

**DEMOCRACY CORPS  
GROUP 1  
DES MOINES, IA  
NON-COLLEGE WOMEN, 30-49  
INCOME UNDER \$50,000  
AUGUST 20, 2001, 5:45 P.M.**

Karen. I have 2 daughters, 6 and 11. A husband. We have a little dog named Tuffy. And I like to walk for pleasure.

Bonnie. I have 3 boys, 8, 9, and 10. And they're all adopted from Russia. My husband owns his own business. And I have 3 dogs and we're just getting a new one.

Mary. Got 2 kids, 3 dogs, 2 cats, too many fish.

Rose. I've been married for 8 years. I have technically 5 children, I lost one to SIDS before me and my husband got together. I have a 7-year-old daughter, a 6-year-old daughter, a 2-year-old daughter and a 3-month-old son. So, when I have time, I try and go on the Internet to do freebies and go fishing.

Vicki. I have an 18-year-old daughter and a husband and a dog named Pooh and a cat named Kelly and a couple of fish and a rabbit. I work part time, no, I work full time at a school as a teacher's associate in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. And for fun, we like to travel, go to the horse races, Perry Meadows, that's a little casino here, be with people.

Nora. And I have 1 child; he's 15 years old. It's like having 2 kids sometimes because it's how he acts. And mainly, first of all, I stay home. I usually watch 3 younger kids that she adopted, it wore her out, my nieces and nephews, so I help her with them. Mainly I watch TV or go for a walk, work crossword books.

Tina. I have 1 child, boy, 12. That keeps me busy. I'm a single mom so I do it all by myself. We have a dog Boomer and a cat Diana.

Laurie. I work for FedEx. I've been married for 4 years next month. I enjoy volleyball, yard work, garden.

Julie. I work as a secretary. I have a daughter who is 27. And I like to read and I like to travel.

**MODERATOR—GENERALLY SPEAKING, THINKING ABOUT THE ENTIRE COUNTRY, AND THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING IN THE COUNTRY TODAY, WOULD YOU SAY THINGS ARE GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION OR THE WRONG DIRECTION IN OUR COUNTRY?**

I would say the wrong direction. In terms of the way children are treated and the way parents are losing control of how they are able to take care of their children.

I would say the wrong way. I work as a temp and I know last year I was busy all year. This year, it's been slow as all get out. And I also agree with her, the government has got their nose way too far on how we raise our children, they need to butt out, the State, the government, the whole schmere.

I agree with that. I mean, nowadays if you punish your child, there's a difference between abusing them and discipline. And if you're disciplining your child you can get turned in and go to jail for it. I mean, I'm not saying that you should beat your child to get the point across. But sometimes a child needs a good old-fashioned butt whopping. Not any more. Because of the Shelby thing and everything else and Jonathan Waller before that. Now all of a sudden any time anybody suspects you of getting too close to your child. I've had people yell at me in the grocery store because I used a tone with my children. What I do with my children is my business. They're not out robbing banks.

And nowadays kids are going to school and telling their teachers, my mommy and my daddy whopped my butt. And they'll turn around and turn the parents in. Even though that kid doesn't have a mark on him.

Well, I'm worried about unemployment and the fact that there's a lot of layoffs. Seems like 2 or 3 times a week I look, I view CNN, well, just on the news, national news, there's always a plant closing down and moving to another country or downsizing to another area. Thousands of people just laid off work, concerned about that.

I'm worried about the behavior of the kids that are like pulling guns in schools. There's more and more of it.

Get afraid to send kids to school because of all this gun violence. Why don't we just keep our kids at home? That way, if they go to school they're not going to get shot if they're at home. But if they're at school, who knows? You could be at home and then get a phone call saying, your child has been shot and killed.

I have friends that are home schooled because of all of that. Drugs. It's getting worse.

MODERATOR—ANYTHING GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION?

No positives here, huh?

Not even the weather.

