

## Obama defends lack of U.S. flag pin

by UPI

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa - Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., says he decided to stop wearing a U.S. flag pin on his lapel, choosing instead to show his patriotism through his words and actions. The presidential hopeful, when questioned about the choice by an ABC affiliate reporter in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, said the decision was related to his opposition to the Iraq War, ABC News reported Friday. "You know, the truth is that right after 9/11, I had a pin," Obama said. "Shortly after 9/11, particularly because as we're talking about the Iraq War, that became a substitute for I think true patriotism, which is speaking out on issues that are of importance to our national security, I decided I won't wear that pin on my chest. "Instead," he said, "I'm going to try to tell the American people what I believe will make this country great, and hopefully that will be a testimony to my patriotism." Obama later expanded on his statements in response to criticism from conservative pundits. "I'm less concerned with what you're wearing on your lapel than what's in your heart," Obama said Thursday in Independence, Iowa. "You show your patriotism by how you treat your fellow Americans, especially those who serve. And you show your patriotism by being true to your values and ideals. And that's what we have to lead with, our values and ideals," Obama said.

© Copyright United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

*Obama defends lack of U.S. flag pin by UPI*