



Blagojevich impeachment vote could come Thursday

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SPRINGFIELD -- The Illinois House could vote to impeach Gov. Rod Blagojevich as early as next Thursday. That's what members of a special committee investigating whether to impeach the governor said Friday as they prepared to return to Springfield next week.

"We are anticipating the likelihood of action," said state Rep. Dan Brady, a Bloomington Republican who serves as an alternate member of the panel.

"I think it could come Thursday or Friday at the earliest," added state Rep. Roger Eddy, R-Hutsonville, who is a member of the committee.

For some, a vote couldn't come soon enough.

"I think that most of us wanted to have this thing put to bed last week," said state Rep. Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet, who sits on the panel.

The committee already has met for five days to investigate whether impeachment of the governor is warranted. That 21-member panel will then recommend to the full House whether to formally impeach the embattled governor.

Eddy said its not a question of if the committee will back impeachment, but when they will recommend it. Rank-and-file members of the House were told to prepare to be in session non-stop – weekends included - beginning Wednesday.

"This is a very, very serious issue," Eddy said.

If the full House votes to impeach, the process then moves to the Senate where a trial would be held to determine if Blagojevich should be kicked out of office.

Blagojevich was arrested Dec. 9 on federal corruption charges. Despite calls for his resignation and the on-going impeachment effort, he has remained in office and last week enraged officials when he appointed former Illinois Attorney General Roland Burris to filled Illinois' vacant U.S. Senate seat.

State and national leaders are trying to block Burris from taking office, saying Blagojevich has tainted the seat.

On Wednesday, Burris, 71, filed a petition with the Illinois Supreme Court challenging Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White's refusal to sign a certificate approving Burris' appointment.

For now, Burris' motion is sitting idle in the court, while he prepares to head to Washington D.C. to be sworn into office on Tuesday. Senate Democrats who control the U.S. Senate have said they would block his appointment.

Under court rules, White's office has seven days to respond to Burris' motion.

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