

# What They Are Saying ... About Obama's White House Perks For Donors

**CBS News' Katie Couric:** "He's attended 28 fund-raisers this is year, raising more than \$27 million. But the president is also raising money in a less public, more controversial way." (CBS' "Evening News," 10/28/09)

- **CBS News' Sharyl Attkisson:** "As Democrats prime for their fundraising machine for 2010 midterm elections, their biggest rain maker is the man in the White House. Mega-donors are scoring invitations to exclusive White House affairs, access to senior officials, even the Executive Office bowling alley." (CBS' "Evening News," 10/28/09)
- **Attkisson:** "Here's the difference, though, President Obama as a candidate implied things would be different." (CBS' "Evening News," 10/28/09)

**The New York Times:** "If The Lincoln Bedroom Was Fashionable For Political Donors In The 1990s, Is The White House Bowling Alley Suddenly En Vogue For Contributors Today?" (Jeff Zeleny, "White House Denies Giving Donors Special Access," [The New York Times](#), 10/29/09)

- **NYT:** "In his presidential campaign, Mr. Obama pledged to change the way business was conducted in Washington and to reduce the influence of money in politics." (Jeff Zeleny, "White House Denies Giving Donors Special Access," [The New York Times](#), 10/29/09)

**The Washington Post:** "What does being a top Democratic donor get you in Obama's Washington?" (Michael D. Shear, [The Washington Post](#), 10/28/09)

**Politico:** "Donors Got Access To Bowling Alley, WH Movies, Messina" (Glenn Thrush, [Politico](#), 10/28/09)

- **Politico:** "It turns out that the White House-complex bowling alley is the new Lincoln Bedroom." (Glenn Thrush, "Donors Got Access To Bowling Alley, WH Movies, Messina," [Politico](#), 10/28/09)
- **Politico:** "The big shots were also treated to an in-person West Coast briefing on health care reform by Jim Messina, one of Obama's point men on the Hill." (Glenn Thrush, "Donors Got Access To Bowling Alley, WH Movies, Messina," [Politico](#), 10/28/09)

**Talking Points Memo:** "Obama Using The White House As A Fundraising Tool" (Justin Elliott, [Talking Points Memo](#), 10/28/09)

- **TPM:** "All of this is reminiscent of Obama's campaign strategy of giving "VIP" contributors access to high-level advisers." (Justin Elliott, "Obama Using The White House As A Fundraising Tool," [Talking Points Memo](#), 10/28/09)

**ABC News' Jake Tapper:** "White House Faces Questions on Big Donor Maintenance Programs" (Jake Tapper, [ABC News](#), 10/28/09)

- **Tapper:** "The White House found itself on the defensive Wednesday as spokesman Robert Gibbs tried to answer questions about a Washington Times investigation indicating that this White House ... rewarded big Democratic donors with access to the White House and its powerful players." (Jake Tapper, "White House Faces Questions on Big Donor Maintenance Programs," [ABC News](#), 10/28/09)

- **Tapper: “Some of Mr. Obama’s more idealistic supporters may have been under the impression that President Obama wouldn’t be eager to engage in such activities ...”** (Jake Tapper, “White House Faces Questions on Big Donor Maintenance Programs,” [ABC News](#), 10/28/09)
- **Tapper: During Democratic Primary, Obama Campaign Made Issue Of Clinton White House Past Donor Maintenance Controversies.** “During the Democratic primaries, after Clinton donor David Geffen became a support of Obama’s, Gibbs invoked some of the Clinton-era controversies involving fundraising, saying, ‘It is ironic that the Clintons had no problem with David Geffen when was raising them \$18 million and sleeping at their invitation in the Lincoln bedroom.’ Beyond obvious issues over what the word ‘ironic’ means, the statement was clearly meant to invoke some of the donor maintenance controversies from the Clinton era.” (Jake Tapper, “White House Faces Questions on Big Donor Maintenance Programs,” [ABC News](#), 10/28/09)

**Los Angeles Times: “Turns out that President Obama, who promised a more ethical approach to governance, has been rewarding friends with the perks of office.”** (Johanna Neuman, “Obama White House defends social invites to top donors. Yawn. At least Lincoln bedroom not in play,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 10/28/09)

