

SRB declines her pay raise; will others follow suit?

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Mayor Stephanie C. Rawlings-Blake's office just sent out word that she will voluntarily decline the 2.5 percent salary increase she was automatically slated to get under a 2007 law. (This follows a well-publicized flap two years ago in which Ms. Rawlings-Blake, then-Mayor Sheila Dixon and other members of the Board of Estimates voted on the raises without any public discussion or acknowledgment that the salaries they were adjusting were their own.) The mayor says she will return the money to the city treasury to help out with the \$120 million budget shortfall expected for the coming fiscal year.

Her salary was slated to go from \$151,700 to \$155,493. The others due for salary increases are the City Council president and the comptroller (\$100,450 to \$102,961), the vice president of the council (\$64,575 to \$66,189) and members of the council (\$58,425 to \$59,886).

The total amount of money for the raises is not huge in the scheme of the city budget -- less than \$100,000 -- but the symbolic politics are huge. It will be interesting to see whether all of the mayor's colleagues do the same. Elected officials: If you're declining your raise, drop me an e-mail and I'll post your name here, too.

UPDATES: City Councilman William H. Cole IV just wrote in to say he's declining the raise. He writes, "I gave the money back to the city last year and will be doing the same again this year. I wish we had a mechanism to refuse the raises outright."

Council President Jack Young's office also says he is declining his raise and asking that it be earmarked to the Parks and Recreation budget. According to a release from his office, he's asking other council members to give back their raises, too.

Julie Scharper is reporting that Comptroller Joan Pratt also has decided to give back her raise.