I don't see anything going in the right direction but I see everything is like a quick fix and not really tackling problems, moving forward with problems. Addressing them. And we're not looking at anything long range. Everything is a quick fix. And then it's dropped and nothing is ever done. And the one area that I see or I feel about is, a lot of the social economic you know, like the rebate that we got or we're supposed to get, that we haven't got yet. Anyway, to me that's kind of a quick fix. And I would rather see, at the end of the year we're going to end up, my husband and I end up paying a whole bunch of taxes anyway so it won't make any

difference. It's not going to decrease anything sticking out for any taxes in my paycheck or his. But I kind of disagree, I think maybe where the State and the federal government, I think they're cutting too back on some of the social issues. I don't think they're, I don't know if it really needs to be overhauled but I don't think they're addressing the problems and giving the money where it should be going. I think they're cutting back just a little bit, just a little bit, just a little bit for a quick fix to get everything evened out and they're not doing it right. And I think education is one of them. Of course it's because I work for a school.

Oh, I think there's all kinds of cuts at a local level and that trickles down from the federal and the government to our, at our level. And I really think things are getting, I think they get by with a lot of things. They happen so quickly we don't realize they're happening at the time but eventually you'll feel or you'll see it. I don't think we see really what is being cut out. And we don't really have the capacity to look at these large, huge numbers in the federal budget to see what they're cutting out. I mean a lot of it is, it's all French to people but you only feel it at what affects you and then eventually you might pick up and understand what it's all about.

Do you realize that when they did the base closing how open they left us? On everything. Because when they closed the bases they also decreased the benefits that people like my stepfather and my biological father were supposed to get for life.

That's another issue, veterans.

They closed those bases and you know there's people across the sea that don't really like us and they're going to see all these base closings and they're going to attack us at the weakest point. I was a military brat. The respect they have for the military government nowadays is a joke. Bush says, I've done this and I've done this. OK, hero, restore some of the benefits of these people that fought and died.

They're closing hospitals.

MODERATOR—I DON'T WANT TO GO TOO FAR. I WANT TO SHIFT GEARS HERE. I'M GOING TO THROW OUT NAMES, TELL ME THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND. LET'S START WITH, AL GORE.

Poor thing.

The one nice guy.

Very smart nice guy.

He should have won.

A wimp.

I still say they counted them votes wrong and he should've won and Bush should've lost.

He's very personable. I went out when he went to the stone container and he would look you right in the eye, who are you? And you would introduce yourself and he would shake your hand and he's just real personable.

Smart.

Governor.

I think got raw deal.

Too bad.

I'm not overly fond of him but he did seem like he was a very nice guy. Really got ripped by who he ran with. He made his choice to run with him. Speaking of Clinton.

MODERATOR—BRITTANY SPEARS.

Tramp.

I think in a way she's a good role model for girls.

Oh, uh unh, no.

We had girls that wore the hip-huggers and short tops, it's not a big deal, she'll fade out and somebody else will come in.

(Many voices speaking at once)

She has good values though.

I think she's bad influences on girls because the girls want to dress like them and stuff. I got a 9 year old little sister, she wants to wear the clothes like Brittany Spears, her mother tells her no, you are not as old as Brittany Spears, don't act like her and don't try and dress like her. She's showing too much.

MODERATOR—BILL GATES.

Smart man.

Wealthy.

Opportunist

Seattle. He lives in Seattle.

I don't have anything bad to say about him.

MODERATOR—WHY DO YOU SAY ‘OPPORTUNIST?’

I just think, I think he’s been, I don’t know a whole lot about him. But what I can perceive is, he’s one of these and there’s a zillion of them, right place, right time. And just ran with it. He’s got all the money he’ll ever need.

He got lucky.

He shares it with charities and does a lot of good work.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT JOHN MCCAIN?

John McCain, he’s the candidate. He’s Democrat, right?

He’s a Republican. I believe he’s a Republican.

All I know is, I saw him at the caucus in Ames.

George Bush.

He lost because of Iowa. Because he didn’t, ethanol, he said he wouldn’t give money for it.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT RICKY MARTIN?

I like him. My little sister likes, I have 2 little sisters who just adore him.

He makes me sick.

MODERATOR—I COULDN’T TELL WHAT THAT SOUND MEANT. HOW ABOUT BILLY GRAHAM?

He’s wonderful.

He’s great.

MODERATOR—EVERYBODY IS NODDING THEIR HEAD.

Charismatic.

He’ll call a horse’s ass a horse’s ass, pardon my language, in the Bible where it says you’re a horse’s ass for doing this.

His son is a fantastic person.

MODERATOR—BILL CLINTON.

[Laughter]

Horse's ass.

I liked him.

