



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on October 24, 2012

Obama Stiffs Illinois Capital \$55,000 for 2008 Campaign Event

As of September 30, President Barack Obama's reelection campaign [had raised over \\$560 million and had \\$99 million on hand](#). Yet the campaign still refuses to reimburse the city of Springfield, Illinois, \$55,457 for a 2008 campaign event held there. And after four years of trying to wring the cash out of Obama, the city is throwing in the towel.

"Short of suing the campaign, which isn't really going to do anything — it would drag on forever — there's really nothing we can do," Springfield budget director Bill McCarty told the [State Journal-Register](#). "We've tried."



In August 2008, then-Sen. Barack Obama introduced his running mate, then-Sen. Joe Biden, at an appearance at the Old State Capitol in Springfield. The city provided nine civilians and 160 police officers to facilitate and secure the event, at a total cost of \$68,139, for which it billed the Obama campaign. The campaign paid just \$12,682 of that tab, leaving taxpayers in the Illinois capital to foot the rest of it.

Ever since, the city has tried unsuccessfully to collect the outstanding debt. Alderman Frank Edwards, who briefly served as mayor following the death of Mayor Timothy Davlin in late 2010, told Chicago's [WLS](#) radio that "the Obama campaign has given him and other Springfield officials the runaround when they have asked to be paid what is owed."

Indeed, part of the reason the bill remains unpaid is that no one seems willing to accept responsibility for it — a familiar refrain in Washington. When asked about the bill, an Obama campaign spokesman told WLS to talk to the Secret Service, which in turn denied responsibility for "pay[ing] for police overtime associated with protective visits." It has also been suggested that the White House itself may be responsible for the bill.

During his four-month tenure as mayor, Edwards sent a [letter](#) to the president asking him to clear up the confusion. "As you know," he wrote, "sometimes only the executive himself can cut through such inter-departmental differences of opinion. Therefore, I am reaching out to you for your assistance in resolving this matter. It is my hope that you will task someone from your office to specifically facilitate this payment to us."

The letter was dated March 10, 2011. More than a year and a half later, the debt remains outstanding. Earlier this year, reports the [Journal-Register](#), Alderman Frank Kunz "jokingly suggested turning over the bill to a collection agency," a remark that "got national attention."

Now, however, city officials have given up trying to collect.



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“At some point, you have to dedicate your time and resources to something that’s going to get you somewhere,” McCarty told the newspaper. “Spending our time and resources on the campaign have gotten us nowhere.”

It appears, therefore, that Springfield taxpayers will have to cough up the cash to cover the very well-off Obama’s 2008 campaign event. Of course, that is nothing compared to the \$5 trillion (plus interest) American taxpayers will be forced to turn over to Uncle Sam to pay off the debt Obama and his cohorts have racked up in Washington over the last four years, but it is still unjust.

“If you’re going to go after your citizens for bills they owe you then everybody’s in,” Edwards told WLS. “And that’s just kind of the way I look at it. I think if the Obama campaign owes us money they ought to pay it.”

Edwards also told the station that Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel should require advance payment for Obama’s planned election-night rally in the Windy City:

That’s exactly what I’d do. It would be no different than if you, a private individual, went and had an event somewhere and you didn’t pay your bill, you didn’t pay your catering bill, you didn’t pay the rental hall. Anybody that goes to rent you a facility is going to be a little leery of you because you haven’t paid your bill. I’d be especially leery now because if he doesn’t win re-election his campaign’s gonna have debt. And you’re gonna be at the bottom of the pile.

Given that Emanuel is tight with Obama, he is unlikely to heed Edwards’ advice; nor is he likely to pursue any Obama debt to Chicago aggressively. Chicago taxpayers, hold onto your wallets.

Photo: The Illinois State Capitol in Springfield, Illinois: AP Images via Wikipedia



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