



Some want state ethics investigations made public

By Mike Riopell, The Southern Springfield Bureau

SPRINGFIELD - Though a state inspector general report shows dozens of instances of misconduct in state agencies controlled by Gov. Rod Blagojevich, law will have to be changed before the public can find out exactly what happened.

A report released this week by Executive Inspector General James Wright shows violations across state government, including six cases referred to the U.S. attorney's office.

Lawmakers have pitched proposals to make the inspector general's investigation results more transparent. This week, Wright lent support on one proposed by Sen. Bill Brady that would make public all complaints that were found legit.

Brady says the threat of having government wrongdoing made public could serve as a deterrent.

"Our goal here was just to bring about total transparency," the Bloomington Republican said.

Wright's office was set up in 2003 to monitor ethical problems in government. This week's report was the first time the office categorized complaints.

"Unfortunately, a minority of individuals conduct themselves in an erroneous sense of entitlement and do not feel obliged to act in an ethical or legal manner," Wright said in a statement.

But Wright isn't without his own legal issues. He's been sued by two Southern Illinois University professors who failed the state ethics exam because they reportedly finished too quickly.

The report also comes as two state employees accused of helping politically connected job candidates get state employment are suing to get their jobs back. The employees, Dawn DeFraties and Michael Casey, have instead said Blagojevich pushed for preferred candidates.