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**Change in Burris' story?; Appears to contradict affidavit saying he hadn't spoken to representative of gov about Senate seat**

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SPRINGFIELD-A potentially troublesome new detail emerged about Roland Burris’ controversial U.S. Senate appointment Thursday after a state House panel voted unanimously to recommend Gov. Blagojevich be impeached.

For the first time, Burris indicated that he asked Blagojevich's former chief of staff and college classmate, Lon Monk, to relay his interest in the Senate seat to the governor last July or September.

"If you're close to the governor, you know, let him know I'm certainly interested in the seat," Burris said he told Monk.

That testimony appears to differ from an affidavit Burris submitted to the impeachment panel this week in which he stated he spoke to no "representatives" of the governor about the Senate post prior to Dec. 26.

Federal prosecutors, who identified Monk as "Lobbyist 1" in their criminal complaint against Blagojevich, indicated they tapped Monk's phone in November as Blagojevich moved to fill President-elect Barack Obama's Senate seat.

Whether the new Monk detail poses any threat to Burris' efforts to persuade Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) to allow him to be seated isn't clear, but Republicans on the state impeachment panel see a contradiction.

"There is an inconsistency between his testimony and the affidavit," said state Rep. Jim Durkin (R-Western Springs). "I'll leave it to Sen. Reid to determine what value that has to their process."

Burris' lawyer, Timothy Wright, said it was improper to consider Monk a "representative" of the governor -- the language used in Burris' affidavit -- since Monk no longer was on the state payroll when he and Burris spoke last year.

Burris "was talking to him as a friend and expressing his interest," Wright said. "He wasn't talking to him as a representative of the governor."

Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) did not weigh in on whether Burris had passed the test to lay claim to the state's vacant Senate seat. "Roland Burris has now testified, and we will carefully review that testimony," Durbin said.

The full state House is expected to vote today on the panel's recommendation to impeach Blagojevich.

Blagojevich's office blasted the 21-0 panel vote, calling the outcome a "foregone conclusion" and predicting a "much different" outcome in the state Senate, where a trial would be held.

"The governor believes that the impeachment proceedings were flawed, biased and did not follow the rules of law," the Blagojevich statement said.