

CHICAGO



Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., shown here speaking in March in Chicago, recently was released from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., after being treated for a bipolar disorder. FILE/AP

Father: Unclear when Jackson will resume work

By Sophia Tareen
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Days after U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. was released from a hospital where he was being treated for bipolar disorder, it's still unclear when he'll return to work.

The Chicago Democrat left the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., last week and is back in Washington with his family following months out of the public eye on a secretive medical leave. But neither his office, his civil rights leader father, nor his wife, Chicago Alderman Sandi Jackson, could say when Jackson would return to the office.

Jackson spokesman Frank Watkins said Sunday that he had no information. A day earlier, Jackson's father, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, told reporters that he didn't expect his son to rush back.

"I hope he does not move quickly, because he's so anxious to function; so anxious to work. He's programmed in that direction. He wants to serve. I think his people have been quite generous to him in terms of giving him time," Jackson told reporters. "But my concern is that of a father. I have no interest in the political timetable. It's his health timetable, and there is no date certain for that."

The elder Jackson declined to give more details to The Associated Press on Sunday, except to say that his son was still under medical supervision and it was too premature to predict his work schedule.

Very little information

has been available about the congressman's condition and recovery.

Jackson's office waited two weeks before disclosing that the 47-year-old congressman went on medical leave June 10 and initially described him as suffering from exhaustion. Later, it referred to his condition as a "mood disorder." Last month, his office disclosed that he was at Mayo and being treated for depression after a transfer from the Sierra Tucson Treatment Center in Arizona. The Mayo Clinic has said that Jackson was being treated for Bipolar II, which means he was suffering from periodic episodes of depression and hypomania. Hypomania is a less serious form of mania.

Jackson has received visitors, including from former U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy of Rhode Island, but his office has denied interview requests. While a Jackson aide once predicted the congressman would return to work around Labor Day, he's since been mum on the issue.

After Jackson was released from the Mayo Clinic, Sandi Jackson said he was not expected to return to work until released from doctors' care. She didn't elaborate.

The handling and timing of the medical leave has invited scrutiny, most recently from Jackson's political opponents.

Jackson is currently under investigation by the House Ethics Committee for ties to imprisoned former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich. The committee is looking into allegations

Jackson was involved in discussions about raising money for Blagojevich's campaign in exchange for the then-governor appointing him to President Barack Obama's vacated U.S. Senate seat. Jackson has repeatedly denied wrongdoing.

The announcement of the leave also came just days after a former fundraiser connected to the allegations was arrested on unrelated federal medical fraud charges.

Jackson, who first took office in 1995, is seeking reelection in his Chicago-area district in November.

While he is widely expected to win, one of his little-known opponents seized the opportunity to criticize his release, including asking why Jackson would return to Washington instead of Chicago, where the family also has a home.

"We now take joy that he has been discharged from the clinic," said a statement from Republican Brian Woodworth, a college professor. "Perhaps Congressman Jackson returned to Washington, D.C., to face his pending Congressional Ethics hearing? Or did he sneak back to Washington as he had fled earlier to Arizona — to keep the new 2nd Congressional District guessing over his ability to lead?"

Jackson easily won a primary challenge earlier this year from former U.S. Rep. Debbie Halvorson. However, he had to run a vigorous campaign and spend time in new rural areas of his largely black, urban and Democratic district.

ILLINOIS REPORT

The Associated Press

DECATUR

Quinn may rely on Web for pension campaign

Gov. Pat Quinn is hinting that his so-called grassroots campaign to rally support for an overhaul of Illinois' pension system will involve social media and the Internet.

Lawmakers have failed to come up with a plan to deal with the roughly \$85 billion pension funding gap. Legislators couldn't agree on an approach at a special session last month.

Quinn says he'll push forward with a grassroots campaign to win public support.

He's said details would come later this week but has declined to say what the campaign will entail.

Quinn said Saturday in Decatur that having the power of the Internet is a good way to get the message out, according to a report by The (Bloomington) Pantagraph.

Lawmakers won't meet again until after the November election.

SYCAMORE

Trial to begin today in 1957 slaying

The trial of a man accused in the 1957 kidnapping and slaying of a 7-year-old Illinois girl is expected to begin today.

Jack McCullough was arrested last year in Seattle and is in custody in Illinois.

He's accused of felony murder, kidnapping and abduction charges in the death of 7-year-old Maria Ridulph of

Sycamore. He's pleaded not guilty.

Ridulph's disappearance and death generated national headlines at the time.

Her brother, Charles Ridulph, told The (DeKalb) Daily Chronicle that it's been very difficult for the family. He was 11 when his sister disappeared.

CHICAGO

Report: Taxpayers foot bill in small town

A published report shows that a Chicago suburb has among the highest municipal tax rates in Cook County while it has

one of the highest levels of debt.

The Chicago Tribune reports that Bellwood increased taxes while spending millions of borrowed dollars on failed real estate ventures. That's because an Illinois law that allows small towns to tax, spend and borrow like big cities.

Bellwood also imposes one of the highest sales tax rates in the state. It has fewer than 20,000 people.

Village officials say they've tried to improve the situations, including a slight tax cut and reducing budgets.

Three-term Bellwood Mayor Frank Pasquale declined to comment.

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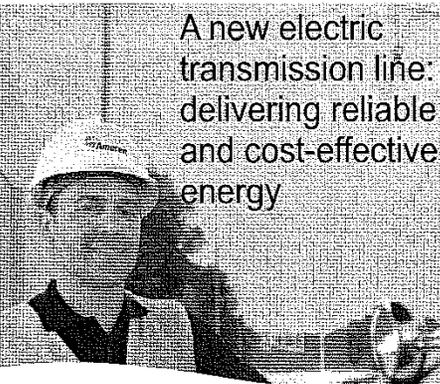
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