

BLAGO'S DOG AND PONY PRESSER

Okay EW is tied up and will be along in a bit, but Rod Blagojevich just had a fascinating press conference. Like a demented king (there is that Elvis parallel again) holding forth in his court. Probably not for long, but the guy knows how to play a room, you have to give him that.

Blago rambled around about how he has brought healthcare to the poor, which he actually did do, but of course it was how he did it that is the problem. The biggest LEGAL issue they've got on him for is that he pushed through the Family Care Program in Illinois. Doing so was completely illegal (the Legislature had said no once via a vote, and then once again via a separate modality). It was a way to get healthcare to those in the 400% poverty level; a really laudable policy if you like people, but really horrible legally.

As many of you have seen, I, in the long run, care very much about the process of law, and irrespective of the good motives, that process must be followed. He didn't.

My take, Blago is on drugs, and damn good ones too. Jeebus, he was even quoting Alfred Lord Tennyson at one point. If not drugs, he is completely loopy. One of his former aides thinks that is the case. Josh Marshall agrees.

Discuss.

Update, from ew: Here's what I think he's doing. He is going to the voters over the head of the lege, exacting a cost for what they're doing by painting himself as the champion of the people and the lege as just selfish politicians who want benefits they won't give to taxpayers. He's also taking a few specific counts and flipping them—concentrating on his goals, rather than his illegal means to get them done. From his presser:

The causes of the impeachment are because I've done things to fight for families that are with me here today.

bmaz mentioned the FamilyCare program above. From the Impeachment Report, starting on page 29.

The evidence showed that the Governor proceeded with the expansion of a program known as "FamilyCare" over the objection of the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules ("JGAR"), despite the fact that, under state law, JGAR's objection barred the Governor from doing so. The issue presented herein is not the merit of expanded health care coverage, but rather the authority of the Governor to ignore state law and the legislature, and impose an expansion of a program on the citizens of this State unilaterally, without legislative approval and without money appropriated for that purpose.

Blago, of course, is trying to make the issue the merit of expanded health care. Expect Blago to repeatedly bring up examples of the benefits of this program, and ignore the illegal means he used to put through the program. It'll be particularly timely, because part of what Blago did was sustain SCHIP in IL, despite the Federal failure to extend SCHIP. So it'll be timely.

Also note that he attributes his I-SaveRx Program (described starting on page 40) to Rahm Emanuel. If you've got any other doubts he's trying to embarrass Rahm—and through him, Obama—this should end those doubts.

He may be crazy, but it's a fairly smart strategy.