

## Rezko case puts big question mark on Illinois politics

[Story](#)    [Discussion](#)

BY KEVIN MCDERMOTT  
 Lee News Service | Tuesday, May 20, 2008 | [No comments posted.](#)    Font Size:

SPRINGFIELD | Buffeted by a federal corruption probe of his associates and facing escalating rumors that he would be indicted himself, in August 2001 then-Illinois Gov. George Ryan announced he wouldn't seek re-election the following year.

"The governorship should not become mired in the political divisions of a campaign year," he told a large gathering in his hometown of Kankakee.

Ryan, a Republican, now is sitting in a federal prison for using his elected office to enrich himself and his friends. Democrat Rod Blagojevich has become the embattled incumbent governor, watching as associates pleaded guilty or are put on trial on corruption allegations.

As pundits across the state wonder about a possible historical rerun, one question that persists is whether Blagojevich will echo Ryan and forgo a 2010 re-election bid.

Many believe that decision could hinge on the verdict in the federal corruption trial of Blagojevich campaign fundraiser Antoin "Tony" Rezko, who is accused of using his clout to squeeze state contractors for bribes and political contributions.

Blagojevich hasn't been charged, but there has been testimony linking him to the case and speculation about what Rezko might tell prosecutors if faced with a prison sentence and offered a deal. That's ultimately how federal prosecutors got to Ryan after he left office: The string of convictions of his associates eventually led them to testify against him.

Senate Minority Leader Frank Watson said Blagojevich doesn't act like a man under siege.

"He has a Teflon coating about him," the Greenville Republican said. "He's a very outgoing individual and it doesn't seem to be bothering him. I wouldn't sleep at night if it was me."

Blagojevich's office didn't respond to requests for comment Friday, but during a news conference Monday said it's "stupid" to ask if he's concerned that he could be the next target of a political corruption investigation by federal authorities. And the governor isn't saying whether he is going to run for a third term.

But those around him say he seems to still be committed to his own political viability, regardless of the verdict in the Chicago trial.

"The conventional wisdom is that he is politically dead and it certainly seems like it, but in politics, you never know," said Chris Mooney, political scientist at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

For their part, Republicans would like to run against someone they privately call "the Democratic George Ryan."

"I think he will (run), if he's unindicted -- or maybe even indicted. I'm told that he's told people he'll run," state Sen. Bill Brady, R-Bloomington, said.

Brady has run for governor before and admits he is "laying the groundwork" to possibly run again.

"In that four-way mix (for the Democratic nomination), Gov. Blagojevich could win, and he knows that," Brady said.

Dems could line up to run for governor  
 Should Gov. Rod Blagojevich run again for the state's top executive, he almost certainly will face a challenge from his own party.

State Comptroller Dan Hynes, Attorney General Lisa Madigan and even Blagojevich's own lieutenant governor, Pat Quinn -- all Democrats -- have been sharply at odds with Blagojevich and are often mentioned as possible challengers.

A former Democratic candidate said if he could offer advice, he'd tell Blagojevich to step aside.  
 "My advice to him is not to run. ... He's been an ineffective governor, he's lost the trust of the people ... and it would divide a party that doesn't need dividing," said state Rep. Lou Lang, D-Skokie, who hasn't ruled out his own challenge to Blagojevich.

"Having said that, Gov. Blagojevich is a man who believes in what he's doing," Lang said. "I don't think whether Mr. Rezko is guilty or not guilty will have much impact on the governor's final decision."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

[Previous Story](#)    [Next Story](#)    [Share](#)    [Email](#)    [Print](#)

### Back to story [No comments posted.](#)

**Please note:** The following are comments from readers. In no way do they represent the views of The Times or Lee Enterprises. We will not edit or alter your comments, but we do reserve the right to not post or to remove comments that violate our code of conduct. No comment may contain potentially libelous statements; obscene, explicit or racist language; personal attacks, insults or threats. [Terms of Service](#)

### Post a comment Once your comments are approved, they will appear here.

**Name:**   
**Email:** (optional)   
**Comments:**

Current Word Count:  0

**Image Verification:**

- [» More Illiana Stories](#)
- South suburban Memorial Day briefs
  - Worker claims firing was to protect governor
  - Illinois horse racing backers still hoping for slots
  - Memorial musicians make their mark
  - News in brief
  - In brief: Illinois
  - Getting to know ... Paul Henry

SUBSCRIBE

RSS FEEDS

NEWSLETTERS

MOBILE

**Open the door**  
 to a world of opportunity  
 at  
**Governors State University**  
**OPEN HOUSE**  
 March 15, 2008  
 9:30 am - 12:30 pm  
 For more information:  
 708.534.4490  
 gsunow@govst.edu  
**Governors State University**  
 www.govst.edu  
 1 University Parkway, University Park, IL 60466

**fine living network company management**  
 View top company management info & access biographies & salary info.  
[www.Hoovers.com](#)    [Ads by Yahoo!](#)

### Marketplace

[Jobs](#)
[Homes](#)
[Autos](#)
[Coupons](#)
[Meet The Expert](#)

**ELECTRICAL INSTRUMENT/ ELECTRICIAN** There is an opening for an Instrument/ Electrical Technician in t

---

**SHIPPING SHIPPING Dispatcher** Niagara LaSalle Corp., located in Hammond, IN, has an immediate opening

---

**ELECTRICAL INSTRUMENT/ ELECTRICIAN** There is an opening for an Instrument/ Electrical Technician in t

---

**HEALTHCARE ANREX HOME CARE FT RN** For home care visits. Bonus program/ profit sharing Call 219-836-80

---

**GENERAL In-Store Beauty Demos \$11/hr.** Weekends. Email: instoredemos@yahoo.com...

**3-day Forecast**

HIGH LOW  
 HIGH LOW  
 HIGH LOW

[5-day forecast](#) | [Live Traffic](#) | [Flight Information](#)

**Free Time**

- Sudoku
- More Games

CLICK HERE  
 TO ENTER YOUR  
 PET TODAY!

