

# NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

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## PRESIDENT ADDRESSES NATION'S STUDENTS

Aleigha Page  
Staff Writer

"I expect you to get serious this year. I expect you to put your best effort into everything you do. ... So don't let us down," Obama remarked to the nation's students this past week. In his speech, Obama urged the nation's students to take their studies seriously and to stay in school. "You can't drop out of school and expect to drop into a good job," noted Obama in his speech.

President Obama delivered this speech on September 8th from a high school in Arlington, VA. However, the speech has been met with multitudes of controversy over the past few weeks. On the day of the speech, Obama and his motorcade were met with a slew of protestors outside of the Arlington school. One poster, according to reports from the LA Times, read "Children serve God, Not Obama."

Some parents are concerned that the government is attempting to indoctrinate the nation's children with liberal ideology. Many parents did not allow students to attend school on the day of the speech. Florida's Republican Chairman Jim Greer is quoted saying Obama is trying to "indoctrinate America's children to his socialist agenda." Obama is

not the first president to specifically address students; predecessors Bush and Reagan also addressed the school children of America.

Part of the controversy was created by the White House sponsored discussion guide to the speech. Greer believes that the government should not mass produce a discussion which only supports the speech. Another aspect of the speech sparking controversy was the request to have students write a letter to the president, telling him how we can help the nation. Conservatives interpreted this as a resort for the Obama administration to appeal to students and therefore increase the falling approval ratings. Others may choose to see the letter as a mind opening activity intended to make students think about improvements to their country.

Former First Lady Barbara Bush was in support of the Presidential delivery to school children stating "There's a place for the president of the United States to talk to school

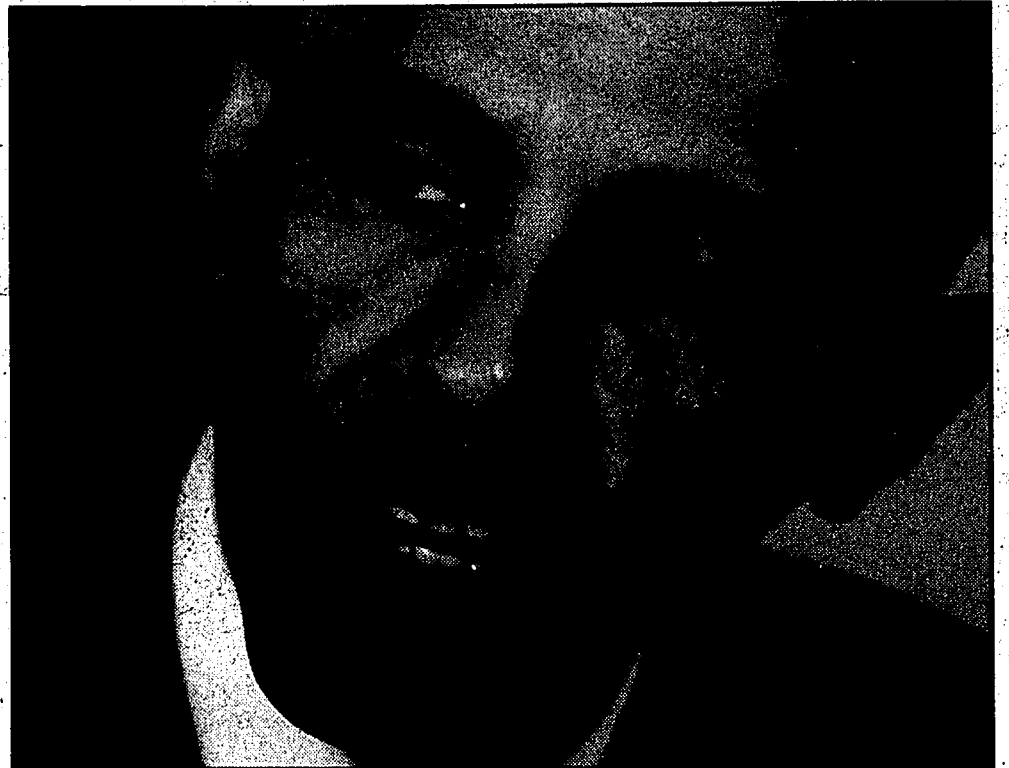


Photo courtesy www.concurringopinions.com

children and encourage school children. It's really important for everyone to respect the president of the United States."

Following the conclusion of the speech, Greer took back his words and admitted "The speech was entirely appropriate."

The LA Times letters to the editor indicated that some parents still feel President Obama is infringing on their parenting abilities by giving students an encouraging speech.

Wake County was not exempt from the national debate over airing the speech. The News and Observer explains Wake board member Ron Margiotta opposed the airing. He encouraged his colleagues to vote on whether or not the speech should be aired

in Wake County. In the end, the Board of Education left the decision up to principals and teachers of the county. All but one school in Wake County allowed the airing to be at the teacher's discretion.

## ETHIOPIA CELEBRATES THE NEW YEAR

Mariamawit Tadesse  
Assistant Editor

The world remembered the September 11th victims on Friday while Ethiopians everywhere celebrated their New Year. Enkutatasha, the New Year, is a big celebration. On Friday, the country just fêted the year 2002. Ethiopia still uses the Julian calendar which consists of thirteen months where the twelve are made up of thirty days and the last month is made up of five days or six days during the leap year. The Ethiopian calendar is eight years behind the Gregorian calendar used in the west.

The ceremony by itself is unique and has been passed down for generations. Two weeks in advance of the big holiday, women start brewing traditional alcoholic drinks know as Tejj and Tella. A week left, parents start buying necessary spices, butter, and grains. Two days before the holiday, people start cleaning their houses, buying sheep and

chicken, and shopping for new clothing and shoes.

As September 11 approaches, the holiday spirit is observed in the streets. Shops start playing traditional New Years music; the Ethiopian flag is seen everywhere and most people are rushing for last minute shopping because on the day of the holiday everything is closed with the exceptions of hospitals, restaurants, hotels, cafes and kiosks.

At home, the Difo Dabo, a type of bread, and the injera, the national food of Ethiopia, are prepared on the eve of the New Year. Some families spend the night at church and come back in the morning but the majority prefers to stay at home. The chicken is slaughtered around 7:00pm. It is then

cooked with a hot and spicy sauce for a minimum of four hours. This dish is one delicacy that is prepared on both holidays and weddings.

In the early morning of the holiday, the men get up to let the sheep slaughterer do his job; the dish is ready by the afternoon. Children sprinkle grass all over the house while mothers make coffee. The family comes together to eat the bread and drink the Tella or Tejj. Then the telephone starts ringing. It is a tradition to call everyone you know and wish them a Happy New year. After lunch, either a family comes for a visit or you go and visit another family. The dead silent city comes back to life as traditional Ethiopians stop at cafes to get cake to take with them as they visit their family and friends. As the sun sets, the

night life begins to boom as people go to Azmari bet, a place where traditional food, drink, music, and dance is found.

By Mariamawit Tadesse