

Blagojevich won't rule out return to politics

By the Associated Press

CHICAGO — Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich thinks a future in politics is still a possibility.

Blagojevich said he won't rule out another run for political office if federal prosecutors fail to convict him at a second trial, according to an interview on "Fox News Sunday."

His comments came days after he was convicted of lying to federal agents. Jurors, however, deadlocked on 23 other more serious charges, including that he had tried to sell President Barack Obama's old Senate seat.

Federal prosecutors have said they will retry Blagojevich on those charges, but the former governor insisted that he will be vindicated.

A federal judge has scheduled a Thursday hearing to decide the manner and timing of a retrial.

"I didn't lie to the FBI. And I'm not lying to you, and I'm not lying to the people," Blagojevich told

talk show host Chris Wallace.

When Wallace asked Blagojevich if he would run for office again, he answered, "If you're asking me, do I believe that there's a potential political comeback in the future, when I'm vindicated in this case, absolutely I do."

Blagojevich's appearance on the talk show was part of a media blitz that began Friday when he appeared on NBC's "Today" show. The appearances seem intended to appeal, at least in part, to anyone who might end up on a second jury.

It was widely believed that media appearances Blagojevich made before his first trial, including on the "The Celebrity Apprentice" reality show, were attempts to influence potential jurors.

Blagojevich appeared on "Fox News Sunday" by video feed from Chicago. Wallace noted that Blagojevich originally was supposed to be in the studio in Washington with him but had stayed in Chicago to appear at a

comics convention where he posed for photographs and signed autographs.

Blagojevich said he needed the \$50 he received for each autograph to support his family. But he also said it was "a way to get out among the people," presumably including some who could be on another jury.

The former governor repeatedly insisted that he had been involved in nothing more than "political horse trading" and that he didn't try to trade political appointments and other favors for campaign contributions.

But when Wallace pressed him, asking whether he had talked about getting money from U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr.'s supporters before appointing Jackson to the Senate, Blagojevich sidestepped the question.

Blagojevich's older brother, Robert Blagojevich, a Nashville, Tenn., businessman, was charged with him.

The 23 counts on which jurors deadlocked included four involv-



Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, second from left, and his wife Patti leave Chicago's Federal Court building with his attorneys Aug. 17.

ing Robert Blagojevich.

As he did before his first trial, Blagojevich said he would testify and that his attorneys would call a

number of prominent Democrats, including White House adviser Rahm Emmanuel and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid.

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