

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, President

BALTIMORE

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE INTRODUCES SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATION TO CREATE MORE BALTIMORE ENTERTAINMENT VENUES

Bill Would Convert Zoning for Live Entertainment to Permit Process

BALTIMORE—Today, Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake will introduce a bill to expand live entertainment and nightlife venues in Baltimore City. The legislation, if enacted, would remove live entertainment from the zoning code and replace it with a comprehensive licensure process.

“Every weekend many citizens from the Baltimore region, and their dollars, travel south to Washington or north to Philadelphia and New York to enjoy different entertainment options,” Rawlings-Blake said. “This legislation will enable Baltimore to better compete and help put Baltimore on the map as a true entertainment destination.”

The legislation is modeled after similar efforts that are in place in San Francisco and Seattle. Both cities are known nationally as live entertainment hotspots and Seattle has blossomed as a mecca for the music industry.

“Baltimore is blessed with many exciting entertainment venues that provide good jobs for our citizens,” Rawlings-Blake continued. “But, we need to do more to grow this dynamic sector of our city’s economy. And, by doing so, we can also make Baltimore a more vibrant and safe city.”

Since taking office, Council President Rawlings-Blake has worked to create enhanced arts and entertainment options for the citizens and visitors of Baltimore. In 2007, Rawlings-Blake created a task force of business and community leaders to develop strategies to grow Baltimore’s entertainment, cultural and hospitality economy. The legislation introduced today is one of the top recommendations of the taskforce.

Under current city ordinance, in order for a restaurant, tavern or dance hall to have live entertainment, it must be zoned for it. The proposed legislation removes live entertainment from the zoning code and replaces it with a licensure process.

The new legislation will also help to reduce impacts on communities by mandating an annual permit application process and security, traffic, parking and sanitation plans; all measures that do not exist today.

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“I’m very pleased that we are not only going to be able to enhance entertainment venues, but we are going to do it in a way that respects and protects our city’s neighborhoods,” Rawlings-Blake said. “I believe that a more vibrant city is a safer city and this legislation adds additional safeguards and enforcement measures.”

The legislation, entitled, “Live-Entertainment – Licensing and Regulation – Hospitality Services – Promotion and Coordination” will introduced at tonight’s City Council Meeting at 5:00pm, Du Burns Council Chambers, City Hall.

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