

Testimony in support of HB0336:

I am submitting testimony to urge my lawmakers to support HB0336 to ensure private institutions like Johns Hopkins are not able to create their own police force. As a Johns Hopkins student, employee, and member of the Baltimore community I believe that the creation of an armed police with arrest power and all the state protections therein will be a detriment to the community and undermine the very goals JHU claims to want to accomplish. The creation of the police force is opposed by a majority of JHU students (>70%), and JHU admin themselves have delayed the formation of this police force given the public backlash they've faced over the summer uprising against violent and racist policing. Since then, over 6000 people have signed onto a petition for JHU to abandon this private police force.

Students and community members were not given a voice or chance to decide on the creation of this force; at no point did upper administration allow the greater student body or the surrounding neighborhood members if this was a good thing to do. There has already been several issues with racial profiling in JH's security department that they should focus on before trying to create an armed private police force. The Garland Sit-in group has recently submitted evidence to the university of violent, white supremacist beliefs espoused by two JH security officers which they made known through their public Facebook profiles. The JH Office of Institutional Equity has not taken any transparent action regarding this. Their only response has been saying they could not disclose "personnel matters." JHU offers no accountability towards or respect to for the very people they claim to offer safety too, and as such cannot be allowed the power to create their own police force in any way, shape, or form.

JHU has put forward its demands without any consent of the people they represent, and if we have learned anything over the past several years it is that more police does not make a community safer. Instead of investing in more police, JHU should invest in communities and proven public health based strategies for reducing crime, like their own School of Public Health's experts advise. However, since we cannot legislate JHU into doing that, the very least we can do is stop them from forming yet another ineffective and violent police force.