

Testimony in Support of HB 336: Private Institutions of Higher Education - Police Departments - Repeal and Prohibition

To: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Daniel Richman

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My name is Dan Richman. I am a resident of Baltimore, Maryland, legislative District 46. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 336, the repeal of authorization for a Johns Hopkins University police department.

I work at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in East Baltimore and I live in a nearby neighborhood where I walk to work. I am one of many members of the Johns Hopkins community who do not want to see our own institution deploy a private police force. I am one of many members of Baltimore neighborhoods who do not want to see another police force on our streets.

The neighborhoods around Johns Hopkins already show what happens when people in charge prefer policing over other services. The Baltimore Police Department acts like an occupying army in these neighborhoods, unaccountable to the people it patrols. How then can we expect accountability from a private university that has repeatedly shown a callous, racist disregard for the people who live near it when it has wanted their land, money, or bodies?

“More police” is the wrong answer when the state considers it. We know we should prioritize housing, healthcare, jobs, and education, and we know that policing leads to violence and incarceration and only exacerbates the problems that segregation and exploitation cause. “More police” is an even more wrong answer when a private institution considers it.

I respectfully urge a favorable report for HB 336.