

## **Ethics bill heads for council consideration**

### **Committee approves Rawlings-Blake measure**

By Julie Scharper, Baltimore Sun, March 5, 2010

A bill that would reconfigure the city's ethics board was unanimously approved by a key committee Thursday and will be considered by the full City Council on Monday.

The measure, a signature initiative of Mayor Stephanie C. Rawlings-Blake, would bar city, county and state employees and lobbyists from the ethics board. It would stagger the terms and require at least two of the five members of the volunteer panel to be attorneys.

The legislation would reduce the number of panel members nominated by the mayor from five to three. Under Rawlings-Blake's proposal, the council president and comptroller would each suggest one member.

Councilman Bill Henry, a member of the Judicial and Legislative Investigations Committee, had contemplated proposing an amendment that would limit the mayor's nominations to no more than two members. But City Solicitor George Nilson said that would violate the city charter.

A companion bill by Councilman William H. Cole IV was also approved by the committee. Both bills address problems in the city's ethics policy that came to light during the corruption investigation that led to former Mayor Sheila Dixon's resignation.