2015/04/penn-police-training-to-combat-use-of-excessive-force>

I would also like to reference **this article by a former Baltimore City police officer and police internal affairs investigator who opposes the JHPD** and describes issues with current Hopkins security practices and details previous incidents involving deadly force and history of officials that often come from troubled Baltimore Police units. <https://theappeal.org/johns-hopkins-universitys-private-police-force-will-bring-more-cops-to-an-overpoliced-baltimore/>

I am not alone in this position. **A majority of those in the Hopkins community including 75% of undergraduates are opposed to a Hopkins police department** (<https://baltimorebrew.com/2019/02/20/johns-hopkins-plan-for-a-private-police-force-splits-communities-and-the-student-body/>) **Over a hundred JHU professors have signed a letter opposing a Hopkins police department** (<https://www.jhunewsletter.com/article/2020/01/101-faculty-sign-letter-against-private-police-force>). In fact, this summer, JHU has suspended for two years the implementation of the police department as a result of public outcry, but is poised to return to business as usual at the end of the two years, which is why opponents are proposing legislation to prevent them from doing so. I am very skeptical that armed JHU campus police are the answer to security issues and **I object to an armed Hopkins Police Department, who, unlike a city or county police, have even less accountability to private citizens living in the surrounding community.** Furthermore, we are speaking about a campus community which is not supposed to discriminate against individuals, whereas existing campus security already have a history of discrimination and harassment against minorities. Adding armed police will only increase harm and harassment.

Sincerely,

Margaret Ho