

## HOLLYWOOD CELEBRITIES TURN OUT FOR OBAMA: KEEN, READY AND PREPARED



The Obama camp says that it has no shortage of celebrities wanting to put in their share for the President's chances in the November elections. Elizabeth Banks can be seen on a web video advocating the worth of Planned Parenthood for "working-class ladies." Academy award winners are visiting homes in battleground states, where stakes are high, and pushing for the President. NBA stars are going to participate in the "Obama Classic" on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August. The fundraiser will feature Michael Jordan and other NBA stars including Carmelo Anthony, Rajon Rondo and John Wall in shooting hoops. Jordan and NBA commissioner David Stern will also co-host a \$20,000-per-person dinner with the president that evening. People with less disposable income have also been invited to participate and donate as much as their purses will permit. Deputy National Field Director Marlon Marshall wrote in an email to supporters, "Imagine shooting hoops with Carmelo Anthony, Patrick Ewing, Sheryl Swoopes, Kyrie Irving and Alonzo Mourning. Oh, and you'll get to meet President Obama and Michael Jordan over dinner, too." Mr. Obama, who has made Mitt Romney's wealth a major issue during this campaign season, has no problem in hobnobbing with wealthy and showcasing his celebrated supporters and putting them to work for him. Already Obama has had top of the tops, people like George Clooney and Sarah Jessica Parker opening their homes for fundraisers that raked in huge amounts of money through the guests and also through the lucrative contests that fetched millions more from small donor participants. It is not that only Obama has the big guns on his side, Mitt Romney has his share of them as well. Clint Eastwood endorsed him last month and Kid Rock headlined a concert just prior to a campaign rally during the primaries. However, it will be safe to assume that Obama will have more of the star dust showered on him than Romney. The Obama campaign claims that they are receiving many requests from celebrities from all fields, music, films, sports and industry, seeking to do whatever they can for the President. The campaign says that it looks to use these friends to give a boost to and motivate hard working volunteers who are energized by their presence amongst them. Their star power also helps bring in new people into the campaign hubs and generating positive media coverage as the celebrities quotes carry media leverage and are given considerable importance. Obama has drawn huge support from Hollywood's biggest names that include movie moguls Jeffrey Katz enberg and Steven Spielberg. The fundraiser at Clooney's house, included actors, Tobey Maguire, Jack Black and Salma Hayek and singer Barbra Streisand. As recent as last week, the campaign organized a key 100-days-out nationwide organizing initiative, which saw former "Scrubs" co-stars Zach Braff and Donald Faison visit houses in Las Vegas registering voters. Don Cheadle from the sets of "Iron Man 3" in Durham, NC, stopped by at barber shops, whilst Alfre Woodward visited beauty shops in Richmond. Other celebrities who are doing their bit for President Obama are Justin Long who refereed a dodge ball game at Dartmouth University in New Hampshire and Ryan Phillippe is travelling to Iowa to woo young voters. The campaign says that the celebrity contribution is likely to increase as the day draws nearer. Moreover, they play an increasingly important role as they deputize for the President in place wherever time constraints prevent him from being present. Both the President and his deputy also need time for their governing duties and must prudently divide their time between politics and governing. Obama's glamorous elbow-rubbing is fraught with risks as his Republican rivals are contending that he is more interested in rubbing shoulders with Hollywood Stars to add luster to his campaign than he is in helping ordinary Americans, who are reeling under economic conditions that were caused by his policies. It seems that the President has judged that the risks associated with being associated with the rich and mighty and alienating the poorer sections, is outweighed by the promotion their endorsement brings – it is a risk well worth taking.