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Feds taped Blagojevich



Who is John Wyma?

Wyma (above left) is among Gov. Rod Blagojevich's closest confidants, fundraisers and friends. Before becoming a top state lobbyist, he was Blagojevich's chief of staff when Blagojevich was in Congress and played key roles in the governor's campaigns.

TRIBUNE EXCLUSIVE: Adviser cooperated with corruption probe, sources say

By Jeff Coen, John Chase and David Kidwell
TRIBUNE REPORTERS

Federal investigators recently made covert tape recordings of Gov. Rod Blagojevich in the most dramatic step yet in their corruption investigation of him and his administration, the Tribune has learned.

As part of this undercover effort, one of the governor's closest confidants and former aides cooperated with investigators, and that assistance helped lead to recordings of the governor and others, sources said. The cooperation of John Wyma, 42, one of the state's most influential

lobbyists, is the most stunning evidence yet that Blagojevich's once-tight inner circle appears to be collapsing under the pressure of myriad pay-to-play inquiries.

Wyma, Blagojevich's chief of staff when he was in Congress, has long been one of the few advisers trusted by Blagojevich and kept in the loop on matters of policy and politics. As the federal probe intensified, Wyma met privately with the governor and his former chief of staff at the governor's campaign headquarters on Oct. 22, North Side for 90 minutes on Oct. 22.

Confronted outside that meeting, Wyma declined to talk to Tribune reporters about what the meeting was

about before jumping into his car. The next day, the Tribune was the first to report that Wyma's name appeared in a federal subpoena delivered to Provena Health, a former client of his.

The subpoena sought records about Provena's lobbying relationship with Wyma, the hospital's efforts to win state approval of a new heart program and a \$25,000 donation the company's for-profit affiliate gave to Blagojevich's campaign fund.

On Thursday, Wyma did not return phone messages and e-mails

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Obama's \$1 billion

