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Final Edition

**No birthday party; No cake, no candles. Just calls to 'do the right thing' -- resign**

By Dave McKinney

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SPRINGFIELD-Wednesday marked Gov. Blagojevich's 52nd birthday, but there was no birthday cake or partying in his solemn Thompson Center office -- only mounting calls from afar that he resign.

President-elect Barack Obama encouraged Illinois' disgraced chief executive to leave office immediately, as did the state's senior U.S. senator, Dick Durbin, while some close to Blagojevich questioned if he might wither under the pressure and relinquish power by week's end.

The scandal over Blagojevich's alleged plot to sell Obama's former Senate seat to the highest political bidder claimed a casualty Within the governor's inner circle Wednesday. Deputy Gov. Robert Greenlee tendered his resignation without explanation.

Greenlee, 33, was identified as "Deputy Governor A" in the 76-page criminal complaint against Blagojevich that federal prosecutors released Tuesday.

Greenlee is described as being in secretly recorded conversations with the governor and first lady Patti Blagojevich while they allegedly plotted to become wealthy with the U.S. Senate appointment and to shake down the Chicago Tribune by demanding layoffs on its editorial page in exchange for a $100 million state deal to acquire Wrigley Field.

Increasingly isolated, the governor remained hunkered down in his 16th-floor office for more than eight hours Wednesday, showing no outward signs that he intended to comply with the growing demand for his political scalp.

Blagojevich entered the glass-and-steel state office building through a basement entrance. That was a departure from the way he usually goes into the Thompson Center -- through street-level entrances where he can shake hands with office workers, tourists and other visitors.

Spokeswoman Kelley Quinn tried to put the best possible face on the governor's workday, insisting his appearance in federal court Tuesday and the criminal charges that could be his undoing were not on his mind. Blagojevich was preoccupied with the state's precarious finances. "At the end of the day, the state has to keep functioning," she said.

The 30 or so employees in Blagojevich's office suite went about their routine business, wary of speaking too loudly about the scandal that has engulfed the governor. "The water cooler was off, for sure," said one worker, who asked for anonymity.

There also was a palpable anxiety among some about their employer's plight and the prospect of losing their jobs in a bad economy if Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn steps in should Blagojevich resign.

While the governor was on the job, his chief of staff, John Harris, was a no-show at work after being charged along with Blagojevich.

Kelley Quinn would not explain Harris' absence but indicated he had not been placed on leave. She also declined to say whether Blagojevich was contemplating resigning.

Obama, meanwhile, moved to build greater distance between himself and the governor in a scandal that has captured the world's attention and created an unwelcome distraction during the transition to the White House.

Obama spokesman Robert Gibbs told the Associated Press that the president-elect believes Blagojevich should resign, saying "under the current circumstances it is difficult for the governor to effectively do his job and serve the people of Illinois."

Gibbs also said Obama urged Illinois lawmakers to strip Blagojevich of his ability to appoint a Senate successor to Obama by voting to establish a special senatorial election next year -- a move Gibbs said would result in "a new senator that will have the trust and confidence of the people of Illinois."

The House and Senate will converge on Springfield on Monday and vote on a plan as early as Tuesday that could allow voters to choose an Obama successor perhaps by April. State election authorities estimate an election could cost up to $35 million.

Durbin, who Tuesday was among the first to advocate a special Senate election, wrote to Blagojevich on Wednesday to encourage him to resign. "I urge you to search your heart and summon the strength to put your state and your nation above any personal considerations," Durbin wrote.

All 50 members of the U.S. Senate Democratic caucus sent Blagojevich a letter late in the day demanding his resignation and telling him "under no circumstances make an appointment to fill the vacant Illinois Senate seat."

At City Hall, Mayor Daley advised the governor to "do the right thing" for Illinois and said incriminating federal wiretaps of Blagojevich are "not lighthearted, windbag conversations."

Though Daley didn't directly say what he meant by that, he made clear he agrees with fellow Democrats all the way up to Obama that the embattled governor should resign.

"He has to figure out what is best for the state of Illinois," Daley said.

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