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**FORMER ILLINOIS GOV. ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH SENTENCED  
TO 14 YEARS IN PRISON FOR CORRUPTION IN OFFICE**

CHICAGO — Former Illinois Gov. **Rod R. Blagojevich** was sentenced today to 14 years in federal prison following his conviction at trials in 2010 and 2011 on 18 felony counts of corruption during his tenure as governor, including his effort in 2008 to illegally trade the appointment of a United States Senator in exchange for \$1.5 million in campaign contributions or other personal benefits. Blagojevich was also sentenced for shaking down the chief executive of a children's hospital for \$25,000 in campaign contributions in exchange for implementing an increase to pediatric reimbursement rates; holding up the signing of a bill to benefit the Illinois horse racing industry in an attempt to illegally obtain \$100,000 in campaign contributions; and lying to the FBI in 2005.

Blagojevich, who will turn 55 on Dec. 10, was ordered to surrender to the U.S. Bureau of Prisons on Feb. 16, 2012, to begin serving his sentence. The prison term is the longest-ever imposed on a former governor in the Northern District of Illinois.

“When it is the governor who goes bad, the fabric of Illinois is torn, disfigured and not easily repaired,” U.S. District Judge James Zagel said in imposing the sentence after a two-day hearing.

“The harm here is not measured in the value of money or property . . . the harm is the erosion of public trust in government,” he said.

The judge imposed a fine of \$20,000 and two years of supervised release after incarceration. Blagojevich also must pay a special assessment of \$1,800, or \$100 on each count of conviction.

During the sentencing hearing, Judge Zagel agreed with the government that the properly-calculated advisory federal sentencing guidelines provided for a sentencing range of 30 years to life. He also agreed with the government that the range was not appropriate within the context of this case, and found an “effective” guideline range of 188 to 235 months in prison, which was proximate to the government’s recommended sentence of 15 to 20 years. The judge further reduced the range to 151 to 188 months after finding that Blagojevich accepted responsibility for his crimes at sentencing.

In sentencing papers, the government contended that “Blagojevich’s criminal activity was serious, extended, and extremely damaging.” The crimes proven at trial were not isolated incidents, but, instead, were part of an approach to public office that Blagojevich adopted from the moment he became governor after he was first elected in 2002 on the heels of gubernatorial corruption and running on a campaign to end “pay-to-play” politics.

“Blagojevich betrayed the trust and faith that Illinois voters placed in him, feeding great public frustration, cynicism and disengagement among citizens. People have the right to expect that their elected leaders will honor the oath they swear to, and this sentence shows that the justice system will stand up to protect their expectations,” said Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois.

“The sentence handed down today represents a repayment of the debt that Blagojevich owes to the people of Illinois. While promising an open and honest administration, in reality, the former

governor oversaw a comprehensive assault on the public's trust," said Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Thomas P. Brady, Inspector-in-Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service in Chicago, said: "The United States Postal Inspection Service is proud to be one of the federal law enforcement agencies to help ferret out this type of political corruption in Illinois. The Inspection Service is committed to increasing the public's trust and confidence through our investigations of fraudulent activity. While the sentencing today closes one chapter, we must adhere to a renewed standard of accountability to ensure that the citizens of our state are not victimized by political corruption and greed."

Alvin Patton, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division in Chicago, said: "Today's sentence sends a loud message that public corruption will not be tolerated. The IRS Criminal Investigation Division, together with the U. S. Attorney's Office and our law enforcement partners, will continue to aggressively pursue violators of the public trust. Regardless of political office or position, no one is above the law."

James Vanderberg, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, said: "This sentence sends a clear message that public officials cannot engage in corruption for personal benefit in exchange for political favors.

Blagojevich, a lawyer and former state prosecutor, state legislator, and U.S. Representative, was arrested on Dec. 9, 2008, while serving his second term as governor. He was accused of using his office in numerous matters involving state appointments, business, legislation and pension fund investments to seek or obtain such financial benefits as money, campaign contributions, and

employment for himself and others, in exchange for official actions, including trying to leverage his authority to appoint a United States Senator to replace then President-Elect Obama.

Blagojevich went to trial in the summer of 2010 and was convicted of lying to FBI agents when he falsely told them in an interview on March 16, 2005, that he did not track, or want to know, who contributed to him or how much money they contributed to him, but the jury was deadlocked on all remaining counts.

He went to trial again in the spring of 2011 and was convicted on 17 additional counts, including 10 counts of wire fraud, two counts of attempted extortion, two counts of conspiracy to commit extortion, one count of soliciting bribes, and two counts of conspiracy to solicit and accept bribes.

The prosecution was part of *Operation Board Games*, a public corruption investigation of pay-to-play schemes, including insider-dealing, influence-peddling and kickbacks involving private interests and public duties. The investigation began in 2003 and has resulted in convictions against 15 defendants, including two former chiefs of staff for Blagojevich while he was governor.

The Government is being represented in the Blagojevich case by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Reid Schar, Carrie Hamilton and Christopher Niewoehner.

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