

The New York Times

The Caucus

The Politics and Government Blog of The Times

APRIL 27, 2012, 2:56 PM

Obama Campaign Raises Money for Hillary Clinton

By [NICHOLAS CONFESSORE](#)

Four years ago, the Obama fund-raising machine worked to bury Hillary Rodham Clinton. Now his contributors are opening their wallets for her.

Obama campaign officials have asked the president's elite donors and fund-raisers to donate to Mrs. Clinton's defunct presidential campaign committee, with the goal of retiring \$245,000 in debt left over from her 2008 White House bid. As secretary of state, Mrs. Clinton is barred from engaging in political activity or actively fund-raising for herself.

People familiar with the effort said the campaign's outreach grew out of discussions with Mrs. Clinton's husband, former President Bill Clinton, who has agreed to headline a series of major fund-raisers for Mr. Obama's presidential campaign, including one this Sunday at the Virginia home of Terry McAuliffe, a former chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Mr. Clinton has also been approached to help raise money for Priorities USA Action, a "super PAC" founded by former Obama aides that has had difficulty attracting donors.

"We are helping to retire the remainder of the debt from the Clinton campaign in 2008," said Matthew Barzun, the Obama campaign's national finance chairman, in a statement. "All of our Democratic allies are working together to help re-elect President Obama for another four years."

It is not unusual for victors to help their former opponents pay down campaign debts: Mitt Romney and his family made contributions this year to the campaign committee of Tim Pawlenty, for example, after Mr. Pawlenty dropped out and endorsed Mr. Romney.

But Mrs. Clinton's debt has in the past been a point of contention between her supporters and those of Mr. Obama. She ended her White House bid in 2008 with \$20 million in debt and loans, and while Mr. Obama asked his top donors at the time to help defray it, many of them - still fuming after the contentious primary fight between Mr. Obama and Mrs. Clinton - refused to do so.

In recent days, Mr. Barzun and Jane W. Stetson, the national finance chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee, have both approached Obama donors seeking checks of \$2,300 - the maximum allowable contribution in 2008 - to clear Mrs. Clinton's debt. Ms. Stetson recently e-mailed members of the Democrats' 400-person National Finance Committee seeking their help; they are the campaign's elite "bundlers," each committed to raising \$350,000 for Mr. Obama.