Human being.

I liked him until what he had did then it's like, that changed my opinion of him awful fast.

People got to stop and think, the president is human, too. Now, I'm not saying what he did was right, not by any means. But I'm telling you what, I don't know of anybody, if you're cornered and you're cheating on your spouse that's going to pop up and say, oh, yeah.

Let me ask, if you were Hillary, if you were in the White House or not, wouldn't his stuff been out on the front lawn?

Oh, I would have thrown his shit out that night. You betcha'. He would have had bruises by the time I got through with him.

They say she's gay.

Yeah, if they don't like you they'll call you a homosexual and like that.

No, it's in books and everything in the stores.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE ABOUT BILL CLINTON?

I think he's a snake, to sit there and lie. And the way he's treating his wife. He's a role model to children. Children watch the news, hear their parents talk.

I don't think he had to give anybody an explanation but his wife.

No, you're right.

It's not anybody's business.

But with Bill Clinton though, he made promises and a lot of them he kept them promises unlike Bush. Bush makes promises and don't keep promises. He wants to cut social security, SSI, different benefits.

MODERATOR—GO BACK TO THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE. I'M GOING TO READ A NUMBER OF STATEMENTS AND TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT IT AND WHY. FIRST ONE,

BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS CREATE WEALTH AND PROSPERITY IN OUR COUNTRY. GOVERNMENT SHOULD GET OUT OF THE WAY AND LET THEM DO THEIR JOB.

Read it again.

What's that second word mean?

I think it's limited. They have to be involved too to a certain extent.

MODERATOR—GOVERNMENT HAS TO BE INVOLVED?

Yeah. They have to have some involvement with it. Obviously taxes. Control of everything from import-export. There's got to be something they have a control on.

Well, if that's the case why is it that the biggest companies in this country pay the least amount of taxes? There's nothing right about that.

That's from administration to administration that's been handed down.

Does that make it right?

No. But it's who we vote for.

Well, who we vote for doesn't necessarily do us a damn bit of good either. The last election proved that.

I know States that pay more taxes than here in Iowa does. I know California, they got more taxes where theirs is higher than here.

MODERATOR—WHAT ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT GETTING OUT OF THE WAY AND LETTING THEM MAKE MONEY?

No. In that case, we have to protect our environment, protect our air. We have to protect the people that work for them. Not necessarily unions but we have to have guidelines and safety things and you can't just let, you know. It would be nice if you could but you can't just let them go and do their own thing without any kind of regulations and control, you couldn't do it. You couldn't trust them all to keep things in line.

I have no clue.

They have to have the government in a little bit somewhere. I mean, but, that's like minimum wage. If it wasn't for the government we wouldn't have the minimum wage. It was what, \$3.30 an hour and now I have no clue what it is but I know they raised it. And if it wasn't for that they'd probably pay people 2 bucks an hour, even the small businesses.

And child labor laws.

MODERATOR—NEXT STATEMENT,

THERE ARE SOME BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD MEET – SCHOOLS WITH HIGH STANDARDS, AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE, AND A RETIREMENT SYSTEM THAT IS SECURE.

It's all that in one statement.

I think so.

But I agree totally.

MODERATOR—WHY?

Schools have a lot of kids that just kind of slide by, more so now than they used to I think. And the health care system, it's pretty sad that nurses and health care workers are being overloaded and expected to do all kinds of paperwork and they should be taking care of the patients and the patients end up suffering.

Are you talking about health care insurance? Or health care doctors, that type of thing?

MODERATOR—I'M TALKING ABOUT, ARE THESE THE TYPE OF AREAS THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN?

Well, yeah, it has to be.

Anybody could put out, if it was a freelance insurance anybody can charge, they'll just charge an exorbitant amount of money for services so it has to be controlled.

With the problem with the schools and stuff, letting kids slide by, they've done that for years because we don't want to worry about them, let the next teacher worry about them. And that's what they do.

MODERATOR—ARE THESE THE TYPES OF THINGS THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN?

Yes.

Yeah. Make sure things are being done.

For our future in all three of those areas. Our kids, which is our future. Our retirement which is our future. And health care which gets us to the future.

MODERATOR—IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD ADD TO THAT LIST?

Yeah, in our environment. I really feel strongly about our environment. And I think you need, foreign affairs with other countries, our military.

