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GREENSBORO, N.C. - Applauding President Obama for his leadership in education, Dr. Julianne Malveaux, one of the nation's foremost educators and economists, said today that President Barack Obama should be lauded, not attacked, for his decision to address the nation's students. The president, she added, should not have to post his address in advance in an effort to appease critics who are using children as their "political hobby horse."

"It's a good thing for President Obama to encourage students to stay in school," said Dr. Malveaux, president of Bennett College for Women. "The president of the United States is the leader of this country. We know we have a major education gap in this country at this time. We know that not only in terms of college attendance, but also in grades K-12 where test scores are less than those in Western Europe and Japan and where the school year is longer than in our country. When the President exhorts students to study, this is simply good rhetorical leadership. His critics have taken this speech totally out of context by suggesting that asking students to study is anything near indoctrination. If one young person is inspired to stay in school and take education more seriously, this speech is a good thing."

Dr. Malveaux added, "President Obama's critics are using children as their political hobby horse, and it does not make any sense. Do these people trust their children to think critically and make up their own minds? Are they so insecure about their upbringing that they are afraid to have their children listen to the president of the United States?"

College age students, Dr. Malveaux said, are looking at this with amusement.

"College students are wondering what the Republicans and extremists are talking about when they go after President Obama so forcefully about a simple back-to-school speech," she said. "These actions are not defensible. They are losing ground."

Dr. Malveaux said she is encouraged by the education leadership that President Obama is providing in his 2020 goals to increase the number of Americans who have completed college.

"Those goals are laudable, especially in light of the industrial shift we are seeing in America," she said. "The United States will never be able to have the manufacturing preeminence again, because it is not cost effective. But the future development of our brainpower in education, healthcare and technology is critical for the future growth and development of this country. The president and his team are attempting to address this academic challenge with a whole series of innovative programs, and I am excited that he is choosing to talk about our culture and education and choosing to encourage our students to stay in school and study hard."

Bennett College for Women is one of only two all-women historically black colleges in the nation. For more information about Bennett College, visit [www.bennett.edu](http://www.bennett.edu). For additional information about these issues or to arrange an interview with Dr. Malveaux, call the contact numbers at the top.