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**Lawmaker seeks to lift veil on Cellini 'empire'**

By Dave McKinney

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SPRINGFIELD - A suburban lawmaker targeted felon William Cellini's business "empire" Thursday in pressing to end decades of state-sanctioned secrecy surrounding how much Cellini's family makes managing government office buildings.

Driven by stories in the Chicago Sun-Times, state Sen. Susan Garrett (D-Lake Forest) called on the state Procurement Policy Board to pursue legislation that for the first time would disclose who runs management companies that oversee state buildings and how much those firms make indirectly from government leases.

The issue has surfaced because Cellini, a felon convicted for taking part in a $1.5 million shakedown of investment mogul and Hollywood producer Thomas Rosenberg, is barred under state law from doing business with the state because of his conviction.

While lawyers for Cellini himself contend he does not do any government contracting, a web of companies that he formed and now are run by his children manage more than a dozen state buildings in a lucrative and confusing business arrangement that indirectly could cost taxpayers millions of dollars.

"This should not be a witch hunt for William Cellini. What this does is expose the fact that the Cellini conglomerate has a stronghold on not just the landlord-lease issues, but also and more importantly, the management of at least 14 state-occupied facilities with no oversight," Garrett said.