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February 23, 2021

Opposition: HB 336 - Private Institutions of Higher Education - Police Departments - Repeal and Prohibition

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 336, the bill that would repeal the Johns Hopkins Police Department.

I was born and reared in Baltimore City and have worked my entire career in service to Baltimore City. For the last 25 years, I have served as the director of Operation P.U.L.S.E. (People United to Live in a Safe Environment), Inc. in East Baltimore. I know firsthand the challenges our city and its residents face from petty to violent crimes, and I fully support the development of the Johns Hopkins Police Department. We also have witnessed that police presence and support for the community are major deterrents for crime in our area.

HB 336 is the wrong step and the wrong time. It would take away a critical tool to fight crime at the very moment when our community needs it the most.

Tragedies are becoming a common place in our communities. Our communities are not safe and the optics make for unsolicited national attention. The taint of vast criminal activity inhibits small businesses from thriving and prevents larger businesses from seeking to invest. To reverse the negative press that our fair city receives requires community investment, economic development, jobs and training programs. It most certainly requires a truly progressive, transparent and accountable police department.

The *Community Safety and Strengthening Act* passed by the legislature two years ago covers all of the above. The thought that this act would end before it has even begun would be truly detrimental to improving the current crime pandemic our city is facing.

I spent considerable time and effort participating in the community meetings that Hopkins undertook prior to the enactment of this legislation two years ago. The final bill reflected that input and the opinions and perspectives of the communities surrounding the Hopkins campuses. As a result, I have every confidence that the Johns Hopkins Police Department will be a best-in-class model for other departments to follow.

Everyone that has been affected personally, or who watches the daily local news would agree that more must be done to stop the violence, and this law represents the hopes and hard work of many of us who live, work, worship and go to school in this city. I strongly urge this committee to vote no on this bill.

Sincerely,

Samuel T. Redd, Jr.

Samuel T. Redd, Jr., Director

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