

PACs spend record on federal election

by UPI

WASHINGTON - A political watchdog group says contributions to lawmakers from special interests could shape U.S. President Barack Obama's agenda in Congress.

While Obama shunned contributions from political action committees during his campaign, 175 members of Congress received 50 percent or more of their campaign money from PACs in 2007 and 2008, USA Today reported Monday, noting PACs spent a record \$416 million on the federal election.

The deep contributions to lawmakers could shape Obama's proposals for healthcare, energy and taxes as they are debated in Congress, said Craig Holman of Public Citizen.

"The purpose of PAC giving is so a company can buy a seat at the table," Holman said.

Some lawmakers, including Rep. Joe Barton, R-Texas, received more than 80 percent of their campaign money from PACs, federal records show.

"Congressman Barton is proud that groups of nurses, oilmen, Realtors and ... others agree with him," Barton's office said in an e-mail to USA Today. "The fact that so many people believe in him is a tonic."

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