

**Sen. Barack Obama** briefly discussed government transparency at a meeting of the Newspaper Association of America and the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

I think one of the biggest problems of the last eight years has been the degree to which President Bush has taken almost the opposite tack, that secrecy and concentrations of power in the Oval Office and a disdain, to some degree, for public opinion has left the American people feeling like they have no influence over their government. And to some degree, they don't know what's going on. And I think the fact that lobbyists and special interests have been so dominant in how Washington works has contributed to that sense. So one of the things I want to do is open things up. I want transparency. I want accountability.

You know, since I worked in the state legislature, I've always been interested in ethics reforms and disclosure. One of the laws that I'm proud of passing was working with one of the most conservative members of Congress, Tom Coburn, for a searchable Internet database so that not just the press but also the public can discover every single dollar being spent by the federal government, whether it's a bridge to nowhere or a no-bid contract to somewhere, so that we can shine the light and hold more people accountable. I think that's important.