



## Critics Say Obama Should Stay Out of the Classroom

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By Bret Baier

**FOX NEWS**

*Now some fresh pickings from the Political Grapevine:*

### Superintendent in Chief?

The White House is facing opposition from several groups over next week's national address by President Obama to school students, with one critic calling him "superintendent in chief."

The Department of Education has offered a series of classroom activities to coincide with the speech. Students in grades K through six are encouraged to read books about past presidents and Barack Obama. But other suggestions include writing, "letters to themselves about what they can do to help the president."

For grades seven through 12, proposed activities include asking questions like "How will (President Obama) inspire us? How will he challenge us?"

Some critics are concerned the lesson plans amount to a form of indoctrination.

Neal McCluskey of the CATO Institute says, "It essentially tries to force kids to say the president and the presidency is inspiring and that's very problematic."

And Frederick Hess, an education policy director at the conservative think tank AEI, says: "I don't think it's appropriate for teachers to ask students to help promote the president's preferred school reforms and policies."

### Staying Put

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Charles Rangel is safe... for now.

Democratic aides tell The Hill newspaper House Speaker Nancy Pelosi will let the New York Democrat keep his chairmanship of the House Ways and Means Committee, despite last week's revelation that he failed to list about half his total worth on federal financial disclosure forms. That prompted calls from government watchdog groups to appoint a special council to investigate.

Aides say Pelosi is staying out of it because the House Ethics Committee is still conducting its own investigation into a number of possible Rangel violations. Speaker Pelosi promised that investigation would be wrapped up nine months ago.

Melanie Sloan, executive director of Citizens for Ethics and Responsibility in Washington, says of the time-consuming probe: "If they can't get their act together, then certainly the Democratic leadership should step in."

### Spaced Out

Japan's incoming Prime Minister, Yukio Hatoyama, has a lot to worry about: Japan's economy, North Korea and Japan's relationship with the U.S. But his wife seems to be a free spirit, discussing her inner thoughts about what she calls a close encounter with aliens.

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Incoming first lady Miyuki Hatoyama writes about the far-out experience in her book entitled, "Very Strange Things I've Encountered": "While my body was asleep, I think my soul rode on a triangular-shaped UFO and went to Venus. It was a very beautiful place and it was really green."

— *FOX News Channel's* Lanna Britt *contributed to this report.*

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