Training Kids to Be Obama's Servants

by Phyllis Schlafly September 11, 2009

A significant part of Barack Obama's plan to "change" America involves having the federal government take control of public school curriculum, plus compiling a database of personal information about each student. The takeover is planned to be accomplished by talking directly to the kids in their schools, and by attaching extraordinary strings to the $128 billion of Stimulus funds shoveled into education.

Obama's announced September 8 speech from the White House website to every schoolchild in America kicked up a storm of controversy. A study plan for his speech produced by the U.S. Department of Education, which exposes the political motives, was pre-circulated.

The politics of Obama's extraordinary internet visit to all classrooms was reinforced by the August 28 showing of the "I pledge" video at an assembly of the Eagle Bay Elementary School in Farmington, Utah. This four-minute video calls on viewers to pledge "to be a servant to our President" and pledge "to be of service to Barack Obama."

This video presents about 50 celebrity-type persons saying "I pledge . . ." to take some leftwing action, such as supporting health care legislation, advancing stem cell research, working for UNICEF, or signing up with Serve.gov to do community service.

Many of the "I pledge" statements support goals of the leftwing environmentalists, such as pledging "to sell my obnoxious car and buy a hybrid," to reduce use of plastics, to buy less bottled water, not to use plastic bags at the grocery store, and not to flush a toilet after only urinating. One pledge parodies our traditional Pledge of Allegiance: "I pledge allegiance to the folk, to the united folk of folkadelica."

After vigorous criticism from parents, the Utah principal apologized for showing this video, but the children had already been propagandized to support Barack Obama.

Regarding Obama's September 8 speech to all schoolchildren, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan sent advance instructions to all school principals urging them to use this "historic moment" to have their students and teachers watch the President's speech "so they can compete in the global economy." Duncan told them to make use of the "Menu of classroom activities for grades PreK-6 and for grades 7-12."

The PreK-6 Menu tells teachers to "build background knowledge about the President" by reading books about Barack Obama. The Menu tells elementary students it is "important that we listen to the President," to "take notes while President Obama is talking," to "write down key ideas or phrases" from his speech, and to "discuss them after the speech."

The Menu instructs teachers to "extend learning" of PreK-6 children by having them "write letters to themselves about how they can achieve their short-term and long-term education goals." Their letters are to be "collected and redistributed at an appropriate later date by the teacher to make students accountable to their goals." But, accountable to whom?

The Menu for grades 7-12 instructs teachers to post "notable quotes" from Obama's speeches on the board, and to have students "take notes while President Obama talks" and identify "the three most important words in the speech." Students should be queried: "What is President Obama inspiring you to do?" and "How will he inspire us?"

The hero worship and brainwashing built into these lesson plans are, to say the least, inappropriate. Parents should rise up and stop the public schools from using

classroom or assembly time to teach schoolchildren to be cheerleaders for Obama and his policies.

Now comes the iron fist in the velvet glove. President Obama's nearly trillion-dollar Stimulus law designates $128 billion for education, so it's no surprise that tight strings are attached.

Buried in the fine print is an ominous requirement to build a national electronic database of all children. Any state that receives federal education funds must "establish a longitudinal data system that includes the elements described in . . . the America COMPETES Act."

That law, passed a couple of years ago, sets out the goal of longitudinal databasing of "student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information" for all students from preschool through postsecondary education. This electronic database will contain "yearly test records of individual students," "a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students," "student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned," and "student-level college readiness test scores."

Database collection on each student continues through college and into the workforce. States are required to enter "information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education."

Creation of a database of this magnitude is the sort of thing that totalitarian governments do but should not be allowed by those who value freedom. It's scary to think of Obama's czars and political operatives such as Rahm Emanuel having access to all that personal information on American citizens.