

Obama: Stimulus jobs to be based on merit

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- U.S. President Barack Obama told state lawmakers Friday he was issuing a directive to provide guidance on what constitutes "acceptable use of taxpayer money."

"Decisions about how Recovery Act (stimulus) dollars are spent will be based on the merits," Obama said during a speech to the National Conference of State Legislatures. "I don't need to remind you the American people are watching what we do. They expect to see their hard-earned money spent wisely."

The \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act "will not be an excuse for waste and abuse," Obama told the 60 leaders from state legislatures. "Whenever a project comes up for review, we will ask a few simple questions: does it advance the core mission of the Recovery Act? Does it jump start job creation? Does it lay the foundation for lasting prosperity?"

Obama said he was committed to being a strong partner to state legislatures as they work through the recession.

"You're on the front lines of this recession," Obama said. "It's your states that are struggling with shrinking revenues, your budgets that are being cut and your services that families turn to first in a moment of need."

While saying he couldn't predict how long the road to recovery would be, "I do know that ... we build a partnership that stretches from the State House to the White House, then we'll turn this economy around and the American people will emerge from this crisis stronger than we were before."

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