

Hands off Malia and Sasha Obama!

Written by George E. Curry
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Just when you think leaders of the National Rifle Association can't stoop any lower, they keep managing to plunge even deeper. This time, they have strayed way over the line of respectability by using Malia and Sasha's enrollment in Sidwell Friends, a private Quaker school, to malign President Obama over his proposal to place limits on the sale of assault rifles and expand background checks.

"Are the president's kids more important than yours? Then why is he skeptical about putting armed security in our schools when his kids are protected by armed guards at their school? Mr. Obama demands the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes. But he's just another elitist hypocrite when it comes to a fair share of security. Protection for their kids. And gun-free zones for ours."

White House Press Secretary Jay Carney was correct when he said in a statement: "Most Americans agree that a president's children should not be used as pawns in a political fight. But to go so far as to make the safety of the president's children the subject of an attack ad is repugnant and cowardly."

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, a Republican, said: "To talk about the president's children or any public officer's children who have – not by their own choice, but by requirement – to have protection and use that somehow to make a political point I think is reprehensible."

I am tempted to call NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre and his comrades scum. But I'm going to resist the temptation. Not because they don't fit that description. I'm restraining myself because to call them scum would be an insult to scum.

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A second NRA ad, running four-and-a-half-minutes, tossed in an image of NBC newsman David Gregory – whose children also attend Sidwell Friends School – for good measure. The narrator in the ad says “Armed Guards — Good enough for the David Gregory’s kids’ school, not for the rest of us. ...[The] school Obama’s daughters attend has 11 armed guards.”

Not surprisingly, the ad conveniently ignores the fact that the Secret Service is required to protect the president’s children. They protected Chelsea Clinton and Julie Nixon when they attended the school, known as “the Harvard of Washington’s private schools.”

Although the original NRA ad leaves the impression that it is referring to Secret Service agents, the longer version makes it clear that NRA is referencing security guards at the school, which has a lower school campus in Bethesda, Md. and middle and upper schools in northwest Washington, D.C.

The Washington Post’s Fact Checker column awarded the NRA ad four Pinocchios, representing a “whopper” of a lie. The newspaper noted, “...the online directory for Sidwell Friends lists 11 people as working in the Security Department. Five are listed as ‘special police officer,’ while two are listed as ‘on call special police officer,’ which presumably means they do not work full-time. The directory also lists two weekend shift supervisors, one security officer and the chief of security.”

“... But we spoke to parents who said they had never seen a guard on campus with a weapon. And Ellis Turner, associate head of Sidwell Friends, told us emphatically: ‘Sidwell Friends security officers do not carry guns.’”

The NRA’s ad claiming that President Obama is “skeptical about putting armed security in our schools” misrepresents his position. The clip was taken out of context from this exchange between the president and David Gregory on NBC’s “Meet the Press.”

GREGORY: Should we have an armed guard at every school in the country? That’s what the NRA believes. They told me last week that that could work.

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OBAMA: I'm not going to prejudge the recommendations that are given to me. I am skeptical that the only answer is putting more guns in schools. And I think the vast majority of the American people are skeptical that that somehow is going to solve our problem.

Clearly, the president did not say he was skeptical about placing armed security guards in schools. Instead, he said that is not "the only answer."

Even more insane, at a press conference, Wayne LaPierre of the NRA asserted that the answer to preventing future incidents like the one at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn. is the placement of armed guards in every school.

Among the proposals presented by President Obama is providing federal funds to place more officers in schools, if the school requests them.

After acting on a specific proposal made by NRA, the gun lobbying organization denounced Obama yet again. After coming under attack by even some conservatives, NRA spokesman Andrew Arulanandam said: "If anyone thinks we're talking specifically about someone's children, they're missing the point completely..."No, that's exactly the point. Leave those beautiful Obama girls out of your degenerate ad campaigns.

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