

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake

Senior Advisor



Senior Advisor

Washington, DC

D +1 202 496 7500

stephanie.rawlings-blake@dentons.com

Overview

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake is a senior advisor in Dentons' Public Policy group and a member of its Local Government Solutions team. Stephanie has more than 25 years of urban leadership experience, including serving as the mayor of Baltimore from 2010 to 2016, secretary of the Democratic National Committee, president of the US Conference of Mayors (the first African-American woman to hold that post), president of the Baltimore City Council and a lawyer with the Baltimore Office of the Public Defender.

Immediately prior to joining Dentons, Stephanie was principal of SRB & Associates, a government relations firm she founded to provide a full range of problem-solving, consulting and advocacy services focused on improving our cities and cultivating new ideas, which is her focus at Dentons. As mayor, Stephanie helped Baltimore become a national leader in attracting millennials and fostering entrepreneurship and her experience navigating that city's challenges—including financing infrastructure improvements, restructuring pension and health care liabilities, improving fiscal management, attracting and retaining businesses and incentivizing development through tax strategy—informs the guidance she provides both local government clients seeking solutions to complex challenges and private businesses and organizations seeking to develop or expand their relationships with US local governments.

With experience as both a legislator and as the chief executive of a US\$3.4 billion enterprise—as well as 10 years as a practicing lawyer—Stephanie is adept at helping local governments resolve their most complicated and nettlesome problems. And being part of Dentons' Local Government Solutions team, which includes other former local government elected and appointed officials, as well as others who have played integral roles in city halls and county governments, has only enhanced her effectiveness. In addition, she assists private sector businesses in pitching their ideas effectively to city leaders and engaging with community groups and voters. She helps clients build support for their projects through grassroots and grassroots advocacy and civic engagement, from crafting the right message, logos and branding, to sharing that message across multiple platforms, to producing material that intrigues voters and earns their support.

- Skills and resources : More than 25 years' experience as a public official, including serving as a City Council member, City Council president, mayor of Baltimore and lawyer with the Public Defender's Office. As president of US Conference of Mayors, Stephanie engaged, led and represented hundreds of mayors on such issues as sustainability, infrastructure and urban redevelopment. As DNC secretary since 2013, she communicates with hundreds of the organization's members across the country (and throughout the world) on a regular basis and has developed knowledge of local government affairs needs.

- Relationships and contacts: As mayor of Baltimore and president of the US Conference of Mayors, Stephanie built strong relationships nationally and working relationships outside the country, including with mayors and other municipal officials in China, Japan, India, Qatar, France, Cuba and Israel in connection with cultural exchange trips, and collaborative leadership and business development initiatives.
- Financial planning: Stephanie created and implemented Baltimore's first long-range financial plan, along with a bold set of reforms, that put Baltimore on track to reduce homeowner property taxes by more than 20 percent over a 10-year period and led to the city receiving its highest bond ratings in more than 50 years.
- Neighborhood development: As mayor, Stephanie focused on building a diverse group of neighborhoods appealing to young professionals. As a result, Baltimore is recognized as one of the top cities nationwide to attract millennials. Its downtown is one of the fastest growing residential populations in the region. This was culmination of her decades-long focus on the need for housing development and commercial growth to satisfy residents' needs. Her successes included:
 - Automobile infrastructure: Worked to increase city's Zipcar fleet and electric vehicle charger installations.
 - Cycling infrastructure: Secured funding for a bike-share program and expanded and improved bike infrastructure citywide.
 - Ruins into residences: Spurred billions of dollars in new construction activity through the creation of tax incentives to transform areas with unwanted and aging buildings into dynamic, mixed-use communities with thousands of new market-rate apartment units. Downtown Baltimore now ranks as the country's ninth-largest residential population.
- Economic development: To persuade a Fortune 500 company to expand its existing world headquarters in Port Covington, MD, a 266-acre waterfront development, Stephanie shepherded through one of the largest tax increment financing (TIF) deals in the nation. With an additional US\$535 million in infrastructure improvements, Port Covington is expected to add more than US\$6 billion in new, vertical construction and tens of thousands of new job over the next two decades.
- Sustainability: As mayor, Stephanie was recognized as a national leader on sustainability issues, having developed and adopted a number of innovative programs and projects. Her administration laid the groundwork for, and kicked off, the Green Network Plan, which leveraged public and private resources to reclaim and transform vacant and blighted land to create green space. Other initiatives included:
 - Climate Action Plan (CAP)
 - Disaster Preparedness Project and Plan (DP3)
 - Homegrown Baltimore, an urban farming initiative
 - Green Pattern Book, a tool to guide the greening of vacant land

