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**Congressman Jackson for Obama's Seat**  
**The SouthtownStar**

Chicago, [November 10, 2008](#)

**The Issue:** Barack Obama's soon-to-be open U.S. Senate seat is creating a stampede of, "Me, me, me!"

**We Say:** No one is better suited to fill the seat than U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr.

The SouthtownStar newspaper office sits at 159th Street and Harlem Avenue in Tinley Park. We hold a unique vantage point straddled between Cook and Will counties, between the gated communities of Homer Glen and the abandoned bungalows of Harvey. Our readers include Chicago city workers, Homewood teachers and the union households of Oak Lawn, Orland Park and Country Club Hills.

We know the farmers of Elwood. The stay-at-home moms of Mokena.

We know the members of the mosques, the Catholic churches, the Baptist congregations.

Our perch in the Southland gives us an authoritative voice and a rounded view of

Illinois. We've got it all, right here.

And so, with that perspective, we offer our strong recommendation of U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-2nd), of Chicago, to fill the vacancy of President-elect Barack Obama's U.S. Senate seat.

Here's why:

For 13 years, we've watched Jackson up close. He is one of Congress' most reliable advocates for the middle class while supporting economic development for large and small businesses alike. Of the \$600 million in federal appropriations he has secured for the 2nd District, nearly every cent has gone toward infrastructure projects, colleges and universities, housing and health care programs, and police and firefighter grants.

There are no bridges to nowhere. There are no statues, no stained-glass windows. He uses his position on the House Appropriations Committee to fund programs in his district that help working families. He is not afraid to call out wasteful spending when he sees it.

He has been a lonely voice - a fearless voice - on corruption, from abuses in Chicago's minority set-aside program to the Hired Truck scandal to voting rights violations nationwide and an inept police department in Harvey.

He endorses and supports candidates for office regardless of color or political expediency. He has backed reformers such as Forrest Claypool on the Cook County Board and clashed with the entrenched interests of former Chicago Ald. William Beavers and Dolton Mayor Bill Shaw, two Southland officials stuck in the model of old-school, unresponsive, patronage-laden government.

These are issues that impact us all.

Gov. Rod Blagojevich said championing health care will be a prerequisite for any candidate he considers - not just talking the talk, but walking the walk, as Blagojevich has done.

Jackson fits the bill. He has been a consistent voice on Capitol Hill for health care accessibility, backing a more progressive agenda, in fact, than Obama himself. Jackson supports a constitutional amendment to guarantee health care for all Americans and was a critical resource to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies when it conducted its groundbreaking 500-page report, "Unequal Treatment," in 2003, which outlined racial disparities in health care delivery.

Jackson voted twice last fall to extend the State Children's Health Insurance Program - a program for which Blagojevich's administration pushed hard. He would be a key ally for Obama in the U.S. Senate.

Democrats want Blagojevich to choose someone who can be elected statewide in 2010. Although downstate voters aren't shy about their distrust of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Jackson Jr. is not his father's cutout.

Obama's successful U.S. Senate strategy in 2004 was to get in front of as many groups

as possible so voters could see and hear him. He spent weeks living out of his Jeep Cherokee, shaking hands at Lincoln dinners and block parties. The same strategy could work for Jackson - although we welcome a hearty challenge from the Republicans as well.

Finally, we are not so naive as to discount the tension that has bubbled between Blagojevich and Jackson; Jackson and former Senate President Emil Jones; Jackson and Chicago Mayor Richard Daley; and Jackson and newly elected U.S. Rep. Debbie Halvorson (D-11th). Jackson has demonstrated a propensity to flare up and lash out.

However, we hope Blagojevich will see beyond the narrow disagreements of Illinois' diverse Democratic Party.

We hope, Governor, that you will take a wide, holistic view of the contributions Jackson could make to the state of Illinois, and to the country, in making this selection.

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**The BlackCommentator Readers' Corner Blog**

### **Poll: Jackson Should Get Obama's Seat UPI.com**

Chicago, [November 11, 2008](#)

U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. is a favorite among possible replacements to fill the Senate seat being vacated by President-elect [Barack Obama](#), a poll indicates.

A Zogby telephone poll conducted last week shows that among 10 possible candidates, 21 percent say they think Democratic Gov. [Rod Blagojevich](#) should appoint Jackson to the seat when Obama leaves it vacant in January.

The only other potential candidate to get double-digit support was [Tammy Duckworth](#), a former Democratic congresswoman candidate from a Chicago district. Fourteen percent of respondents said she should be appointed.

In two prospective Senate races, Jackson would defeat Republican [Congressman Ray LaHood](#) by a 50 percent to 31 percent margin, the survey shows.

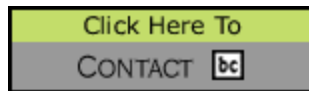
The poll of 802 likely voters statewide has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

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