I think those three things are a good start but you could add a few more.

Maybe with different degrees of involvement.

MODERATOR—NEXT STATEMENT,

THE EROSION OF MORAL VALUES AND THE WEAKENING OF THE FAMILY IS THE GREATEST CRISIS FACING OUR COUNTRY TODAY.

True.

True.

Still true.

True.

MODERATOR—WHY?

Why? 'Cause for starters you got too many deadbeat dads running around. Or dads that just pay their child support but have nothing to do with the kids. What good are they then?

Donors.

Pretty much.

Right now people don't, I was a military brat for my first 10, 11 years. When I was growing up even the civilian, what we called civilian kids, had better manners than the kids nowadays. Nowadays a full grown adult pushes past you. Nowadays a person who is in their 60's push past you, bump in to you and basically tell you to 'f' off. And I'm sorry, those aren't the right type of values you should have. Have a little bit of politeness when you're doing stuff. Think about how you would feel if somebody did that to you. The kids need to be shown the moral values at an early age. And nowadays there's too many parents that they shuffle them off to wherever, somebody else takes care of them most of the time and then, hey, my kids don't know the values, that's not my problem.

No religion. These kids think, you don't kill because you'll go to jail. It's not a commandment. There's no commandments.

Divorced families. Mother has got 2 or 3 live ins. The ex has got women coming in and out. This is what they see so therefore it's what they think is normal.

I think so too that to make it nowadays financially both the husband and wife have to work for many reasons, the husband can't make enough money. And so the moms aren't able to be at home for the kids and make sure they're doing things they should, their homework.

Well, we're living beyond our means now. Therefore we need two incomes. But life was simpler, your parents, your grandparents, they were able to be home. And the cost of living wasn't so, wasn't very high. And people just didn't have to have all the amenities and the entertainment that they have to have now. And the clothes.

We make it on one income. It's tough but we make it on one income, my children.

Working in the school, maybe I shouldn't even say this, but I don't think it makes any difference if you're a single parent or a deadbeat dad or if it's the snowman somewhere. I think it's a matter of priorities. I think you have to set your own priorities for your own self and then for your children. It's also the way that you treat your children. If you treat them with respect and show them respect and show them good morals they will be the nicest kids and they will do everything in the world. And it can be the parents that make \$100,000 a year, if their child is not a priority they're going to have big problems. If you make \$6,000 and you're a single mother and live in a box, if you show that child that they're a priority and give them the basic things they need and show interest in them, it doesn't make any difference.

I agree.

So, I don't buy this about the deadbeat dads because there are a lot of mothers out there that are raising kids wonderful, wonderful children who get by on practically nothing. I mean these kids are great. And it has nothing to do with religion. It has nothing to do with anything. It's priorities.

I can only speak for myself. But you don't think it's very important to a boy to have his father around?

Oh, of course.

If possible.

(Many voices speaking at once)

The dads are raising them now as far as I can see. These women are abandoning their kids.

It works both ways.

And it's usually drugs, alcohol, loose morals.

MODERATOR—MOVE ON, THE NEXT ONE,

IN ORDER TO SUCCEED IN TODAY'S WORLD, WE MUST BE OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND EMBRACE CHANGE AS THE WORLD AROUND US CHANGES.

I don't think succeeding has anything to do with it. I think, I think accepting change, things you cannot change you need to accept. But things I can't change are not going to make me successful.

I think you have to accept the changes. With my mom half the time, she's 76. And you see these girls with the belly button pierced and their tongue and she just like flips. They're everywhere. That's just the change that's happening. You may not have to agree on it but it's everywhere. And it's hard, very hard.

It's government. It's like Polk County. Your city council. The changes that they're making. Where you live. You can't fight them.

(Many voices speaking at once)

If you don't accept change it will be like Ireland and the Palestinians and the Israelis, you have to accept changes around you and make the most of your little corner of your little.

But there's people in Ireland, and I talk to them all the time, that they try and accept changes and one person in Ireland or two people in Ireland, it's just a matter of, they got to get it through their heads, all this fighting does nothing. I have a girlfriend that lives in Belfast.

MODERATOR—NEXT ONE,

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT TO TAKE CARE OF PEOPLE WHO CAN'T TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.

No.

The handicapped.

Too many people are going to jump on that bandwagon. Poor me. And they really can't.

