

JESSE JACKSON JR.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Short version: Jackson uses this as a campaign commercial, he makes a narrow denial about the conversations of his supporters with Blago, makes a categorical statement saying he (personally) hadn't met with Blago for four years, and he refuses to take questions.

[Starts by expressing outrage at the pay to play schemes.]

The people of IL deserve better.

The governor should resign and forfeit his authority to make the appointment. Anyone would be too tainted.

Meanwhile the governor's fate is in the hand of the justice system.

I want to address rumors about me. I reject and denounce pay to play politics. I did not initiate or authorize anyone at any time to promise anything to Blagojevich on my behalf. I never sent an emissary to make a deal. I thought, mistakenly, that the process was fair.

I have more seniority than all those—except Luis Gutierrez—considered for the position.

I thought the governor was considering me based on my 13 years of hard work on the part of IL.

I did not know that the process had been corrupted. I did not know that qualifications meant nothing to the governor. I wanted to be considered for the appointment because I believe in public service. That's what I shared with Blago on Monday, when I had the opportunity to meet with him **for the first time** in four years. The media saw me enter his office, the media saw me exit his office. Despite what he may have expected, that's all I had to offer.

[Thanks all those who have endorsed him for the position.]

Know this. I spoke to the US Attorney's office on Tuesday. I am not a target of this investigation and I am not accused of any misconduct. In the days ahead, law enforcement officers want to meet to discuss what I know about this process. I look forward to cooperating completely. I retain the advice of James Montgomery Sr.

On his advice, I will not be taking any questions.

I do want to add one point before I leave. This morning I got text messages from my little sister, who said she was proud of what I've done. This morning she told me, Jesse Jr, I'm proud of you.