

I am a Johns Hopkins Graduate Researcher and proud Baltimore community member writing to support Senator Jill Carter's SB0276 to repeal the ability for Johns Hopkins University to create a private, armed police department.

In keeping with the history of Hopkins exploiting Black bodies through the likes of the affront to the family of Henrietta Lacks, lawsuits carried out for medical debt of disproportionately Black patients, and a long history of medical racism in this country, Johns Hopkins University is attempting to use this police force to further control the neighborhoods around its campuses. It is unconscionable to suggest that in a time of national reckoning with the ills of policing in this country, that the solution to a corrupt and ineffective Baltimore Police Department, of which the leaders of Baltimore City have no control, is to allow a private institution to create another police force that the city also does not have control over.

This institution has ignored the concerns of their faculty, nurses, students, and staff as well as the Baltimore City residents that would live with this policing every day in their own communities. Not only have community associations adjacent to Hopkins voted to oppose this police force, Hopkins affiliates of color, myself included, strongly oppose the formation of this force. We do not support policing our patients, neighbors, and visitors to East Baltimore and Johns Hopkins. I implore you to support this bill, as the half a million dollars in lobbying by JHU does not matter more than the lives of people who are rising up to oppose this police force.

When their bill was being debated, Hopkins attempted to tell you that this was an urgent need, that without this bill they would not be able to protect their affiliates. Two years after its passage, no police force has been created and Hopkins announced an additional 2-year pause in creating the force. Is this what urgent means? If this were so urgent, then why would they back down to the pressure from around the world to stop using policing Black and Brown as a solution to problems of poverty and desperation? Do not allow this institution to play us for fools. I implore you to support this bill, as the half a million dollars in lobbying by JHU does not matter more than the lives of people who are rising up to oppose private police anywhere. It is time to support this bill and repeal Hopkins' ability to police this city.