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REBOREDO PRESENTED

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BODY:

For the last two days, Miami-Dade County prosecutors have presented evidence to a criminal grand jury to indict County Commissioner Pedro Reboredo for hiring two close friends for no-show jobs at County Hall.

The pair - 90-year-old Adelfa Perez-Cruz and 78-year-old Benito Mongeotti - may also be indicted, sources familiar with the case said Thursday. They have been collecting county paychecks for about eight years.

Reboredo's lawyer insisted the eight-year commissioner was innocent.

"These accusations have been hanging over the head of my good friend and client like a sword of Damocles," said attorney Milton Hirsch. "Pedro and I hope the near future will bring the opportunity to clear his good name."

Reboredo could not be reached for comment.

Those close to the case say the evidence against Reboredo and his aides, gathered during a yearlong police investigation, is not entirely clear-cut.

"The case has holes," said a law enforcement source familiar with the evidence. "It has strengths, it has weaknesses. It also needs to be determined if the violations are of a criminal nature or civil. That's why we are letting a grand jury decide."

The grand jury has not completed reviewing the evidence - including surveillance tapes, payroll records and statements by county employees, said a law enforcement source familiar with the case. The grand jury is scheduled to reconvene Wednesday.

Perez-Cruz worked on Reboredo's first commission campaign in 1993 and has worked for him ever since as a constituent services representative. She currently makes about \$17,000 a year.

Records show Perez-Cruz took only 12 hours of leave time in the last five years.

She and Mongeotti are paid to spend 40 hours a week helping Reboredo's constituents negotiate Miami-Dade government's extensive bureaucracy.

Reboredo has maintained that all his employees don't punch a time clock, but rather work flexible hours, including nights and weekends, to serve his constituents. Reboredo's district includes South Miami, West Miami and Miami Springs, as well as parts of Coral Gables, Miami, Hialeah and unincorporated Miami-Dade.

Among Mongeotti's duties were rounding up ingredients and wrestling the giant iron pan to cook Reboredo's trademark paella feasts for

constituents. He currently makes \$35,000 a year.

On Thursday afternoon, Reboredo's former chief of staff, Agustin "Gus" Garcia, was spotted going into the grand jury room at the Dade County Courthouse.

County Attorney Robert Ginsburg, who sources say was subpoenaed in connection with the case, was also seen outside the grand jury room.

Jeffrey Feiler, the attorney for Perez-Cruz, said the specter of the proceedings caused his elderly client's blood pressure to skyrocket earlier in the week - landing her in the hospital for three days.

"It's my understanding the grand jury is considering the possibility of indicting her," Feiler said. "My client is 90 years old, and it's my understanding she's done nothing wrong. She should not be indicted in this case."

Mongeotti's attorney, Arturo Alvarez, said he was unaware of the proceedings and declined to comment.

Herald staff writer Karl Ross contributed to this report.