

Hello, my name is Tom Kerby, a resident of Baltimore's 46th District, writing in support of HB0336 in an effort to repeal the Johns Hopkins's private police, and the police of other private institutions.

The area that private police will be deployed, the Middle East neighborhood, is already heavily policed, and Hopkins security is already an obvious presence. Many community members, in fact over 6,000, have stated our opposition to the police force in this petition, which has still not been acknowledged by Hopkins administration. Many of us find this extremely concerning. How can we expect the accountability of any future JHU police department if its administration will not even take accountability to deeply listen to, or even simply acknowledge, community members who oppose the formation of the force? Johns Hopkins's actions, which have almost completely excluded dissenting voices, including the voices of those who would be most affected by the implementation of a PD, do not bode well for an accountable police force.

Over the years, JHU has made many promises to the Middle East area around the medical campus, including the Minority Inclusion Agreement, which 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.

Additionally, we have seen University police forces have devastating effects on individuals and their families, even here in Baltimore. Specifically, in the death of Tyrone West, whose life was taken seven years ago by a Morgan State officer. This is a concrete example of the harm that University policing promises.

Research and history show that reform is ineffectual. We have 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 did not 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.

With all the above in mind, we would like the University to place the funds that were intended for Johns Hopkins PD, and more, in the hands of communities, such as residents of the Middle East near the medical campus. This is what the safety Johns Hopkins claims to desire looks like, giving the community JHU claims to be prioritizing the autonomy, ability and resources to do so accordingly.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I am not originally from Baltimore, but I have grown to feel like a local because of the strong community and passion for this city. Bringing in additional police will not make me or anyone safer, and will cause more harm among those who already feel marginalized by JHU's presence.

Best,

Tom Kerby