



Editorial/Opinion

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Candidates ignore 'security moms,' at their peril

By Michelle Malkin

I am what this year's election pollsters call a "security mom." I'm married with two young children. I own a gun. And I vote.

Nothing matters more to me right now than the safety of my home and the survival of my homeland. I believe in the right to defend myself, and in America's right to defend itself against its enemies. I am a citizen of the United States, not the United Nations.

I want a president who is of one mind, not two, about what must be done to protect our freedom and our borders. I don't care about the hair on his head or the wrinkles in his forehead. I am not awed by his ability to ride a snowboard or fly a plane. Nor does it matter much to me whether his wife speaks four languages or bakes good cookies.

What I want is a commander in chief who will stop pandering to political correctness and *People* magazine editors, and start pandering to me.

The Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks shook me out of my Generation X stupor. Unlike Hollywood and *The New York Times* and the ivory tower, I have not settled back casually into a Sept. 10 way of life. I have studied the faces on the FBI's most-wanted-terrorists list. When I ride the train, I watch for suspicious packages in empty seats. When I am on the highways, I pay attention to large trucks and tankers. I make my husband take his cell phone with him everywhere — even on a quick milk run or on a walk to the community pool.

Educate the children

We have educated our 4-year-old daughter about Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. She knows that there are bad men in the world trying to kill Americans everywhere.

She has helped us decorate packages of books and bubblegum for our brave soldiers. And at night, we ask God to bless our troops as they risk their lives trying to kill the bad men before they kill us.

This isn't living in fear. This is living with reality. We drive defensively. Now, we must live defensively, too.

I am not alone. Professors and political analysts have observed the remarkable conversion of "soccer moms" to "security moms" since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. According to GOP pollster David Winston, "security moms" now make up between 11% and 14% of the electorate. The trend has manifested itself in increased concealed-weapons-permit applications among women; the rise of national-security-focused Web logs published by hard-hitting female "war bloggers"; and an upsurge in political activism by women on core homeland-defense issues, such as immigration enforcement.

Security moms are women such as Grace Godshalk, who lost her 35-year-old son, Bill, when the World Trade Center's south tower collapsed on Sept. 11. Godshalk is on the board of the 9/11 Families for a Secure America, which lobbies for secure borders. She has made it her "lifetime job to put an end to terrorism so no one else ever has to live this nightmare."

Security moms are women such as Bonnie Eggle, a Michigan schoolteacher who lost her 28-year-old son, Kris, a National Park Service ranger who was gunned down by a drug smuggler at the U.S.-Mexico border in August 2002.

"I approach this whole situation as a mother," Eggle said during a Washington, D.C., news conference after her son was murdered. "I want other parents to know that these are things that can happen to your children. Our son took a bullet that he did not have to if we had secure borders."

And conservative activist Kay R. Daly, a security mom of two in Northern Virginia, warns

that "A candidate who underestimates the security mom and her vote this fall may do so at his own peril. Hell hath no fury like a momma protecting her babies."

Do the presidential candidates truly comprehend how fierce this sentiment is among ordinary moms across the country? Do they understand our demands for a president who will ensure that Islamic terrorists are kept out of our country and that criminal illegal aliens are kicked out for good? Will they ensure that our children grow up in a world where the bloody, severed heads of Americans are not a weekly occurrence on the evening news? Do they have what it takes to keep suicide bombers off our shores and out of our malls?

No clear-cut leader

So far, neither presidential ticket quite measures up. Judging from the touchy-feely-fest put on by the John Kerry-John Edwards campaign recently, it is clear that the Democratic Party still thinks it can win by wallowing in the Sept. 10 politics of grievance, entitlement and passivity. The Democratic presidential campaign is softer than a Kleenex tissue, when its motto should be "No More Tears."

As for the Republicans, I have supported President Bush's war on terror overseas, but he continues to fight only a half-hearted battle to defend Americans on American soil from hostile invasion or attack. Recently, the White House revived an amnesty plan for millions of illegal aliens, and the Department of Homeland Security retreated on immigration-enforcement sweeps in Southern California. It is clear that the GOP elite gravely underestimates the wrath we security moms feel toward Washington's fatal addiction to "cheap labor" and "cheap votes" at the expense of secure borders.

To paraphrase the Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher: Gentlemen, this is no time to go warm and fuzzy. Security moms will never forget that toddlers and schoolchildren were incinerated in the hijacked planes on Sept. 11. Murderous Islamic fanatics will stop at nothing to do the same to our kids. As they plot our death and destruction, these enemies will not be won over by either hair-sprayed liberalism or bleeding-heart conservatism.

Neither will we.

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