

Black History Month

Barack Obama: Senator with the midas touch

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON—Barack Obama has shown a Midas touch in so many different ways that it's easy to forget he's just another new senator.

In the past year, the freshman from Illinois has become a best-selling author, a millionaire, a Grammy Award winner and an important fundraiser for Democrats.

Altogether, Obama has helped raise \$6.5 million for his political action committee and other Democratic candidates, party committees and state parties, as he crisscrosses the country from New Jersey to Virginia to Florida.

He brought in about \$800,000 with an e-mail message sent out on MoveOn.org on behalf of Sen. Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., who at age 88 is seeking a ninth term in office.

"He said some nice things about me," Byrd recalled. "Anywhere he comes in West Virginia we will give the man a great reception. He's a wonderful man."

Some of Obama's fundraising activities are part of his job as a vice chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

"These are trips not initiated by me; these are trips that other people think will be helpful," Obama said, noting he has family and political

obligations in Illinois. "For every invitation I've accepted, I've turned down 100."

"I've been incredibly blessed," he said in an interview with The Associated

Press. "My attitude is as long as I work hard, as long as I operate honestly, with integrity, the worst that can happen to me is that I can lose an election."



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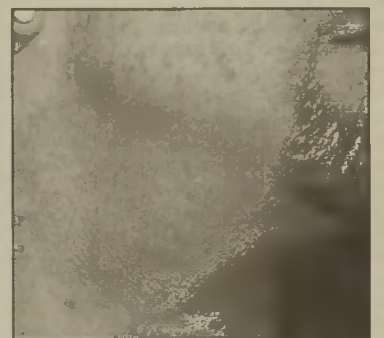
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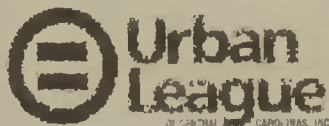


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