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**'Cellini' & Lincoln painting to stay;**

**Was corrupt power broker painter's model?**

By Dave McKinney

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SPRINGFIELD - Convicted power broker Bill Cellini undoubtedly whispered in the ear of many a politician during his era of influence in state politics, but none is more famous than Abraham Lincoln.

An uncanny likeness of Cellini is pictured alongside the 16th president in an oil painting at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, and the painting is going to remain hanging despite Cellini's corruption convictions Tuesday, the museum said Wednesday.

"It'll stay," museum spokesman Dave Blanchette said.

Cellini is wearing a black suit and peering over Lincoln's shoulder while the president sits in a chair and inspects vote totals from the 1864 election. Cellini is gesturing in the painting, as if to make a point to Lincoln.

"The artist never officially told us who the people he used for models in the picture are, so we don't have confirmation from the person who knows whether that's him or not," Blanchette said when asked the rationale behind keeping the painting.

"And second, there's no reason to change anything in the museum. It's great the way it is. It's almost 3 million people who have been through, and it's the world's most popular presidential museum. We think everything was done right in the museum."

State lawmakers took an entirely different tack with convicted ex-Gov. Rod Blagojevich, passing a law last year that barred the expenditure of any state funds on any oil painting of the impeached ex-governor.

That law effectively barred Blagojevich's likeness from being hung in the state Capitol's Hall of Governors, where an oil painting of every chief executive except him is hanging.