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**Obama: I would not pardon Rezko; Republicans pounce on Dem candidate's ties to convicted fund-raiser**

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SPRINGFIELD-If elected president, Democrat Barack Obama will not pardon Tony Rezko for his corruption convictions or reduce his prison time, the senator's campaign said Thursday.

That word came after a federal jury in Chicago convicted Rezko Wednesday on 16 of 24 corruption counts -- and Republicans seized on the verdict with an immediate round of Internet-based advertising questioning Obama's past personal and professional ties to Rezko.

Asked about the possibility of clemency, Obama campaign spokesman Ben LaBolt said the senator would not act to wipe away Rezko's felony convictions or commute any prison time he might serve as a result of Wednesday's verdict.

LaBolt would not elaborate on Obama's rationale for ruling out clemency for Rezko.

In a statement issued by his campaign after the verdict, Obama said he was "saddened" by Rezko's conviction and said, "This isn't the Tony Rezko I knew."

The Republican National Committee said the verdict and the senator's past friendship with Rezko "raise serious questions about whether he has the judgment to serve as president."