

Dear Del Clippinger and the Judiciary Committee,

I am a resident of District 46, and live a few blocks from Hopkins on Wolfe St, and I am writing to you to SUPPORT HB0336 and HB1284. These two bills repeal the legislation that allowed Johns Hopkins to create their private police forces.

The Baltimore Police Department is going through some significant, and expensive, reforms to deal with many of the systemic problems that caused it to be investigated by the Justice Department in the first place. While Johns Hopkins made promises about following many of the same reforms, we do not know that will actually happen. I was in the hearing where Melissa Hyatt promised that she would help build a reform minded department. However, she only stayed on long enough to get the legislation passed, and then moved on. We need more than just promises to get legislation passed.

In the last year, we have seen how many departments across the country have abused their citizens. Thankfully, the Baltimore Police Department did not have incidents like that, which could be partly due to the work of the consent decree. The last thing we need is to fix the BPD, and then have issues with a private police force. Would people really care that there is a difference in the agency if the news trumpets that there was a use of force incident in Baltimore? I don't think so.

As a community member, I have serious concerns about trying to create a Hopkins bubble. Hopkins is one of the best hospitals we have in the area, has many transit routes going through it (including metro), and is an anchor institution in Baltimore. This should be a place that anyone feels welcome walking, or lingering. However, we have seen how policing can be used as a weapon against mostly people of color.

Baltimore City has serious issues with safety. Students and faculty at Johns Hopkins deserve to feel safe. However, additional policing will not solve the systemic issues that cause the violence in this city, and will not help our residents of color feel safer.

As we look at all of the reforms on the table in this session, as we mourn the death of George Floyd at the hands of police officers, lets make sure we are undoing the damage of previous years, including this legislation that allows Hopkins to stand up a police force.

Thank you,

Brian Seel

223 S Wolfe St, 21231