



Open For Access

A More Appropriate Name For Obama's Advocacy Group

THE WHITE HOUSE SAYS THERE'S NO "SET PRICE" FOR A MEETING WITH OBAMA



White House Press Secretary Jay Carney Says There Is No "Set Price" For Access To Obama, But Donors To Organizing For Action Will Get Access. "There is no 'set price' to meet with President Obama, White House press secretary Jay Carney said Monday amid continued outcry over the role of Organizing for Action, the outside group supporting the president's agenda. 'Any notion that there is a set price for a meeting with the president of the United States is just wrong,' Carney said during his daily briefing. Since OFA is intended to back the president's agenda, it makes sense that Obama would meet with the group. 'As anyone would expect, the president would likely meet with their representatives to discuss his agenda,' Carney said. 'But, again, any notion that there's a price for meeting with the president is simply wrong' he added." (Jennifer Epstein, "W.H.: 'No Set Price' For Meeting With Obama," [Politico](#), 3/4/13)

OBAMA IS "LEADING THE STAMPEDE" OF SPECIAL INTEREST MONEY IN POLITICS

***The Washington Post* Editorial: "Organizing For Action Should Be Renamed Paying For Access."**

"Judging by recent reports, Organizing for Action should be renamed Paying for Access. The Obama team has been talking about raising half the group's money through \$500,000 donations from the president's top supporters. They will apparently be offered a spot on an advisory board with the privilege of

attending quarterly meetings with the president.” (Editorial, “The Temptation Of Dark Money,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/3/13)

- ***The Washington Post* Editorial: “He Was The One Who A Few Years Ago Warned Us Of ‘A New Stampede Of Special-Interest Money In Our Politics.’ Now Mr. Obama Seems To Be Leading The Stampede.”** (Editorial, “The Temptation Of Dark Money,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/3/13)
- ***The Washington Post* Editorial: Obama Is “Blithely Ignoring His Own Past Warnings” In Forming Organizing For Action And “It Stinks.”** “Blithely ignoring his own past warnings, President Obama is wading ever deeper into a campaign and politics quagmire filled with potential hazard for his second term. He ought to come to his senses. If he doesn’t, it won’t be easy to clean this muck off his shoes later on. The president’s team has formed Organizing for Action, a group intended to advance his priorities using the potent grass-roots technology and troops from his winning reelection campaign. According to a summary prepared for donors and reported by The Post’s Tom Hamburger, this includes 2.2 million volunteers, 33 million Facebook friends, 22 million Twitter followers and 17 million e-mail subscribers. We see nothing wrong with that. But how the Obama people are going about it stinks.” (Editorial, “The Temptation Of Dark Money,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/3/13)

***The New York Times* Editorial: Organizing For Action’s Ties To The White House Are “Disturbing.”** “But a closer look at this group shows how disturbing its work really is. Its name is Organizing for Action, and if its initials seem familiar, that’s because the group is the direct descendant of Obama for America, the president’s campaign organization in 2008 and 2012. That organization is now defunct, but its new incarnation has its extremely valuable voter database and many of the same strategists.” (Editorial, “The White House Joins The Cash Grab,” [The New York Times](#), 3/2/13)

- **“Organizing For Action Appears To Be An Extension Of The Administration, Stocked With Alumni Of Mr. Obama’s White House And Campaign Teams And Devoted Solely To The President’s Second-Term Agenda.”** “Many traditional advocacy organizations, including the Sierra Club and the National Rifle Association, are set up as social welfare groups, or 501(c)(4)’s in tax parlance. But unlike those groups, Organizing for Action appears to be an extension of the administration, stocked with alumni of Mr. Obama’s White House and campaign teams and devoted solely to the president’s second-term agenda.” (Nicholas Confessore, “Obama’s Backers Seek Big Donors To Press Agenda,” [The New York Times](#), 2/22/13)

OFA IS AN “OPEN INVITATION TO DONORS WHO WANT ACCESS AND INFLUENCE”

***The Washington Post* Editorial: “Big Money Given In Secret Is A Corrupting Influence On Our Politics. But It Is Even More Worrisome For A Sitting President To Be Fielding Such A Group.”** (Editorial, “The Temptation Of Dark Money,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/3/13)

- **“It Seems To Be An Open Invitation To Donors Who Want Access And Influence On Policy Decisions.”** (Editorial, “The Temptation Of Dark Money,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/3/13)

With Its Goal Of Raising \$50 Million, Organizing For Action Has “Ample Potential For Influence-Peddling.” “President Obama’s political team is fanning out across the country in pursuit of an ambitious goal: raising \$50 million to convert his re-election campaign into a powerhouse national advocacy network, a sum that would rank the new group as one of Washington’s biggest lobbying operations. But the rebooted campaign, known as Organizing for Action, has plunged the president and his aides into a campaign finance limbo with few clear rules, ample potential for influence-peddling, and no real

precedent in national politics.” (Nicholas Confessore, “Obama’s Backers Seek Big Donors To Press Agenda,” [The New York Times](#), 2/22/13)

- **“At Least Half Of The Group’s Budget Will Come From A Select Group Of Donors Who Will Each Contribute Or Raise \$500,000 Or More, According To Donors And Strategists Involved In The Effort.”** (Nicholas Confessore, “Obama’s Backers Seek Big Donors To Press Agenda,” [The New York Times](#), 2/22/13)
- **“But Those Contributions Will Also Translate Into Access, According To Donors Courted By The President’s Aides.”** (Nicholas Confessore, “Obama’s Backers Seek Big Donors To Press Agenda,” [The New York Times](#), 2/22/13)

Donors Who Contribute At Least \$500,000 Will Get Access To Obama

“Giving Or Raising \$500,000 Or More Puts Donors On A National Advisory Board For Mr. Obama’s Group And The Privilege Of Attending Quarterly Meetings With The President, Along With Other Meetings At The White House.” (Nicholas Confessore, “Obama’s Backers Seek Big Donors To Press Agenda,” [The New York Times](#), 2/22/13)

- ***The New York Times* Editorial: OFA’s “National Advisory Board” For Major Donors “Is Nothing More Than A Fancy Way Of Setting A Price For Access.”** “The organization plans to raise \$50 million, Nicholas Confessore of The Times recently reported, at least half of which will come from donors pressured to bring in \$500,000 or more. Give or raise that much and you get to be on the group’s ‘national advisory board,’ which will hold quarterly meetings with the president. That is nothing more than a fancy way of setting a price for access to Mr. Obama.” (Editorial, “The White House Joins The Cash Grab,” [The New York Times](#), 3/2/13)
- ***The New York Times* Editorial: “Any Corporation With A Matter Pending Before The Administration Can Give Lavishly To Organizing For Action As A Way Of Currying Favor, Knowing That The West Wing Will Take Note.”** (Editorial, “The White House Joins The Cash Grab,” [The New York Times](#), 3/2/13)