



Obama: Just Say No to Stay-at-home Moms

“And that’s not a choice we want Americans to make.” So said pro-choice president Barack Obama, [speaking](#) Friday on women and the economy at Rhode Island College in Providence. And some would say his remark was anything but providential, as the choice he referenced was that of mothers staying at home with their children.



To place Obama’s remark in context, he was advocating increased government pre-school so women could remain in the workforce and [said](#):

In many states, sending your child to daycare costs more than sending them [sic] to a public university.... And too often, parents have no choice but to put their kids in cheaper daycare that maybe doesn’t have the kinds of programming that makes a big difference in a child’s development. And sometimes there may just not be any slots, or the best programs may be too far away. And sometimes, someone, usually mom, leaves the workplace to stay home with the kids, which then leaves her earning a lower wage for the rest of her life as a result. And that’s not a choice we want Americans to make.

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One thing critics might note is that this is a rare allusion to the fact that the intersex pay gap — women earn approximately 77 cents on a man’s dollar — reflects different lifestyle choices the sexes make (as *The New American* [explained](#) here), not the supposed “discrimination” implied in those effective “Equal pay for equal work!” campaign slogans.

But what’s implied by Obama’s last line is far more interesting. Was the apparent diminishment of stay-at-home moms, as *Town Hall’s* Sarah Jean Seman [put it](#), “At best ... a slip of the tongue.”

Some would say it was a Freudian slip of the tongue.

And it’s not the first one. Trumpeting sex education at a campaign stop in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in 2008, Obama [said](#) about his daughters, “If they make a mistake, I don’t want them punished with a baby.”

Many critics said this reflected the culture of death. No small number of people support sex education in the schools. But how many of them would, quite reflexively (Obama was off Teleprompter at the time), describe a baby as punishment? And millions today must juggle family and career, but how many would, quite reflexively, use words implying that a woman’s choice to devote herself solely to hearth and home is an undesirable one? This could bring to mind an observation the great philosopher C.S. Lewis once made: It is when we react spontaneously, without time to think, that our true selves emerge.

Of course, the reality is that millions of women love staying at home with their children — and millions of others wish they could. And while Obama mentioned “programming” (interesting word choice) “that makes a difference in a child’s development,” what’s better for such development than having a devoted



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mother at home? As Seman put it, “[M]any women see it as privilege to be able to leave the workplace to invest in their loved ones, and, through the raising of the next generation, the future of their country.”

Yet in this respect, some may want women to be under-privileged. For example, after left-wing political strategist Hilary Rosen said in 2012 that Ann Romney had “actually never worked a day in her life” (despite raising five sons), *Crisis*’ Dale O’Leary [pointed out](#) that, while the remark caused a firestorm, it’s not at all controversial “in the circles in which she [Rosen] travels” — which included Barack Obama, with whom she frequently met. Supporting this thesis, O’Leary provided Obamaesque quotations from other leftists, writing:

Feminist icon, Simone de Beauvoir told Betty Friedan: “No woman should be authorized to stay at home to raise her children.... Women should not have that choice, precisely because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one.”

Feminist Ellen Herman ... [cited] “... the family — especially, the western patriarchal, bourgeois, and child-centered, nuclear family — as the most important source of women’s oppression.”

Heidi Hartmann, director of the Washington-based Institute for Women’s Policy Research..., wrote: “The crucial elements of patriarchy as we currently experience them are heterosexual marriage, female child rearing and house work....”

... Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg expressed herself on the issue of motherhood: “Motherly love ain’t everything it has been cracked up to be. To some extent it’s a myth that men have created to make women think that they do this job to perfection.”

This anti-stay-at-home motherhood attitude can be traced all the way back to Frederick Engels [sic], Karl Marx’s collaborator, [who wrote](#): “... the first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry.”

If Obama were pressed on this, of course, some could perhaps imagine him saying, if you want your stay-at-home mom, you can keep your stay-at-home mom. And we should want to keep her. For homemakers’ absence is a part of “what’s wrong with the world,” which is not only a phrase but the name of a book in which G.K. Chesterton profoundly expressed the superiority of motherhood over careerism. He wrote that the woman is surrounded “with very young children, who require to be taught not so much anything as everything. Babies need not to be taught a trade, but to be introduced to a world. To put the matter shortly, woman is generally shut up in a house with a human being at the time when he asks all the questions that there are, and some that there aren’t.” Chesterton then speaks of how the enormity of a stay-at-home mom’s task corresponds to its enormous importance:

To be Queen Elizabeth within a definite area, deciding sales, banquets, labors and holidays; to be Whiteley within a certain area, providing toys, boots, sheets, cakes and books, to be Aristotle within a certain area, teaching morals, manners, theology, and hygiene.... How can it be a large career to tell other people’s children about the Rule of Three, and a small career to tell one’s own children about the universe? How can it be broad to be the same thing to everyone, and narrow to be everything to someone? No; a woman’s function is laborious, but because it is gigantic, not because it is minute. I will pity Mrs. Jones for the hugeness of her task; I will never pity her for its smallness.”

No doubt. And as has often been said, “The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world.” Given this, however, is it surprising that Obama and other leftists want the government rocking the cradle as much



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