

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, President

# BALTIMORE

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## COUNCIL PRESIDENT QUESTIONS POLICE BUDGET REDUCTIONS

### *Resolution Asks for Hearing to Examine Correlation Between Police Budget Cuts and Recent Uptick in Homicides*

BALTIMORE—Last night, Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake introduced a City Council Resolution to examine the impact of police overtime reductions on the City's crime fighting efforts. In November, budget cuts were ordered for all city agencies, including \$21 million for the Police Department for this fiscal year. As of Thursday, February 05, 2009, homicides have increased by 63% over this time last year.

"Last year, homicides were reduced to the lowest level since the 1980s—the steepest one-year decline in more than forty years," Rawlings-Blake said. "Sadly, in recent months, killings have increased and our progress has been threatened."

"As we approach budget season, we must ask ourselves whether the Police Department can continue to sustain deep budget cuts without having a negative impact on our crime fighting efforts," Rawlings-Blake said. "It is my hope that an oversight hearing will shed some light on this important issue and the importance of protecting what should be budgetary priorities during these difficult economic times."

Rawlings-Blake noted the federal stimulus package could be used to help offset potential cuts to Baltimore's crime fighting programs. The U.S. House version of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides \$4 billion for state and local law enforcement. "We need a comprehensive strategy to use the local law enforcement funds included in the stimulus package to bolster our crime fighting efforts," Rawlings-Blake said.

In a separate resolution introduced yesterday, Rawlings-Blake requested the Baltimore Police Commissioner to report to the City Council on the status of the CCTV camera program; and the performance measures in place for monitoring the effectiveness of the program.

Rawlings-Blake also expressed support for a proposal to begin a redistricting process for city police district boundaries. "I'm pleased that Mayor Dixon and Commissioner Bealefeld have taken the suggestions of City Council Members to heart, and are now ready to move forward," Rawlings-Blake said.

"We need to take a look at best practices in other cities to understand what works and what doesn't," Rawlings-Blake said. "This is an opportunity to look for ways to better distribute public safety resources."

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