

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1284

To whom it may concern,

I'm a PhD candidate and instructor at Johns Hopkins University and have lived in Baltimore for the past four years. I am submitting this testimony to urge you to **SUPPORT HB1284**. As someone who materially benefits from the wealth and power of Johns Hopkins University, I strongly believe it is far too unaccountable to the public and should not be allowed to have its own armed police forces with arrest powers and protection under LEOBR.

The resistance to the JHU private police force has been overwhelming since it was first proposed in March 2018. Over 100 faculty members have penned a letter opposing it. At the height of the protest against the police department, community members staged a 35-day sit-in in which hundreds of students participated on a rolling basis, according to Homewood Faculty Assembly's Fact Finding Committee report. The school's own Student Government Assembly voted to formally support the sit-in. A referendum in which over a third of undergraduate students participated found that **over 70% of students opposed the police force**. Following the uprisings against police brutality throughout this summer, Johns Hopkins announced that they would be delaying the police force by two years. After that announcement a new petition garnered over 6,000 signatures from community members and neighboring organizations calling for JH to abandon the police force altogether.

Baltimore is already heavily over-policed by a corrupt and unaccountable police department that regularly terrorizes our communities. Recently the ACLU released a report on police violence and complaints of misconduct that found that there were 13,392 complaints of misconduct filed against 1,826 BPD officers and 22,884 use of force incidents from 2015-2019. The last thing we need is another police department, let alone one formed by a private institution like Johns Hopkins, which would hire from BPD as it has already done in the past. Several former BPD officers are now officers with JH Campus Safety & Security. The former VP for Security, Melissa Hyatt, was a BPD veteran for over 20 years. She was a sergeant of a specialized crime unit with a history of serious misconduct allegations, and a commanding officer during the period of the Gun Trace Task Force scandal. Jarron Jackson, Hopkins' Senior Director of Campus Security spent several years as a BPD sergeant, lieutenant, and captain before joining Hopkins.

There have 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."

All the evidence shows that a police force beholden to wealthy private institutions will bring harm to predominantly Black and working-class communities and would disproportionately harm immigrants, people of color, gender and sexual minorities, the homeless, the disabled, and other marginalized groups. For these reasons, we urge you to do the right thing and support this bill.

Sincerely,

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