

Beat: Politics

Sesame Workshop asks Obama to pull "Big Bird" ad

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USPA News - The non-profit organization behind Sesame Street has asked the Obama campaign to stop using a new advertisement which portrays Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney as someone who is more concerned with Big Bird than Wall Street. The sarcastic video advertisement (<http://tinyurl.com/8eaqj44>), which was released online on Tuesday morning and will air on national cable stations, mocks a comment by Romney during the first presidential debate last week in which he said wants to cut public funding to PBS, which shows the children's show.

"I'm going to stop the subsidy to PBS. I'm going to stop other things. I like PBS. I love Big Bird. ... But I'm not going to keep on spending money on things to borrow money from China to pay for it," Romney said during the debate, a comment which immediately went viral online and has since dominated the presidential campaigns. The Obama campaign's new advertisement opens with pictures of disgraced businessmen Bernard Madoff, Kenneth Lay, and Dennis Kozlowski. "Criminals. Gluttons of greed," a narrator says of the convicted criminals. "And the evil genius who towered over them? One man has the guts to speak his name." The video then shows brief clips of Romney saying "Big Bird" before cutting to a clip of the eight-foot tall bird: "It's me. Big Bird." "Big. Yellow. A menace to our economy. Mitt Romney knows it's not Wall Street you have to worry about, it's Sesame Street," the narrator continues. The video then cuts to a clip of Romney, who says: "I'm going to stop the subsidy to PBS." The narrator then finishes the ad, saying: "Mitt Romney. Taking on our enemies, no matter where they nest." But Sesame Workshop, the non-profit organization behind Sesame Street, called on the Obama campaign to stop using the advertisement. "Sesame Workshop is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization and we do not endorse candidates or participate in political campaigns," a statement said. "We have approved no campaign ads, and, as is our general practice, have requested that both campaigns remove Sesame Street characters and trademarks from their campaign materials." Obama campaign spokeswoman Jen Psaki said they are reviewing the request but defended the ad. "While President Obama passed historic Wall Street reform to hold big banks accountable and give consumers tools to make informed decisions for themselves, his opponent, Mitt Romney, has shown true conviction by vowing to take down Big Bird and keep Sesame Street under control," the campaign said. The campaign added: "Attacking one of America's favorite feathered friends has become a staple of Mitt Romney's stump speech, and was featured in his dramatic debate performance. But even on issues as seemingly simple as 8-foot tall talking birds and early childhood education, Mitt Romney's rhetoric is out of touch with the facts. When asked how he would cut the deficit, Romney's answer is to eliminate PBS and Sesame Street - an absurd solution. You would need to cut PBS more than 1,000 times to fill the hole in Romney's budget promises!" Meanwhile, Romney criticized Obama for continuing to bring up Big Bird. "You have to scratch your head when the president spends the last week talking about saving Big Bird," he told supporters in Iowa on Tuesday. "I actually think we need to have a president who talks about saving the American people and saving good jobs and saving our future and also saving the family farm." Obama's performance during the debate last week has been widely criticized as lacklustre, and a Gallup poll released on Tuesday showed that Romney holds a slight edge over Obama - 49 percent to 47 percent - in the poll's initial likely voter estimate. Preferences tilt the opposite way among registered voters, 49 percent to 46 percent in Obama's favor.

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