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Final Edition

**Pension hike: Gov 'didn't know'; 8-week job upped yearly take $38,000**

By Chris Fusco and Dave McKinney

Staff reporters

Gov. Blagojevich had no idea one of his top allies, retired state Sen. Carol Ronen, stood to add $38,000 a year to her government pension when he gave her a job she held for eight weeks.

"I didn't know about it until I read it in the paper," Blagojevich said Tuesday, referring to a Chicago Sun-Times story about Ronen in Saturday's editions.

Ronen, a 63-year-old Democrat from Chicago, is Blagojevich's onetime Senate floor leader. The governor hired her as a $120,000-a-year senior adviser on March 1, but she left on April 30 to become a volunteer for presidential hopeful Barack Obama.

The job Blagojevich gave her allowed her to increase her pension from $64,005 to $102,000 annually.

"My expectation was she was going to work for us in a high place" for a long time, the governor told news reporters after signing a bill that renews a state movie industry tax credit. "But she heard the siren call of the Obama campaign" and "left me for another guy."

Though Ronen did a "great job" in her brief time working for him, Blagojevich said he would support efforts to revoke so-called pension golden parachutes.