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Begging for jobs; 28 in Senate, 53 in House are listed as making personnel requests; Records show that many of the lawmakers who voted to kick the gov out of office came to him early on . . .

By Dave McKinney, Chris Fusco and Tim Novak

Early in Rod Blagojevich's time as governor, dozens of the Illinois state legislators who eventually would vote to boot him from office came to Blagojevich asking him to reward their political supporters with state jobs and other favors, hiring records obtained by the Chicago Sun-Times show.

Twenty-eight of the 59 Illinois state senators who voted early this year to remove Blagojevich as governor had gone to him with recommendations for state jobs, promotions, transfers or appointments to state boards, a database of patronage hires kept by Blagojevich aides shows.

In the House, 53 of the 114 state representatives who voted to impeach Blagojevich were listed as earlier having sought personnel moves from the governor.

Most of those who made hiring requests were Democrats, according to the records, which cover the period from 2003 to 2005.

Among them: Blagojevich's political nemesis, House Speaker Michael Madigan. In that period, the records show the powerful Southwest Side Democrat sought 98 jobs, raises or appointments and got 33 of them.

In all, the Madigan-sponsored candidates contributed more than $84,000 to the speaker's political funds and another $40,236 to his daughter, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, state records show.

Some of those listed as being backed by the speaker got jobs as highway maintenance workers, electricians and carpenters -- despite a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that bans political hiring for such low-level jobs.

Madigan spokesman Steve Brown confirmed that people sought the speaker's help in getting jobs soon after Blagojevich took office following 26 years of Republicans holding the governor's office.

But when told the names of candidates credited to Madigan, Brown said most of them didn't "ring a bell with me. . . . Given our position and the record for accuracy by the Blagojevich administration, I'd wonder if any of that has any accuracy."

And Brown said campaign contributions wouldn't have been a factor in backing anyone for a job, adding that "$80,000 for a campaign organization that raises several million dollars every year, that certainly is not a significant number anyone would notice."

Brown said he did know one person on the Madigan list who got a state job: his sister-in-law, who was hired as a Department of Public Aid supervisor. But Brown said he never approached Madigan or Blagojevich on her behalf.

A Sun-Times analysis of the hiring database also found:

-Blagojevich's House floor leader, Rep. Jay Hoffman (D-Collinsville), won jobs, raises or appointments for 140 people -- tops, by far, among lawmakers.

-Blagojevich aides seemed eager to grant a request from now-Senate Majority Leader James Clayborne (D-Belleville) that his sister get promoted. A job "is being created and should be sent to" the governor's budget office, a notation reads. But Clayborne's sister Sherry Smith didn't get it. Clayborne didn't respond to requests for comment.

-Among Republicans, Rep. Angelo "Skip" Saviano (R-Elmwood Park) secured 19 of the personnel requests he was listed as sponsoring, followed by House Minority Leader Tom Cross (R-Oswego), who got 14.

Saviano questioned the accuracy of the database, which showed him making 80 job requests. "Eighty? That's ridiculous," Saviano said. "And out of the 19, I maybe know a third of them."

Cross's spokeswoman, Sara Wojcicki, said "many" of the recommendations on his list "were for boards and commissions that require a certain number of Republicans and Democrats. Other ones were for people who had worked under the [George] Ryan administration, were fired by Blagojevich and had asked to be reinstated."

-Gov. Quinn and his top challenger in next year's Democratic primary, state Comptroller Dan Hynes, were credited with recommending two hires apiece. The records also show Quinn recommended two other people for jobs they didn't get; Hynes one.

Hynes spokeswoman Carol Knowles said, "The comptroller played no role in recommending or obtaining a job for anyone with [Rod Blagojevich.](http://www.nexis.com/search/XMLCrossLinkSearch.do?bct=A&risb=21_T21275872197&returnToId=20_T21276220562&csi=11064&A=0.7543992865597572&sourceCSI=162599&indexTerm=%23PE0009ULK%23&searchTerm=Rod%20Blagojevich.&indexType=P)"

Quinn spokesman Bob Reed acknowledged the governor recommended the four people on his list. "Three of them had working relationships with Quinn when he held various public offices," Reed said.

Republican gubernatorial candidate Kirk Dillard was listed as sponsoring a candidate who got a seat on a state board that the law requires be filled by a Republican. That backing "came before I really became a harsh critic of the Blagojevich administration," Dillard said. "Later, when people would come to me, I refused to send letters."