

# RAHM AND “THAT 5TH CD THING”

At his shiny new shack out back of the Big Orange Satan, Kagro X links to this article describing how Rahm is uninvolved (publicly at least) in the fight to replace him.

Rahm Emanuel’s role in attempting to influence Gov. Blagojevich’s choice of a U.S. Senate replacement for President-elect Barack Obama could impact the heated race to fill another important vacancy: Emanuel’s own seat in Congress.

Ald. Pat O’Connor (40th), Mayor Daley’s unofficial City Council floor leader, had hoped to emerge from the crowded field of candidates in the 5th Congressional District by winning Daley’s support and by persuading Emanuel to use his formidable powers of persuasion to clear the field.

But now that the Chicago Sun-Times has lifted the veil on Emanuel’s efforts to persuade Blagojevich to appoint Obama family friend Valerie Jarrett to the U.S. Senate, Emanuel has – as one veteran ward boss put it – “gone underground.”

The new White House chief of staff is reluctant to get involved in the 5th District race, which has attracted more than two dozen candidates.

Of course, the Sun-Times presents this as a reaction to the news that Rahm was involved in discussions over Obama’s seat.

But I would suggest that it’s one more piece of evidence that suggests Rahm was involved in discussions—real or imagined—over his own seat.

After all, aside from calling the Special Election, Blago is not involved in this

election: Richard Daley is the kingmaker here, not Blago. So why would Rahm's involvement in discussions about the Senate seat prevent him from getting involved in discussions about his own seat?

As I've discussed, there's evidence that Rahm and Blago (or Rahm and Blago's flunkies) talked about more than the Senate seat. The only mention of Rahm in the complaint, after all, includes this passage:

On November 13, 2008, ROD BLAGOJEVICH talked with JOHN HARRIS. ROD BLAGOJEVICH said he wanted to be able to call "[President-elect Advisor]" and tell President-elect Advisor that "this has nothing to do with anything else we're working on but the Governor wants to put together a 501(c)(4)" and "can you guys help him. . . raise 10, 15 million." ROD BLAGOJEVICH said he wanted "[President-elect Advisor] to get the word today," and that when "he asks me for the Fifth CD thing I want it to be in his head." (The reference to the "Fifth CD thing" is believed to relate to a seat in the United States House of Representatives from Illinois' Fifth Congressional District. Prior intercepted phone conversations indicate that ROD BLAGOJEVICH and others were determining whether ROD BLAGOJEVICH has the power to appoint an interim replacement until a special election for the seat can be held.). [my emphasis]

Blago's statements here may have been entirely delusional. But in mid-November, at least, Blago believed that Rahm was going to come to him with a specific ask regarding his own seat—not Obama's.

Now that doesn't mean that Rahm actually did make a request of Blago. Nor does it mean that, if there was a request, there was anything improper about it.

But even what we see in the complaint shows evidence that Blago thought he had something of value to give wrt the House seat. Rahm knows that—if I noticed it in the complaint, I guarantee you he has. So he's got to make sure he doesn't appear to be furthering goals that Blago believed he had a role in influencing.

I don't know Chicago politics, but with Daley's blessing, you gotta believe that O'Connor may win the election anyway. Still, if being mentioned in the complaint against Blago prevents Rahm from trying to game his replacement (and with it, prepare for a return to the House and a run for Speaker), I consider that a good thing.