

HB0336 Private Institutions of Higher Education - Police Departments - Repeal and Prohibition

Position: Favorable

Gretchen Tome, 45th District Resident

3229 Shannon Dr.

Baltimore, MD 21213

I am writing as a concerned Baltimore citizen to urge you to vote yes on HB0336, both repealing the Hopkins private police force and prohibiting other private institutions of education from establishing private police forces. The community surrounding Johns Hopkins Hospital already suffers from both over and under-policing, and largely spoke out when this legislation was considered in previous legislative sessions, urging all of you to stop Hopkins from establishing this private police force. Unfortunately, not enough of you listened to the community. This is your opportunity to undo a grave injustice and save lives.

As we have seen time and again in Baltimore and across the country, police departments do not make our communities safer. They protect and serve themselves. They protect and serve more well-off white communities. They protect and serve property. They terrorize Black, Brown, and poor communities. Hopkins has a long history of destroying Black communities, displacing Middle East, profiting off of the life of Henrietta Lacks, poisoning children with lead as part of a "medical study," suing poor patients for medical debt - the list goes on and on. We have no reason to believe that empowering them with a private police force would do anything to make the surrounding Black and Brown neighborhoods any safer. On the contrary, we have many reasons to believe it would do exactly the opposite.

Hopkins should use the funds that they would invest in a private police force to strengthen grassroots community groups that are working on violence prevention and healing efforts. No other private institutions of education in our city or state should be allowed to invest in a private police force. Investment must be made in the community, with the people and groups on the ground, doing the work in their communities to make them safer and stronger.

I ask you all to take seriously the opportunity that you have to make meaningful police reform and undo the wrong that was done in passing this legislation previously. Please vote in favor of HB 0336. Thank you for your time and consideration.