

Obama's shocking speech to schoolchildren

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

September 8, 2009

President Obama spoke to students at Wakefield High School in Arlington, Virginia today, and his [remarks](#) were simulcast in schools around the country. The president's message to American schoolchildren? Show up to school. Pay attention, do your work and be responsible. It will help you get ahead.

Religious right leader Tony Perkins was anticipating something a tad more controversial. The Family Research Council president [went on TV](#) late last week to bash the upcoming first-day-of-school speech and the president's education policy, and FRC's Washington Update [noted](#) that the administration's move was unprecedented. ([It wasn't](#). For [more](#), see Dan Nejfelt.)

Now

that the president's given his predictable and inoffensive speech, you'd think FRC would post something acknowledging this, maybe even taking credit for pressuring the White House into changing its plans and planning an event that all Americans can embrace. You'd be wrong. The organization's home page currently leads with a [Perkins piece](#) explaining how even a bland, policy-free speech is a problem because of the past affiliations of Department of Education leaders Arne Duncan and Kevin Jennings. If this argument surprises you simply because it doesn't really make any sense, then you're not that familiar with FRC's brand of Christian leadership.

Meanwhile, Glenn Beck and other right-wing types finally [succeeded](#) this weekend in pushing out the administration's green jobs czar—Van Jones, a groundbreaking African-American environmental activist and a top expert on green jobs. Score one for vindictive politics and zero for

green jobs innovation, for the diversification of the environmental movement, for the environment itself.

With a loyal opposition like [this](#), who needs enemies?