

McCain, Obama diverge on campaign funding

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Sens. Barack Obama and John McCain have begun laying the foundation for funding fall campaigns for the U.S. presidency, their campaigns say. Obama, the Illinois senator battling Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., to be the Democratic presidential nominee, is signaling he may skip public financing for the general election, should he be nominated, The New York Times reported. His campaign says he raised \$55 million in February and \$40 million in March. McCain, meanwhile, indicated he would take advantage of public financing, which would bar him from accepting private donations and cap spending to the \$84.1 million the U.S. Treasury would provide, the Times said. His campaign started returning contributions earmarked for the general election, asking the donors to contribute to a fund for legal and accounting costs, which is not subject to the public financing limits. Obama's apparent decision to back off public funds drew criticism from the presumptive Republican nominee. McCain's campaign, however, eschewed public financing during the primary. Clinton has not said whether she would take part in the system should she be the Democratic presidential nominee. No major party candidate has walked away from public financing for the general election since the system took effect in 1976.

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