- **LAT: “Report of White House perks for donors stirs debate”** (Peter Nicholas, “Report Of White House Perks For Donors Stirs Debate,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 10/29/09)
- **LAT: “Reports of special treatment for campaign donors are potentially troublesome for the White House, given Obama's promise to uphold the highest ethical standards while running a transparent operation.”** (Peter Nicholas, “Report Of White House Perks For Donors Stirs Debate,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 10/29/09)

**National Review Online: “This Gives One Bad Lincoln-Bedroom Flashbacks”** (Kathryn Jean Lopez, [National Review Online](#), 10/28/09)

**The Daily Beast: “Obama Gives Perks to Donors”** ([The Daily Beast](#), 10/28/09)

- **The Daily Beast: “President Obama has been reportedly showing gratitude towards the top Democratic fundraisers with VIP access to the White House, classified conferences with top advisers, and exclusive invitations to key speeches and town-hall meetings.”** (“Obama Gives Perks to Donors,” [The Daily Beast](#), 10/28/09)

**The Associated Press: “Obama Gives Donors Special Access, Report Says”** ([The Associated Press](#), 10/28/09)

- **AP: “During his 2008 presidential campaign, Obama promised to change the way things are done in Washington.”** (“Obama Gives Donors Special Access, Report Says,” [The Associated Press](#), 10/28/09)
- **AP: “President Barack Obama has rewarded top Democratic donors with perks ranging from holiday visits to the White House to policy briefings, carrying on a practice of past presidents despite his promise to change how Washington works, a report published Wednesday shows.”** (“Obama Gives Donors Special Access, Report Says,” [The Associated Press](#), 10/28/09)

**The Hill: “It is not uncommon for presidents to invite supporters to the White House, but *The Washington Times* charged Wednesday that the Obama administration had offered special access to big donors in an effort to encourage them to support Democrats again in 2010.”** (Tony Romm, “Gibbs: Donors not given special WH perks,” The Hill’s [Blog Briefing Room](#), 10/28/09)

**Time: “Since Obama has taken money from all of these people he is rewarding--often money of the six-figure variety--his motivations are suspect. It looks like payback. It looks bad.”** (Michael Scherer, “Barack Obama’s Well-Tended Money Machine,” *Time*’s [Swampland Blog](#), 10/28/09)

- **Time: “The problem is that the White House now finds itself in a position where spokesman Robert Gibbs seems to be denying the obvious.”** (Michael Scherer, “Barack Obama’s Well-Tended Money Machine,” *Time*’s [Swampland Blog](#), 10/28/09)

- **Time:** “There were a lot of people Obama could have golfed with on Martha's Vineyard, and he chose his top New York bundler, UBS Americas CEO Robert Wolf.” (Michael Scherer, “Barack Obama's Well-Tended Money Machine,” [Time's Swampland Blog](#), 10/28/09)

**Fox News:** “Democratic Party Distributed White House Tickets To Donors” ([Fox News](#), 10/28/09)

“The Obama administration on Wednesday acknowledged that it allowed the Democratic Party to distribute tickets to White House events among supporters and contributors ...” (“Democratic Party Distributed White House Tickets To Donors,” [Fox News](#), 10/28/09)

“That access also covered VIP privileges ranging from a birthday visit to the Oval Office, to use of the White House bowling alley, to a golf outing with the president in Martha's Vineyard.” (“Democratic Party Distributed White House Tickets To Donors,” [Fox News](#), 10/28/09)

**Fox News' Bret Baier:** “[T]hen candidate Obama called it the original sin of all politicians, the need to raise money. Now there is a report alleging that fulfilling that need has led to some special treatment for donors to president Obama.” (FOX News' “Special Report with Bret Baier,” 10/28/09)

**CNN:** “Gibbs Denies Quid Pro Quo After DNC Donor Story” (Peter Hamby, [CNN](#), 10/28/09)

**CREW Executive Director Melanie Sloan:** “It says donors are getting meetings with White House insiders to tell them what's going on.” (Jake Tapper, “White House Faces Questions on Big Donor Maintenance Programs,” [ABC News](#), 10/28/09)