
Obama Not Ready to Endorse Hillary Clinton as Democratic Candidate

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A day after Clinton, who was defeated by Obama in the Democratic primaries of 2008, announced her intention to seek the party's presidential nomination in 2016, White House spokesman Josh Earnest scuttled rumors about any immediate support she might get from the president.

"The two of them (Obama and Clinton) have become friends, but there are other people who are friends of the president who may decide to enter the race. So the president has not offered up any sort of endorsement at this point," Earnest told his daily press conference.

Though the spokesman did not identify exactly who those "friends" might be, predictably among them will be Vice President Joe Biden if he finally decides to compete for the Democratic nomination.

Earnest emphasized that it will be "the responsibility of Democratic voters to decide who should be the Democratic nominee for president" in 2016, and once the process is concluded, whoever receives the party's nomination "can be confident that they'll enjoy the support of President Obama in their campaign."

Last Saturday, Obama called Hillary Clinton a "friend" who would be "an excellent president," a statement interpreted by some pundits as an implicit endorsement for his former secretary of state (2009-2013), considered the frontrunner by a wide margin for the Democratic presidential nomination.

According to Earnest, the chief message of Clinton's campaign – the idea that the United States economy favors the richest to the detriment of the middle class – largely coincides with the same concerns expressed by Obama over the past few years.

In fact, the kickoff of Clinton's campaign coincides with a week in which Obama will be focused on his economic ideas for aiding the middle class, with events planned for Tuesday and Thursday in the White House and on Wednesday in Charlotte, North Carolina.

However, Earnest explained that this focus on the economy "is something we have long envisioned making around Tax Day," adding that the plan was decided on "prior to the announcements of any of the candidates."
