

Testimony Supporting HB1284
Dr. Judah Adashi, Faculty at Johns Hopkins University
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My name is Dr. Judah Adashi. I am a member of the faculty at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, a near-lifelong Baltimore City resident, and a registered voter in Maryland's District 46. I offer the testimony below in support of HB1284, repealing all provisions relating to the establishment and maintenance of a police department at Johns Hopkins University.

As the 2016 Justice Department Report on the Baltimore Police Department and the 2018 Gun Trace Task Force trial have affirmed, policing in Baltimore has caused great harm, disproportionately traumatizing Black citizens, families, and neighborhoods. The prospect of adding police of any kind, particularly a force developed by working closely with the Baltimore Police Department, is deeply troubling.

All of the graphics in Hopkins' 2018 Interim Study on Approaches to Improving Public Safety highlight crime statistics. While the negative impact of policing on marginalized groups is noted, the issue is not similarly highlighted. The name Freddie Gray appears once in 160 pages. Not one, not two, but six police officers were involved in killing Mr. Gray, an innocent, unarmed Black man. I can think of nothing more central to any discussion about increasing the number of police officers in our city.

In the summer of 2020, I was part of a collective of Hopkins faculty and students seeking complete abandonment of the private policing initiative. Our petition was signed by over 6,000 people – faculty, staff, students, alums, and Baltimore residents – as well as over 50 local, statewide, and national organizations, including the ACLU of MD and the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. I stand with these individuals and institutions in profound opposition to Hopkins' efforts to establish a university police force, and therefore offer my utmost support for HB1284.

I value safety and security as much as anyone, especially when it comes to our students, but not at the continued expense of Baltimore's most vulnerable people and communities. It is long past time for us to acknowledge that policing is the problem, not the solution, in Baltimore.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for all that you do for our city.