



## STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE

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**Better Schools. Safer Streets. Stronger Neighborhoods.**

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### **CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT SAYS MORE FEDERAL GUN PROSECUTIONS COULD HELP QUELL GUN-RELATED HOMICIDES**

*Urges more funding for Cross-designated State's Attorneys and  
Announces Support for U.S. Attorney Rosenstein*

BALTIMORE—At a meeting of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, City Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake today called for an increase in federal gun prosecutions to quell a recent uptick in city homicides. Federal Project Exile defendants are held without bail and usually receive stiffer sentences averaging over 8 years in federal prison with no chance for parole. State courts often provide up to 5 year sentences for firearm cases with the opportunity for reductions for good conduct.

“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. “We must use every tool in the arsenal to continue making progress and get gun-toting criminals off the streets. An increase in federal gun prosecutions would go a long way to deter criminals from carrying illegal firearms and would severely punish those that do.”

Rawlings-Blake called for more funding to hire more cross-designated Baltimore City State's Attorneys. Cross-designated State's attorneys can prosecute gun cases in *both* federal and state courts. “The State's Attorney's office needs more funding to hire cross-designated State's Attorneys to have more flexibility to handle a larger caseload of gun cases,” Rawlings-Blake said.

Rawlings-Blake outlined a random sampling of federal and state gun case dispositions from January to demonstrate disparity in penalties for gun crimes. She praised Mayor Sheila Dixon, Police Commissioner Frederick Bealefeld, and State's Attorney Patricia Jessamy for their efforts in Annapolis to strengthen Maryland's inadequate gun laws. She noted that the City's two gun bills were crafted “because we know that not enough criminals are getting the message that illegal guns will not be tolerated in Baltimore City.”

Rawlings-Blake also called for specialized training, conducted by the U.S. Attorney's office in cooperation with the Police Department, to improve the ability of police officers to detect violations of the federal firearm statute. “We also need to look at revamping the public relations component of Baltimore Exile to ensure that the message gets out television, radio, billboards, buses, and shopping bags,” Rawlings-Blake said. “Even in these tough economic times, we must make new innovative investments in order to protect the progress made reducing violent crime.”

Rawlings-Blake concluded her remarks by informing members of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council that that the appointment of a new U.S. Attorney for Maryland may be imminent and voiced support for current United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein.

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“The simple truth is that Mr. Rosenstein is doing a great job. Project Exile prosecutions have increased by 70% since 2005, and this has helped reduce murders and nonfatal shootings in Baltimore,” Rawlings-Blake wrote in a letter to U.S. Senators Barbara Mikulski and Benjamin Cardin who will play a significant role in the appointment process. “If Mr. Rosenstein wishes to remain U.S. Attorney, he deserves serious consideration, in my view,” Rawlings-Blake wrote.

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