

My name is ZaQuane and I am a constituent of District 11.

The people of this city have fought hard for local control exactly to prevent the kind of tragedies our communities have experienced in the last few weeks. The death of our community members who were brutally killed at the hands of the BPD did not happen in a vacuum. Council members, you have direct responsibility and complicity in every act of violence that happens at the hands of the police, both local and private. You do not answer to your wealthy donor base and their private interests, this is our city and we elected you to answer to us.

And so you have a duty to listen to us when we as students, workers, and community members, say no to the Johns Hopkins Private Police, say no to expanded budgets and impunity for BPD, say no to building a cop city in our home, and say no to collaboration with fascist federal agencies.

We do not want a reformed police; we do not want a more trained police to murder more people. We do not believe that there can be any accountability for a police force that is functioning as violently as they are meant to. We simply do not want more police in our communities. We do not want the JHPD in our campuses, our neighborhoods, and our workplace. We do not want BPD and ICE in our streets, murdering and disappearing our neighbors. What we want now is access to affordable housing, free and safe public transportation, for every resident to have healthcare — we want the chance for every Baltimorean to live a safe and dignified life.

The police department released its midyear data for 2025, which shows a 22% decrease in homicides compared to this time last year, and the number of juvenile homicide victims is down 71%. Nonfatal shootings were also down by 19%. . What benefit would the Baltimore community gain from additional overpolicing that is initiated by a private institution that doesn't answer to the community?

I implore the City Council to heed the calls of constituents, particularly on the issue of the newly formed JHPD. Council members must use their powers under local control to suspend the MOU between the JHPD and BPD. Students, workers, and community members have been telling you for years that this police force was forced upon them, is widely unpopular, and is making Baltimore more unsafe.

Additionally, the data from their short tenure already shows that the JHPD is solidifying a legacy of violence against students and activists on campus who have peacefully protested against the interests of Johns Hopkins. I reiterate that under local control, the violence that JHPD and BPD inflict on Baltimoreans is also violence that the city council condones. Do not let your legacy be one of police violence, and suspend the MOU.