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**Madigan son-in-law gets $130K job as RTA lobbyist; Timing of hiring, legal bill 'a little shaky': official**

By Dave McKinney

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SPRINGFIELD - The son-in-law of House Speaker Michael Madigan (D-Chicago) has landed in a $130,000-a-year job as the chief lobbyist for the Regional Transportation Authority, the transit agency announced Friday.

Jordan Matyas was named the RTA's deputy executive director and will oversee the agency's government affairs section, beginning March 1.

RTA Executive Director Joe Costello said Matyas' "extensive legal and legislative background" makes him well-suited to oversee the RTA's lobbying at the local, state and federal levels.

"We are pleased to have Jordan join our executive team to help further solidify public transit's role in our region," Costello said in a prepared statement.

RTA spokeswoman Diane Palmer said the agency had multiple applicants for the position, which had been vacant since last year. She said the job was posted on the transit system's website.

Palmer would not say whether there was any relationship between Matyas' hiring and the demise of legislation in January that would have led to the ouster of RTA Chairman John Gates, who has had a strained relationship with the House speaker.

"It seems a little shaky this bill comes up and disappears, and then the next thing you know a relative of the speaker is getting hired in a pretty high-paying position," said Rep. Randy Ramey (R-Carol Stream). "I'd suspect we should have an investigation, but I don't know who should do that? The attorney general? Maybe not."

Attorney General Lisa Madigan is the speaker's daughter and Matyas' sister-in-law.

Michael Madigan spokesman Steve Brown defended Matyas' hiring.

"Jordan is a talented guy. That's a good selection the RTA made. I'm told they went through their normal hiring employment process. Beyond that I wouldn't have any comment," Brown said, refusing to discuss the Gates legislation.

"Ramey's insults are typical of the Republicans. Just like the insults from billboards and other things, typical Republicans," Brown said. "It's why they're the minority party more than anything else."

In November, the Sun-Times reported on Matyas' lobbying efforts on behalf of Veritech Solutions, a Florida company that tracks payday loans for the state.

Legislation the company - and Matyas - pushed last year imposed new reporting requirements on the payday loan industry, meaning a windfall worth millions of dollars for the company.

Matyas, who married the speaker's daughter Tiffany in July, helped draft the payday loan legislation with staff of the attorney general. The attorney general denied knowing anything about Matyas' role with Veritec or his work with her office.

Matyas served as the state director for the Humane Society of the United States and last year helped bring to light controversial legislation GOP gubernatorial nominee Bill Brady introduced involving dog euthanasia, an initiative Gov. Quinn used against Brady in the gubernatorial campaign.