

February 23, 2021

The Honorable Luke Clippinger,  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee

RE: Opposition to H.B. 336 – Private Institutions of Higher Education - Police Departments - Repeal and Prohibition

I relocated to East Baltimore and called Baltimore City home for more than 5 years now. It was appealing to live, work and play in East Baltimore. I currently work as a Surgery Nurse Coordinator for Johns Hopkins Hospital for more than 13 years. In my role at the hospital, I experience first hand caring for Baltimore city residents and their families who experienced violent crimes and I fully support the development of Johns Hopkins Police Department. Since moving to East Baltimore, I see more violence and feel the pain deeply rooted in the community. I felt moved to be part of the solution and became involved in the community and since have developed ties in my community.

HB 336, the bill that would repeal all provisions related to the establishment and maintenance of a Johns Hopkins Police Department, is a step backwards from providing the community a timely and critical tool to fight crime, maintain safety and advance the community. I am writing to convey my strong opposition to HB 336.

2 years ago I had the opportunity to speak on this important issue. I stand by the same conviction that violence in Baltimore is too important of an issue to not be involved. It affects our children, our families, our communities. Too many people are dying, getting injured, emotionally traumatized and socially strained. I come to support any and all means necessary to address this issue. It is far too important an issue to not find a collective effort for a solution.

The devastating effect of everyday violence in the lives of Baltimore residents is tragic. It does not only affect the victims but their families and the community. Violence happens in schools, churches, hospitals, neighborhood streets, parks and our workplace- it affects all of us- both Baltimore residents and those coming to Baltimore to work, study or play. To address this critical issue of safety is of utmost priority. The Community Safety and Strengthening Act which was passed 2 years ago had the input of the community and all the stakeholders looking to address the increasing violence and crime in the city. Its multifaceted approach that will involve investing in the community, economic development, opportunities for education, training and job placement was well-thought and every concern made known by the community was addressed. The community devoted time and energy to reflect on what the community needs and how these needs can be met.

I and members of my community were hopeful for the change that the Johns Hopkins Police Department will bring to the community. Many of us who live and breathe Baltimore have poured time, energy and commitment to work to stop the violence. I strongly urge this committee to vote no on this bill. Because to move forward with this is to risk more LIVES. Precious lives in our community. I urge this Committee to issue an unfavorable report on HB 336.

May Mendoza