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**More holes in Burris' story; Records show more calls to Blago aide than senator reported**

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Staff reporters

U.S. Sen. Roland Burris had more contacts with then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich's chief of staff before being appointed to his Senate seat than he disclosed in his most recent affidavit, phone records and interviews show.

One of the calls to John Harris came Nov. 13, the day Burris discussed the possibility of raising money for the governor with Blagojevich's brother Robert, according to phone records obtained by the Sun-Times and sources. That call was likely caught on an FBI wiretap.

All told, Burris called Harris, who resigned after he was criminally charged Dec. 9, four times in the weeks following the Nov. 4 election and appears to have spoken to Harris on Nov. 26, phone records show.

In the Feb. 4 affidavit, which has set off a political wildfire because it dramatically altered earlier sworn statements, Burris acknowledged only reaching out to Harris once last October and getting a return phone call three weeks later.

Burris depicted his discussion with Harris as having included a passing reference to the Senate seat. But sources say Burris made a hard pitch to Harris -- as well as other Blagojevich aides -- about being named to Barack Obama's seat.

The Burris camp declined to comment about the apparent discrepancies in his latest affidavit.

When Blagojevich appointed Burris in late December, federal authorities questioned Blagojevich aides about their interactions with Burris and whether any pay-to-play was involved. Burris is not accused of wrongdoing in that probe.

The new questions about the accuracy of his latest affidavit triggered more criticism. "It continues to just show a guy who is completely inconsistent in everything he says, and he continues to contradict himself," said House Minority Leader Tom Cross (R-Oswego).

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said Burris "should explain" to state residents the extent of his involvement with Blagojevich's administration.

As more calls surfaced for his resignation -- from the Chicago Sun-Times, the Washington Post and some Illinois Democrats -- Burris grew emphatic Wednesday in his defense, telling a luncheon in Chicago to "stop the rush to judgment." He also said he wouldn't answer any more media questions about his testimony, citing ongoing investigations.

"I am the real Roland," he told the City Club of Chicago. "If I've done the things I've been accused of, I would be too embarrassed to stand up here because you are all my friends."

"You know the real Roland," Burris said. "I've done nothing wrong, and I have nothing to hide."

Burris said the issue of his varying sworn testimony before an Illinois House impeachment panel is as explainable as "one, two, three."

Burris insisted his affidavits weren't contradictory, saying he explained to "anyone who would listen" that he wanted the U.S. Senate appointment.

Burris initially gave the committee a sworn statement Jan. 5 that indicated he had no contact with any Blagojevich representatives about the appointment before Dec. 26. Testifying three days later, Burris altered his earlier account by acknowledging speaking to former Blagojevich chief of staff Lon Monk about his interest last summer.

Then, in a huge turnabout, Burris gave the committee the Feb. 4 affidavit, stating he spoke to five other Blagojevich insiders about the job, including the ex-governor's brother.

Burris said Robert Blagojevich, chairman of the governor's campaign fund, contacted him about fund-raising, "but I did not give one single dollar to the governor."

Burris told reporters Monday he tried to raise money for Blagojevich but couldn't. "I have nothing to hide, and I will continue to be transparent," he said Wednesday.

Also Wednesday, U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin issued a statement expressing disappointment that questions on Burris' appointment weren't put to rest when he testified under oath before the impeachment committee -- a hurdle he had to clear before being seated in the Senate.

"Every day, there are more and more revelations about contacts with Blagojevich advisers, efforts at fund-raising and omissions from his list of lobbying clients.

This was not the full disclosure under oath that we asked for," Durbin said.

The U.S. Senate launched an ethics inquiry into Burris on Tuesday after the Sangamon County state's attorney opened a perjury investigation.