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Blagojevich Wants Tapes Played in Court

By EMMA GRAVES FITZSIMMONS

CHICAGO — When his corruption trial begins in June, [Rod R. Blagojevich](#), the former governor of Illinois, wants jurors to be allowed to hear all of the audio recordings — some 500 hours' worth — that federal authorities secretly made of his telephone conversations.

In papers filed here on Wednesday, Mr. Blagojevich asked Judge James B. Zagel of Federal District Court to allow far more than just snippets of the calls, some of which have been made public.

“Play all the tapes,” Mr. Blagojevich told reporters after a hearing. He said that he planned to testify at his trial, and that all the tapes — not just parts — would provide the full picture and prove his innocence. “Play the truth, and play the whole truth,” he said.

A lawyer for Mr. Blagojevich, Sam Adam Jr., said jurors did not necessarily have to hear all of the tapes, which were made in Mr. Blagojevich's home and campaign offices and on cellphones in the three months leading up to his arrest in December 2008 on bribery, racketeering and a host of other charges.

But, Mr. Adam said, the defense team does want to play any parts that are related to the charges against Mr. Blagojevich or that give context to any of his statements on the tapes.

That prospect, political analysts here said, was likely to cause queasiness for Illinois politicians, some of whom are thought to be heard on those audio recordings and might have hoped their comments would never become public. In a year when the state is electing a new governor and a United States senator, such an open airing of hundreds of hours of tapes — even for those who did nothing criminal — might be especially awkward.

Any association with Mr. Blagojevich could cast a candidate as part of the “corrupt Democratic machine,” said Kent Redfield, a political scientist at the [University of Illinois](#) at Springfield.

“You would probably have conversations that involved the normal give and take of political activity,” Mr. Redfield said. “In the middle of a campaign, you just don't want to have to explain the substance of a conversation with the governor, however innocent.”

Mr. Blagojevich, who was removed from office last year, on Wednesday pleaded not guilty to charges in a revised indictment against him. The charges were rewritten to deal with the possibility that certain charges already lodged against Mr. Blagojevich — involving the denial of “honest services” — might be found unconstitutional by the [United States Supreme Court](#) in an unrelated case.

Prosecutors have said the recordings show that Mr. Blagojevich tried to sell to the highest bidder the [United States Senate](#) seat vacated by [Barack Obama](#), among other accusations. They quoted expletive-filled excerpts from the tapes during a news conference when Mr. Blagojevich was arrested.

At Wednesday's hearing, Mr. Blagojevich made a point of entering a plea of "innocent" instead of not guilty.

"You know why he entered the plea of innocent?" Mr. Adam told reporters. "Because he is innocent, and the tapes will prove that."

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