

PEOPLE BEARING GLASS WOMBS SHOULD NOT THROW POLICY STONES

I think Obama's response to the news that Sarah Palin's 17-year old daughter is perfect: to stress that a teenaged mom, with the support of her family, can still raise her child to be President.

... my mother had me when she was 18. How family deals with issues and teen-age children – that shouldn't be the topic of our politics.

It sounds like Bristol Palin will have the family support to go through a challenging, life-changing event, and I hope that support helps her succeed at being a teenaged mom as well as Obama's mother did.

That said, I think Nate's question—asking why, if this is such a shameless event, the family and campaign hid that news over the weekend—is an important one.

I think it's wonderful that Bristol Palin has chosen to have her baby, and I'm sure that she'll make a wonderful mother.

But if it's such a wonderful thing, let's be out and proud about it – not try and change the subject. Let's disclose this in the People magazine interview. Let's not bury the news when there's literally a hurricane bearing down on Louisiana. And let's sure as hell not confuse the overheated rantings of the liberal blogosphere for the series of decisions made months ago by mother and by daughter that led to a 17-year-old child becoming pregnant.

The media ought to be more responsible than to take the McCain campaign's spin

at face value. If that irrelevant distraction about rumors in the blogosphere belongs in this – than certainly things like these do: What is Palin's position on contraception? What is her position on sex education? Does she believe that sex outside of marriage is immoral? These questions are not remotely personal, but they're certainly a part of the story.

Likewise, I agree with Anonymous Liberal's point: this rumor got started not by liberal bloggers, but by Republicans in Alaska wondering why a 44-year woman carrying a high-risk child would delay medical attention for over 10 hours after she went into labor.

I know for a fact that is not true. The reason I know that is because I first heard the rumor within minutes of the media reporting that Palin had been tapped to be McCain's VP. And I heard from friends from Alaska, not liberal bloggers. This rumor was already widespread in Alaska (and widely believed) and it had everything to do with the strange circumstances surrounding Trig's birth, not partisan politics. In particular, the rumor was fostered by the exceptionally bizarre story of how Palin—a 44 year old woman with a high-risk pregnancy—boarded an eight hour commercial flight from Dallas to Anchorage after her water broke and she started having contractions. That's a strange story, and if you doubt that, go ask any obstetrician or nurse midwife.

The news that Bristol is pregnant doesn't answer any of the real underlying questions here (questions asked by Republicans in Alaska long before Democrats on blogs asked): why did Sarah Palin endanger her child and herself to even travel to the energy meeting in Texas, much less

return home after she went into labor?

The answer is, ultimately, that's a decision that Palin and her doctors made. But that's precisely the decision that Palin would deny other women, the ability to make reproductive choice decisions based solely on the expert advice of her doctor.

Similarly, the Palins are making much of the fact that Bristol made a "decision to have her baby"—suggesting that she, their daughter, is entitled to a choice that Governor Palin thinks other women should not have.

And finally, Sarah Palin is demanding that the press "respect our daughter and Levi's privacy." Frankly, I agree—the press should leave Bristol alone. She's going to have a tough enough time in the coming months and years without the focus of a Presidential campaign. But there, too, Palin is asking something for her daughter she would deny other women. In both her radical stance opposing abortion in cases of rape and in her refusal to teach teenagers anything but how to say "no," she's inserting the government into other women's private acts, their reproductive choices. She's advocating a far right policy that she would not apply to her own family.

Frankly, in both Governor Palin's decision to make that risky trip to Texas and in Bristol's "decision" to have her baby, the Palin women prove themselves to be pro choice.

For themselves.

But Governor Palin seems to believe only she, the governor, and her own family are entitled to make their own reproductive choices. That's what John McCain picked as his running mate: a woman who believes she and her family are entitled to make their own reproductive choices. But not you and I.