



Testimony on House Bill 1640
to
House Judiciary Committee
on
Morgan State University – Police Force Powers – Authorization

March 10, 2020

Today, as President of Morgan State University, the oldest university in Baltimore, which has been designated a National Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and which the Maryland General Assembly designated as its “Preeminent Public Urban Research University, I am here to testify in support of HB 1640. With me are the University’s Chief of Police, Mr. Lance Hatcher; our Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Kevin Banks; our President of the SGA, Mr. Keyon Grayson; and several of our other impressive student leaders at Morgan.

Morgan is in a period of noticeable growth and momentum. Our enrollment of nearly 8,000 students has grown by about eight percent since 2009. Last year, we were one of only three public universities in Maryland to experience a growth in enrollment. Others were Salisbury and the University of Maryland Baltimore. With the growth in enrollment, accompanied by the demands for on campus living, Morgan has experienced many growing pains. While the University is moving as rapidly as we can to build an on campus residential hall to accommodate 660 students, we have had to resort to leasing properties within a two to three-mile radius of the campus to house nearly two thousand students. Given the preponderance of students now living off-campus in residential neighborhoods, our students are disproportionately victims of violence. From armed robberies to homicides, Morgan students are being preyed upon.

I am now concluding my tenth year as President of this venerable university, and the pain that will stay with me forever is that which our university experiences when a promising student’s life is snuffed out. No parent expects to send their child away to college and not have the University do everything it can to protect them. That is why I am here today imploring you to pass this bill to enable our university Police to expand its jurisdiction to protect our students and our neighborhoods that abut the campus.

Over the last four years, Morgan State University has suffered the loss of lives of seven of its promising students. They were living in, or visiting residential facilities, within a two-mile radius of the campus. Currently, the Morgan Police has no jurisdictional authority to police those areas where more than 1,500 Morgan students are residing. Here I have a map of the expanded area we are requesting and I am asking Chief Hatcher to walk you through the map.

I cannot sit here this afternoon without invoking the names of these students who will not be around to walk across the stage and get their degrees from the university. They are: Gerald Williams (sophomore), Christopher Collins (2016 graduate), Marcus Edwards (sophomore), Jonathan Tobash (sophomore), Tracey Carrington (2015 graduate), Kevon Dix (senior), and Manuel Luis (sophomore).

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, all we are asking is to be granted the same authority as has been granted campuses within the University System of Maryland and The Johns Hopkins.

I humbly request your support of HB 1640.

Morgan State University Proposed Expanded Jurisdiction

3200 Harford Road to 3000 block of Echodale
3000 Echodale (turns into E. Belvedere) to 5600 of The Alameda
5600 The Alameda to 2000 Sinclair Lane
2000 Sinclair Lane to 2000 of Belair Road
2000 Belair Road to 3000 block of Erdman Avenue
3000 Erdman Avenue to 3200 block of Harford Road

