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Banning Barack Obama and his educational address?

September 7, 11:13 AM • Philadelphia Generation Y Examiner • Kimberly Zapata

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Tomorrow marks the start of yet another academic year. Today, parents and students alike are bustling about in a last minute effort to fill book bags and lunchboxes before the bus pulls up to the curb tomorrow morning. Ironically enough, President Obama is doing just about the same thing, and I'm not talking about for his daughters either; I'm referring to President Obama's return to school tomorrow morning. While President Obama isn't actually going to sit in a classroom, or crammed in a desk coated with hatch mark hearts or doodles, he is planning to address the nation with an educational address that, according to the [White House](#), will be issued to promote "the importance of [students] taking responsibility for their education, [and to] challenging [sic] them to set goals and do everything they can to succeed." More specifically, Obama's speech will stream [live](#) via the White House's website to millions of school age children across the country on the morning of Tuesday, September 8, 2009. But not so fast; not every child will see this address. Why? Well, political backlash of course.



In a democracy divided by party lines, not everyone agrees with President Obama, or his message, and many teachers and parents alike are outraged by his so-called brainwashing attempts. But wait, didn't President George HW Bush deliver a similar [address](#) eighteen years ago, give or take a day? Well, according to Jim Greer, the chairman of the Republican Party of Florida, the problem isn't addressing children, it is President Obama's particular plan and address. Greer noted that the address will "not allow for [a] healthy debate on the President's agenda, but rather [it] obligates the youngest children in our public school system to agree with our President's initiatives or be ostracized by their teachers and classmates." The agenda Greer refers to is lesson plan provided to each school district with suggested activities and questions to start an engaging classroom conversation (with on [plan](#) aimed at grades Pre-K-6 and a second [plan](#) aimed at grades 7-12). However, this plan is merely a guide, a teaching tool, and the use of these "Classroom Engagement Resources" is certainly not mandatory (nor is viewing the speech for that matter). Even so, it appears that most of the controversy revolves around these two documents which, according to the [Cato Institute](#), contain "all sorts of troubling buzzwords and guidance" that, in essence, skew the message in a way that is favorable to our President and his beliefs.

Having read both documents, I am struggling to find the controversy noted above--then again, I am also a Democrat, which, I am sure some would argue, may be part of the problem. Regardless, the speech will go on as planned; it just may be your son or daughter will not be able to view it--as many school districts are taking a discretionary approach and allowing either the administration, principal, or individual teachers to decide whether or not to show the address to their students. Ironically, I find this more troubling than any aspect of Obama's speech. Why? Those who argue that Obama's address is a form of brainwashing are, in essence, doing the same thing by skewing so-called facts through limited exposure. Maybe this is quite frankly a naive or idealistic thought, but I like to believe that our children are a little bit smarter than we are giving them credit for. Is there really anything wrong with encouraging patriotism in our children?

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