



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH – GOVERNOR

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Governor Blagojevich Taps Roland W. Burris As Next U.S. Senator

CHICAGO – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today appointed former politician and statewide office-holder Roland W. Burris to the United States Senate seat vacated by President-elect Barack Obama.

"Roland Burris was born and raised in Illinois. He attended school in Illinois, and has represented the State's people both as comptroller and as attorney general," Governor Blagojevich said. "He understands the people's needs. With his experience and knowledge, I believe there is no one better suited to serve as Illinois' next United States Senator."

Mr. Burris, 71, currently runs a political consulting firm and works as a lawyer. He has a long history in Illinois state government. In 1983, he was elected to the office of comptroller, becoming the first African-American to be elected to an Illinois statewide office. He was the Illinois attorney general from 1991 through 1995.

After growing up in Centralia, Ill., Mr. Burris graduated from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. He is also a graduate of Howard University School of Law.

"I welcome the challenge that awaits us in the 111th Congress," Mr. Burris said. "I have faith in the record that I have forged over the last four decades, and am proud of my accomplishments as a public servant."

Governor Blagojevich appointed Burris to the Senate seat after the Illinois House of Representatives dropped plans to schedule a special election for the spot.

"This state has 12.8 million residents. During a time of economic crisis, they deserve to be represented by the two Senate positions to which they are entitled – not just one," Governor Blagojevich said.