



STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE

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Better Schools. Safer Streets. Stronger Neighborhoods.

MEDIA ADVISORY:

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT URGES GREATER POLICE TRANSPARENCY

Resolution calls for Internet reports of officer-involved shootings and crime statistics

BALTIMORE—Today, Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake will introduce a City Council Resolution urging the Baltimore Police Department to implement Internet reporting systems to disclose the final internal investigation results of officer-related shootings and monthly preliminary crime statistics in an effort to provide a greater level of transparency.

On January 5, 2009, the Baltimore Police Department rescinded its policy to release the names of police officers involved in justified departmental shootings. On March 12th the Department announced that the new policy is under review and may again be altered. "As the Police Department reviews the policy for disclosing information related to police involved shootings, serious consideration should be given to an innovative approach adopted by the Chicago Police Department," Rawlings-Blake said.

Rawlings-Blake noted that Chicago's Independent Police Review Authority now posts the final results of investigations of police-involved shootings on the Internet. The reports provide great detail of the agency's investigations, including direct accounts from police officers and witnesses. "By increasing the level of transparency here in Baltimore, we too can strengthen the sacred trust between our police officers and the public they serve," Rawlings-Blake said. "There is no doubt that by continuing to build this trust we can make Baltimore safer."

Similarly, in an effort to build trust with communities, police departments across the nation are becoming more transparent by providing monthly preliminary crime statistics reports via the Internet. For example, the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department's website provides up-to-date preliminary crime statistics including recent arrest activity as well as the current number of homicides, firearm recoveries, robberies and assaults. Rawlings-Blake's Resolution urges the Baltimore Police Department to take a similar approach. "As we examine what other large U.S. Cities are doing to make police agencies more open and transparent, it's clear that Baltimore could be doing more," Rawlings-Blake said.

Last week, Rawlings-Blake introduced a separate Council Resolution urging the Police Commissioner to investigate the possibility of instituting a citywide text messaging system to alert residents and businesses about criminal activity. Text and e-mail alerts could provide real-time information about robberies, missing persons, auto theft and violent crime.

WHO: City Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.

WHAT: At today's meeting of the Baltimore City Council, Rawlings-Blake will introduce City Council Resolution urging the Baltimore Police Department to implement internet reporting systems to disclose the final internal investigation results of officer-related shootings and monthly preliminary crime statistics in an effort to provide a greater level of transparency to the citizens of Baltimore.

WHERE: Du Burns Council Chambers, 4th Floor, City Hall, 100 North Holliday Street.

WHEN: Today, Monday, March 23, 2009 at 5:00pm

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