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Final Edition

**Quinn: Burris has to go; Gov wants embattled senator to step down, as more of state's Dems call for resignation of Blago's pick for Obama's U.S. Senate seat**

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Gov. Quinn on Friday called on Sen. Roland Burris to "put the interests of the people of the land of Lincoln ahead of his own" and resign because of the continuing cloud over Burris' appointment.

Quinn's announcement signifies an opening of the political floodgates among Democrats now stepping forward to call for Burris to step down. Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias, who has expressed strong interest in running for the Senate, also added his voice to the growing chorus. Comptroller Dan Hynes made the same call Thursday.

But during a news conference in Washington, President Obama's press secretary, Robert Gibbs, stopped short of calling for Burris to step down. Gibbs, however, encouraged Burris to analyze his future over the weekend.

"Some of the stories seem to be in variance with what's happened," Gibbs said, adding that "the president is supportive of an investigation that would get some full story out.

"I think it might be important for Sen. Burris to take some time this weekend to either correct what has been said and certainly think of what lays in his future."

Asked if Burris lied about his contacts with then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich and his office about the Senate seat, Gibbs replied, "That's a question for Mr. Burris."

Quinn made his call for Burris' resignation at a morning news conference where he announced his support for legislation by state Rep. Jack Franks (D-Woodstock) to establish a special election whenever a U.S. Senate seat becomes vacant.

"I'd ask my good friend, Roland Burris, to put the interests of the people of the land of Lincoln ahead of his own and step aside and resign from his office and allow our Legislature to pass a law very quickly," Quinn said.

The Democratic governor became the highest-ranking public official to call for the resignation of the embattled Democrat appointed by Blagojevich.

"Sen. Burris should act as quickly as possible for the best interest of Illinois. This should not be a matter that takes weeks. This should be hopefully resolved within a week," Quinn said.

Roughly an hour after Quinn stepped off the stage, Giannoulias announced his desire to see Burris step aside and called for passage of legislation empowering voters, not governors, to fill U.S. Senate vacancies.

"Given the revelations during the past several days, the situation has become toxic and only serves as a sideshow during a time when lawmakers should be addressing the financial crisis that is impacting families across Illinois," Giannoulias said in a statement.

Burris signaled Friday he has no plans to step down.

"Sen. Roland Burris has asked the public and officials to stop their rush to judgment and allow the facts to come out. There's a legal process moving forward, and he's promised to fully cooperate," Burris spokesman Jim O'Connor said.

Burris is trying to fend off death by a thousand political cuts since the Chicago Sun-Times last weekend broke the story about him dramatically altering a sworn statement in a new affidavit. The sequent of events leading up to his appointment spelled out in the Feb. 5 affidavit is far different from testimony he provided before a House impeachment panel Jan. 8.

The disclosure triggered outrage from both ends of the political spectrum and accusations that Burris lied by withholding politically damaging contacts with the scandal-tainted ex-governor. After a series of Sun-Times stories and a push by House Speaker Michael Madigan (D-Chicago), the Sangamon County state's attorney opened a perjury investigation into Burris.

At the same time, the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Ethics opened an inquiry that could lead to sanctions or a call for expulsion against Burris should he choose to stay in office.

Burris did find one voice of support Friday: Cook County Board President Todd Stroger.

"I don't think he should resign. I think he immediately tried to let people know outside of the questions that were asked," Stroger said. "In the end, this is really part of Gov. Blagojevich's tenure. It's not Roland they care about, they don't like to see anything that had Gov. Blagojevich's fingerprints on. Roland Burris is paying the price for being appointed by him. That's all."