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Madigan shuffles fundraiser to accommodate Obama

by **KEVIN BRENNAN**

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If Lisa Madigan is revising her resume anytime soon, she has a line she can add: Shield.

Or maybe magic amulet.

The Illinois attorney general rearranged her campaign schedule at the last minute on Tuesday at the request of the leader of the free world. The request was that she travel to downstate Quincy, where the president was speaking Wednesday at a rally on financial reform.

President Obama needed as many state officials as he could get arrayed around him to deflect undue attention from U.S. Senate candidate Alexi Giannoulias, whose family's bank was shuttered by federal officials late last week.

Political experts said the White House likely wanted Madigan at the rally because of her status as perhaps the most popular major Democrat in the state.

"Lisa Madigan is very popular and not viewed in a highly partisan kind of way," said Kent Redfield, a political science professor at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Redfield explained that Obama's advisers would not want anything to distract from the president's message.

"If you've only got one Illinois constitutional officer there, then all the focus is on that," he said. "If you've got a couple, then that diversifies the story, and it doesn't look like [they're] there just to help out Giannoulias."

Madigan canceled a \$500-per-person fundraising event and pushed back the start of a companion event, which sought \$100 donations, to allow her enough time to fly back to Chicago to attend.

A spokesman for Madigan's campaign said the late changes occurred after the White House expressed an interest in Madigan appearing at the rally.

"They did want her to be there because this is about financial reform," Jacob Johnson said. "It's a rally, and that's her big priority."

The fundraiser, a Women for Lisa Madigan reception, set to start at 5:30 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, was changed to 6 to 8 p.m. Madigan was scheduled to arrive halfway through the event.

The Madigan campaign canceled a host committee reception that had been scheduled to precede the main fundraiser. That will be replaced at some point with a breakfast for donors hosted by Madigan.

Johnson, when asked whether the White House request and resulting flurry of schedule changes caused an undue hardship on the campaign, said, "Not at all. We're happy to accommodate."

Redfield said that helping Obama and his advisers could benefit Madigan.

"You do something for the president because the president asked," Redfield said. "But it's also good to do something for the president if you have ambitions beyond being the attorney general."

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