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Impeachment talk targeting gov heats up: 2 Dems

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BY [DAVE MCKINNEY](#) AND [JACLYN BRENNING](#) Sun-Times Springfield Bureau

SPRINGFIELD -- The impeachment drumbeat at the Statehouse grew louder Wednesday, a day after the blockbuster accusation by a former state official that he got his state job after pouring money into Gov. Blagojevich's campaign fund -- including a \$25,000 check in an envelope he presented to the governor.

Two House Democrats said discussions on a possible impeachment resolution targeting Blagojevich accelerated after Tuesday's disclosure by Ali Ata, whom the governor appointed to a \$127,000-a-year post running the Illinois Finance Authority.

In his surprise guilty plea to federal corruption charges, Ata said he gave two \$25,000 campaign contributions to the governor and then got Blagojevich's assurance of landing a state job in which Ata "could make some money." Ata is expected to testify against indicted former Blagojevich fund-raiser Tony Rezko.

State Rep. Jack Franks (D-Woodstock) and Rep. John Fritchey (D-Chicago) said a decision on impeachment could come within two weeks.

"We now find ourselves in a very different environment, where an individual has pled guilty to being a co-conspirator in transactions involving the governor," Fritchey said. "Can state government be effectively led by a governor who is apparently at the center of some very significant allegations of wrongdoing?"

Blagojevich surfaced Wednesday at a Springfield prayer breakfast that was not disclosed by his staff. In an eight-minute speech, the governor did not address Ata. But, perhaps offering a glimpse into his current mind-set, Blagojevich closed by invoking the lyrics of an obscure, 1950s Hank Williams song, "Men with Broken Hearts."

"You never stood in that man's shoes or saw things through his eyes or watched with helpless hands while the heart inside you dies," Blagojevich said. "So help your brother along the way no matter where he starts because the same God that made you made him too, these men with broken hearts."

Contributing: *Carol Marin*

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