

In Support of HB 273, "Defend the Guard,"

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House Health and Government Operations Committee,

My name is Jessica Katzenstein and I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology at Brown University. I wrote a 2020 [report](#) for Brown University's Costs of War Project on the costs of post-9/11 U.S. police militarization. I conducted ethnographic research in Maryland for 16 months between 2015 and 2018 on militarization and police reform efforts.

Speaking only for myself, I support this measure to minimize the deployment of the National Guard in U.S. military actions. Many current police serve in the Guard, and these officers' deployment abroad can affect their work at home with the communities they serve.

My research shows how our wars abroad have driven police militarization at home, and the many costs militarization has entailed, including:

- **Economic:** U.S. taxpayers have spent tens of billions of dollars, minimum, on military equipment, "militarized" trainings, and surveillance technologies for police since 9/11. This expense entails massive opportunity costs. Investments in drones, armored vehicles, and surveillance systems are dollars denied to education, infrastructure, and renewable energy.
- **Erosion of legitimacy:** Studies have shown that militarization breeds fear and mistrust, especially in Black, Indigenous, and poor communities. This can obstruct crime-solving and undermine community policing efforts.
- **Increased violence:** Militarization may encourage police aggression and violence, particularly against Black people. For instance, SWAT teams often use tactics learned from the military when serving search warrants for drug investigations, and are disproportionately likely to do so against people of color.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 273.