Recognition

Honors and Awards

- First Citizen Award, Maryland State Senate, 2013
- 50 Women to Watch, *Baltimore Sun*, 2013
- ICONS We Love Award, Baltimore Black Pride, 2013
- National Leadership Award in Public Service, National Forum for Black Public Administrators, 2012
- "Maryland's Top 100 Women," *The Daily Record*, 2007 and 2011

- "Innovator of the Year," The Daily Record, 2010
- Award of Excellence, Fullwood Foundation, 2010
- Shirley Chisholm Memorial Award Trailblazer, the National Congress of Black Women, Washington, DC, Chapter, 2009
- "Young Women on the Move," National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Baltimore Chapter

Activities and Affiliations

Community Involvement and Pro Bono

- Mayor of Baltimore, 2010–2016
- Chair, Board of Estimates, Baltimore City, 2007–10 (member, 2014–16)
- Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, Baltimore City, 2007–16
- Board of trustees, Walters Art Museum, 2007–16
- Legislative Committee, Maryland Association of Counties, 2007–16
- Board of directors, Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore, 2010–16
- Maryland Municipal League, 2010-16
- Board of Legislative Reference, Baltimore City, 2010–16
- Co-chair, UniverCity Partnership Initiative (formerly Westside Task Force), Baltimore City, 2011–16
- Secretary, Democratic National Committee, 2013–16
- Chair, board of directors, Baltimore Metropolitan Council, 2011 and 2015; vice chair, 2011 and 2014 (member, 2010–16)
- Board of directors, Maryland African American Museum Corporation, 2010–16
- Board of Visitors, R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center, University of Maryland Medical System, 2010–16
- Board of Trustees, St. Mary's College of Maryland, 2013–present
- Vice chair, Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, 2015–16 (member, 2010–16)
- Delegate, Democratic Party National Convention, 2000 and 2012
- Secretary, National Conference of Democratic Mayors, 2011
- US Conference of Mayors:
 - President, 2015–16
 - Vice president, 2014–15
 - Member of Criminal & Social Justice Standing Committee
 - Member of Tourism, Arts, Parks, Entertainment & Sports Standing Committee
 - Member of Mayors' Water Council
 - Member of Poverty, Work & Opportunity Task Force

- Member of advisory board, 2010–11
- Trustee, 2011–14
- Member of Executive Committee, 2011–16
- Baltimore City Council:
 - President, January 22, 2007–February 4, 2010
 - Vice president, 1999–2007
 - Member of Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee/Public Safety Subcommittee
 - Past chair, Budget and Appropriations Committee
 - Member, December 1995–February 2010
- Fort George G. Meade Regional Growth Management Committee, 2007–10
- Baltimore City Democratic Central Committee, 1990–98
- Human Services Commission, Baltimore City
- Local Government Subcommittee, 2010–11; Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Subcabinet
- Board of directors, CollegeBound Foundation
- Greater Northwest Community Coalition
- Living Classrooms Foundation
- Maryland Science Center
- National Aquarium in Baltimore
- Park Heights Community Health Alliance
- Parks and People Foundation
- Douglas Memorial Community Church, Baltimore

Memberships

- Maryland State Bar Association
- Federal Bar Association
- Visit Baltimore (formerly Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association)
- Epsilon Omega Chapter, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority

Areas of focus

Practices

- Public Policy and Regulation
- Advocacy and Government Affairs

Industry sectors

- Health Care
- Educational Institutions
- Government
- State, Regional, Provincial, Municipal and Local Government Bodies

Issues and opportunities

- Global Smart Cities & Connected Communities Initiative and Think Tank

Education

- University of Maryland School of Law, 1995, JD
- Oberlin College, 1992, BS, Political Science