

News Release

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Illinois citizens file suit to remove Governor Blagojevich from office *Cite conflict of interest on Attorney General Madigan's filing*

CHAMPAIGN - Today four Illinois citizens filed suit with the Illinois State Supreme Court to have Governor Rod Blagojevich temporarily removed from office in light of the recent charges filed against him for bribery and conspiracy, citing his inability to effectively run the state.

"At this time the governor can still appoint someone to the Senate, can still sign legislation in return for donations to his legal fund and most importantly, he still controls the \$56 billion state budget at a crucial time for our state and economy," John Bambenek, plaintiff and co-founder of the Illinois Citizens Coalition, said.

The four plaintiffs, Bambenek, Adam Andrzejewski, founder of ForTheGoodOfIllinois.org, and private citizens John Tillman and Michael Burns, cite their reason for filing as frustration with the lack of action from state leadership in the removal of the governor from office.

"The People's Governor should be removed by the People of Illinois," Andrzejewski said.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan also filed a request today asking the Supreme Court to have Blagojevich removed from office.

"The attorney general's filing is clearly a conflict of interest and a strategic political move," Bambenek said. "Lisa Madigan has aspirations to run for governor, is a candidate for the senate seat and her father, Michael Madigan, was a co-chair of Blagojevich's re-election campaign. She's done nothing for corruption in this state until now when there's a lot of national pressure."

According to Rule 382 of the Illinois Constitution, anyone can file a request for the Supreme Court to conduct a hearing to determine if the governor is fit to hold office.

"The governor's incapacity may be mental, moral or intellectual, but it doesn't matter," Bambenek said. "It is clear that he needs to not be at the helm of this state anymore, and the

people overwhelmingly support his removal."

Governor Blagojevich and his chief-of-staff John Harris were arrested Tuesday on charges of conspiracy and bribery in a scheme to auction off president-elect Barack Obama's U.S. Senate seat for campaign cash.

"It's clear from these indictments that the governor can no longer serve the people of Illinois," Bambenek said. "He's expressed his intentions to use his office, not only for political gain, but for the purposes of helping his legal situation."

Bambenek also cited that the General Assembly has been in discussions about removing the governor from office for over four weeks but have yet to take any action, though Speaker of the House Michael Madigan has circulated an impeachment memo.

"The impeachment memo could be fashioned into a resolution and passed in a single session day, but the 2006 co-chair of the Blagojevich election campaign [Madigan] has elected to wait," Bambenek said.

House Speaker Michael Madigan has called for special session on Monday for the legislature to address the issue of a special election to fill Obama's senate seat and the possibility of beginning impeachment proceedings against the governor.

"Blagojevich was selling board appointments and state jobs for \$25,000 in campaign contributions before, and it's a detriment to the citizens of the state that they're just now addressing these issues," Bambenek said. "We're not waiting around for politicians to calculate their next move. It's time for the people to take action."

John Bambenek is an academic professional at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and co-founder of the Illinois Citizens Coalition (ICC), a political action committee created to inform and organize Illinois citizens to take more of an interest in state government. For more information visit the ICC website at www.yesforillinois.com.

Adam Andrzejewsk is the founder and director of for the Good of Illinois.org. For more information visit the website www.forthegoodofillinois.org

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