

February 23, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Burkett E. Cochrane, I have been a resident of Butchers Hill since 2010. I served in the US Marines for twenty years and currently work for the Department of Defense. I have participated in the Butchers Hill Crime Committee since 2010 with the exception during my overseas tour from 2013 to 2017. I serve as a liaison to the SE Community Safety Task Force that meets monthly with Councilman Cohen.

I am writing to express my opposition to MD House Bill HB1284, which would eliminate JHPD.

Our neighborhoods surrounding JHU medical campus are vibrant and growing with many families and employees of JHU. Quite a few employees walk or bike to work, or make the short drive and then park in the neighborhood.

I was overseas during the events leading to the Freddie Gray incident and the subsequent protests. I returned to Butchers Hill in 2017 and was alarmed at the increase in crime in the neighborhood and the city at large--mostly by juveniles. As an African American, I understand the injustices as a result of racial profiling and believe more should be done to protect our Civil Rights and think about it every time I step out my door. Policing should not be mutually exclusive of the other efforts to solve the issues of poverty, trauma, mental health, racism and drug addiction.

It is very disheartening that my neighbors cannot walk or bike within several blocks of JHUMC without being assaulted at gunpoint, often by repeat offenders. The SE District is undermanned and struggles to provide the appropriate coverage to the surrounding neighborhood. The criminals know there is very limited police presence, therefore, are embolden to commit these acts, often in broad daylight. More Police is needed--with oversight and accountability when there is wrongdoing.

We in the community are united against police brutality, institutional racism and we greatly support constitutional policing. I whole-heartedly support all of those notions in theory and in practice. I also support the fact that a sworn police department will result in a safer environment for ALL individuals in the immediate vicinity of JHUMC. We need the JHUPD here.

I fully support implementation of the JHPD and I oppose MD House Bill HB1284.

Respectfully Submitted,

Burkett E. Cochrane