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Law Resume in Liberal Distracts from Colorado Gubernatorial Race The Associated Press

LIBERAL, Kan. — Colorado gubernatorial hopeful Dan Maes' murky past in law enforcement in neighboring Kansas has become the latest distraction in his gaffe-ridden campaign.

Maes has claimed he was fired by the police department in Liberal in the 1980s because police and politicians were corrupt, and he told supporters that he worked undercover for state investigators gathering information on a local bookmaking ring.

But the Kansas Bureau of Investigation denies Maes ever worked for them, and Liberal's police department won't talk about Maes.

Meanwhile former U.S. Senator and University of Colorado president Hank Brown, one of the most respected Republicans in the state, told the Denver Post today he is no longer backing Maes and is "looking around" for a new candidate. "I'm concerned about the revelations. I'm withdrawing my endorsement," said Brown.

Read more from the Post [here](#).

Maes' shadowy law enforcement resume is the latest distraction in a race in which Maes was fined for campaign finance violations and drew criticism over remarks that he would fire thousands of state workers.

Maes, who defeated former U.S. Rep. Scott McInnis for the GOP nomination, had previously said he was fired from the police department in Liberal — a community of 21,000 that is home to the Wizard of Oz museum — because he got too close to higher-ups. In a letter to supporters in August he went further, saying he was placed undercover by the KBI to gather information inside a bookmaking ring that was allegedly selling drugs.

Maes later acknowledged he was involved — but not employed — by the KBI.

"I got too close to some significant people in the community who were involved in these activities and abruptly was dismissed from my position. I was blindsided and stunned to say the least. I am proud to say that I never participated in any illegal activity while undercover," Maes said in the letter that was briefly posted on his website and later removed.

Maes called it a chapter in his life "where I fought the machine." He refused to elaborate, saying that "many who were involved in this situation are still alive and in new places in their lives and I want to protect them."

Bob Blecha, director of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, said there is no record of Maes working for the bureau or as an undercover agent. He said there was an investigation of bookmaking in

Liberal at the time but "it was unsuccessful." Blecha refused to provide details because there was no prosecution.

Sheena Lynch, Liberal's city personnel director, confirmed that Maes worked for the police department from Sept. 21, 1983, to July 12, 1985, but refused to discuss the circumstances of his departure. Liberal Police Chief Alan Sill, who worked for the KBI until 1996, also refused to discuss Maes' performance as an officer, calling it a personnel matter.

"I'm not getting involved in your guy's political battles. This is something that happened 30 years ago and even if it was corrupt, those people are long gone," Sill said. "The agency isn't corrupt. This could ruin a man's career and I'm not going to talk about it."

Retired Liberal Police Chief Rick Kistner, who now lives in Florida, said he doesn't remember Maes or any bookmaking investigation. And Maes' former boss, Sonny Ralston, who was chief of detectives at the time, did not return multiple phone calls seeking comment. Ralston is now chief of police in St. John, Kan.

In a story Wednesday, The Denver Post asked Maes about his claims of working undercover in Kansas — to which Maes responded that "those comments might have been incorrect comments." He didn't elaborate, but his spokesman, Nate Strauch, said Wednesday that Maes isn't backing off his account.

Strauch said that at the time, Maes had some information about a small-time gambling operation and worked with a pair of KBI agents on "two or three occasions." He confirmed Maes was never directly employed by the KBI.

Maes, a businessman from the Denver suburb of Evergreen, rode tea party support to defeat McInnis in the Colorado GOP Aug. 10 primary. He faces Democrat John Hickenlooper, who is Denver's mayor, and former Republican U.S. Rep. Tom Tancredo in the general election.

Before the primary, Maes paid a \$17,500 fine for improperly paying himself \$40,000 from campaign funds for mileage reimbursements. That in part prompted Tancredo to demand he leave the race as a matter of integrity. Maes refused.

Maes also raised eyebrows by telling a forum of energy leaders that he would fire 2,000 state workers "just like that" if elected. And he said a Denver bike-sharing program could threaten residents' "personal freedoms" because it is part of an attempt to control U.S. cities. Maes said that an international environmental group that promotes Denver's B-Cycle program is part of a "greater strategy to rein in American cities under a United Nations treaty."

Read more: <http://www.gazette.com/articles/undercover-103942-kansas-maes.html#ixzz0yNDR0K00>

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