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**Lawmakers given a timeout;**

**Ryan seeks votes for gun measure**

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SPRINGFIELD-Gov. Ryan and Senate President James "Pate" Philip shut down the Capitol and sent lawmakers home Saturday, but their fight over changing gun laws remains far from resolved.

The General Assembly will return to Springfield on Monday to be on hand should the two Republican leaders settle their differences over making illegal gun possession a felony.

The respite gives Ryan time to regroup after an embarrassing defeat Friday night in the Senate, where Philip led a GOP insurrection against the governor's bid to re-enact Mayor Daley's Safe Neighborhoods Act.

The measure fell seven votes shy of passing. Ryan plans to spend the weekend lobbying on-the-fence lawmakers and waging a stepped-up media effort to build pressure on them.

"Part of the reason they're going home this weekend and I haven't called another special session is so they can go home and find out firsthand from friends and neighbors how they feel about having gunrunners on the streets and convicted felons back on the streets with guns," Ryan said.

Philip, who like most lawmakers had grown weary of the six-day special session, welcomed Ryan's move -- whatever the motive.

"Let the dust settle down. I've got people running out of their blood pressure pills. Let them go home. Let the intensity die down here," Philip said Saturday.

Earlier in the day, Philip floated a revision of a Senate GOP plan that would create two types of charges for unlawful use of a weapon. Those with prior criminal records could face a charge of aggravated unlawful use of a weapon, a felony. Those without criminal pasts would be treated as they are now and be charged with misdemeanors.

But Ryan and other legislative leaders quickly rejected that as nothing more than a warmed-over idea already rejected by Attorney General Jim Ryan as unconstitutional.

"I don't know why in the world we'd even contemplate something where we're told on the front end that it would be unconstitutional," House Speaker Michael Madigan (D-Chicago) said.

To buttress their argument in support of tougher gun laws, Madigan and Ryan pointed to new arrest data from the Chicago Police Department and Illinois State Police.

Since Dec. 2, when the Supreme Court struck down the anti-crime law, 253 people were charged in Chicago with unlawful use of a weapon. Outside the city, the State Police reported 60 arrests on the same charges.

"That's more than 300 people who'll go out on the street again in hours because they could only be charged with a misdemeanor rather than a felony," Ryan said.

Ryan's strategists believe he has a good chance of finding seven votes with the return of three senators who were absent Friday but would have voted for his plan and among several senators who voted present.

As Ryan makes the rounds, lawmakers should not forget about the perks and pork he controls and, more importantly, that he is not about to forget who wasn't with him in this fight, one of his top advisers said.

"George has a long memory. These guys will come in tomorrow, next month, two years from now, and they'll ask for something and say, "This is personally important to me.' And he's going to say, "That's what I told you about the gun bill, and I'd like to help you, but I can't,' " the adviser said.