

Dear Maryland House of Delegates,

I am writing to you in support of HB1284, to repeal Hopkins' private police. I am a community member of 7 years with no direct ties to Johns Hopkins. However, my neighbors, friends, family (with and without connection to JHU) and myself will be directly and negatively affected by an increase in extra-city policing. An increase in police does not increase safety for me in my neighborhood or home. An increase in police will disproportionately affect Black people in and around Hopkins' three campuses.

There is little grounds for trust in JHU's policing as evidenced by long-standing disregard for communities of color surrounding institutions' buildings. The communities of Middle East Baltimore have had promises broken by JHU over the years. For example, the Minority Inclusion Agreement 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. Instead, Hopkins broke their promises while still forcibly removing over 700 families from their homes.

There is also little grounds for trust that a private police force would lead to increased safety, especially for those most marginalized. Research and history show that police reform is ineffectual. We've had six years of reform efforts implemented in the wake of the 2014 killings of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Laquan McDonald, Tamir Rice, and way too many others. Yet, all of that reform didn't save Freddie Gray, or Alton Sterling, or Korryn Gaines, or Walter Scott, or Breonna Taylor, or George Floyd. Reform was not worth those lost lives and it certainly is not worth another. Not to mention the murder of Tyrone West at the hands of another university police officer, this time at Morgan State.

I stand with the Coalition Against Policing at Hopkins in the demand that the University place the funds that were intended for JHPD, and more, in the hands of communities, such as residents of the Middle East near the medical campus. Instead of embarking on new projects like JHUPD, JHU should implement what they have already committed to and neglected to see through in the past: the Minority Inclusion Agreement, which in 2002 promised 8,000 new jobs and a community reinvestment fund in East Baltimore. That is what safety would look like.

The community has already spoken in the form of a petition, testimony and civil action, none of which have been acknowledged or deeply considered by the Hopkins administration. Will you stand with the community and people of East Baltimore and support HB1284? We look forward to publicly discussing your response.

Sincerely,
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