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Final Edition

**'I'm just the opposite of Nixon'; Defiant Blagojevich sticks to his story in New York media blitz**

By Chris Fusco and Dave McKinney

Staff reporters

Gov. Blagojevich remained defiant Tuesday after being told his own voice was heard on wiretaps during his impeachment trial.

"I'm just the opposite of Nixon. I want all the tapes heard," his publicist reported him saying during the second day of his national media blitz. The governor also greeted New Yorkers on the street, saying, "Hi, I'm the governor of Illinois, and I did not try to sell a Senate seat."

Blagojevich stuck to his script during about a dozen interviews, reiterating that secretly recorded statements that allegedly implicate him in pay-to-play schemes are being taken "out of context." The governor did not directly answer a question from the Associated Press about whether he will step aside quietly if removed from office.

"I'll respect the law and the Constitution and the rules," he said, "and whether or not there are legal remedies to pursue beyond this we haven't really discussed . . . but I'm not going to rule out what some of those options might be."

Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn is set to be in Springfield on Thursday in case the Senate ousts Blagojevich. The governor and his family still have clothing, toys and other items in the Executive Mansion, spokesman Lucio Guerrero said, but they've made no plans to remove them.

The same goes for items in the governor's Thompson Center office. "They don't want to assume anything," Guerrero said of the Blagojevich family. "They're just going to wait it out."

In describing the toll on his family since his Dec. 9 arrest, Blagojevich said that their new puppy -- a white maltipoo named Skittles -- is helping ease the stress.

"In terms of what we tell our kids, it's a very difficult time for our family," he said on "The Early Show" on CBS. "And our little girls, my wife and I, we got them a little puppy during the Christmas holidays, something I was resisting for the last couple of years.

"But when all this happened, it was a therapeutic thing for our girls, and they love their little puppy and I think she's helping them through this."