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THINK JEWISHLY. ACT LOCALLY.

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB336**

#### **Private Institutions of Higher Education - Police Departments - Repeal and Prohibition**

**TO:** Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbearly, and members of the Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** Ethan Hasiuk, on behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ)

My name is Ethan Hasiuk. I live in Baltimore City, in District 43. I submit this testimony on behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ) in support of HB336, Private Institutions of Higher Education - Police Departments - Repeal and Prohibition. JUFJ organizes more than 5,500 Jewish Marylanders and allies in support of local campaigns for social, racial, and economic justice.

Jewish tradition teaches us that destroying one life is akin to destroying an entire world. Yet Black and brown Marylanders face deadly over-policing and systemic harm every day. We believe that private police forces are generally a major step backward in the police accountability work that has been a focus of ours this session. And specific to this case, we believe that Johns Hopkins has not demonstrated adequate support or rationale for an armed police force.

According to its own website, the Johns Hopkins Police Accountability Board consists of 15 members, 13 of which “JHU leadership nominates.”<sup>1</sup> Despite requests from students, faculty, staff, and community members, JHU has failed to create an Accountability Board with real independence from JHU leadership, and requests for real collaboration and accountability have

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<sup>1</sup> “Accountability Board Q&A.” *Johns Hopkins University & Medicine*, <https://publicsafety.jhu.edu/jhpd-information/accountability-board/accountability-board-qa/>.

been repeatedly denied. JHU leadership has failed to address the other concerns expressed in a petition signed by 6,000 Baltimoreans and JHU faculty, students, and staff.<sup>2</sup>

Johns Hopkins University did pause the development of the police department for at least two years in order to “benefit from the national re-evaluation of policing in society brought about by the death of George Floyd.”<sup>3</sup> As the Baltimore Sun Editorial Board pointed out at the time, if safety were the real priority, JHU would have no reason to pause the police force, and if civil rights were the priority, JHU would cancel its police force entirely.<sup>4</sup> With no clear rationale, direction, or accountability, the police department is simply too aimless and dangerous of a project to continue. **We respectfully urge this committee to report favorably on HB336.**

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<sup>2</sup> “No JHU Private Police Signatories.” June 29, 2020.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13twmkewdH7lFeIXd7ZlPwy7hCRxSKSYJ/view>.

<sup>3</sup> “Johns Hopkins will pause development of a police department for at least two years.” *The Hub*, <https://hub.jhu.edu/2020/06/12/hopkins-pauses-jhpd-for-at-least-two-years/>.

<sup>4</sup> “Hopkins police force ‘pause’ signals that safety was never a key consideration.” *The Baltimore Sun*, <https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-0617-hopkins-police-force-20200616-mcaxa7ute5dstgq7i3elvfopiy-story.html>.