Where do you draw the line?

(Many voices speaking at once)

People, and they don't need it.

It's gotten way out of hand.

I think they should help the people because I know people that are so bad off that they cannot work at all. They cannot even get out of bed half of the time so, I think they should. But they

shouldn't go helping everybody. There's certain people that should have to work. And there's certain people shouldn't.

Well, handicapped, disabilities, yes.

(Many voices speaking at once)

There's still things handicapped people can do. They just don't want to.

I know there's some people that can't do anything.

(Many voices speaking at once)

But there's a lot of handicapped people that can and don't want to.

And there's a lot of people that sponge off the system. They can't work because they broke their leg you know.

Helping out people that can't help themselves, but look at some of these people that put themselves in that situation to begin with. They're the ones that chose to do the road that they did. I don't agree with a 9-year-old child just because he supposedly can't do certain things with a check because his mom decided she doesn't want to go out and work. I don't agree with that.

I can't work and stuff because I got what you call Bell's Palsy. Mine is so bad, I can be out somewhere and start getting dizzy and I'll pass out. I'll pass out for maybe an hour. And then wake up and not even realize where I've been.

As you said, it is the fine line of who should get help and who shouldn't. And there are handicapped people who can work and do work.

There's people in nursing homes on whatever, they need it. There's people that might need it for a short period of time and all their life. I don't think you can just say, everyone that's on ABC or Title whatever it is, it doesn't mean that it's for life. And there may be a few of them that, I don't know what percentage that shouldn't get it, but you can't take all the rest of them and throw them out because of this one little area.

It's case by case.

I'm looking at a 9-year-old child who is on social security, at 9 years old, and who has been told he'll be on it the rest of his life because of something he might or might not have. Versus a person who can't get on SSI, who can't hardly take care of themselves and they're being denied the SSI versus a 9 year old child getting it like that.

The system fails.

It's so hard to get SSI.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ONE,

WE HAVE GONE TOO FAR IN PUSHING EQUAL RIGHTS IN THIS COUNTRY.

I think so.

Don't get me started. I think everybody is equal. I don't think there's anybody any better or any different than anybody else and I don't know why we have to take select few and give them special, special anything.

There's men. There's women. Treat them equally. But beyond that, uh unh. Because I have brown shoes I should get favorable treatment. Really.

It gets a little bit too much.

No matter who you are or what you look like you should get respect.

I used to do security before I became a mom and I was, they tried to treat me differently because I'm a woman. And I'm sorry, if I'm there to do the job I'm there to do the job just like the guys are. I don't want special treatment. I'm doing that job or else I wouldn't have applied. And I know, Laurie, you probably have the same problem.

No, I guess I'm talking more like gays, trying to get.

Well, minorities. That's like a current thing.

And I don't have anything against gay people, that's their life.

Or Blacks. Or Mexicans.

I say keep it in the closet.

(Many voices speaking at once)

I don't think they should get health care. For a spouse. If you call a man your spouse or a woman your spouse. Why should they?

(Many voices speaking at once)

I disagree about keeping it in the closet.

White is going to fall in there somewhere.

I'm not saying keep it in the closet. I'm saying, God created men. God created women. Let's treat them equally. But beyond that...

It's your own choice.

...it's their own choice what path they go down in life but I don't think the government or insurance companies should consider two men living together, one as a spouse, that's, no. I'm not saying keep them in the closet, but don't take my money.

I have a sister that is gay, she lives with a woman and they got another woman that lives with them that's thataway too and has a girlfriend. And they're like a normal married couple. And the kids understand what's going on.

Mine don't understand. And when they see two woman holding hands and kissing, I mean, how do you explain that one?

My girls got this deal, they look at them and say, that ain't right.

Yeah, you have to say, that's not right.

It's not right but you can't really do anything.

No, it's another change you have to accept.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ONE,

THIS COUNTRY WOULD HAVE A LOT LESS PROBLEMS IF THERE WERE MORE EMPHASIS ON TRADITIONAL VALUES.

I think so.

Yes.

Yes.

Definitely.

MODERATOR—WHAT'S THAT MEAN?

We're stuck with that old Ten Commandments.

Yeah, that's like concrete, morals and family, just family period, that's where it all begins, your family.

Families should come before, you have to have your priorities, your God, your family, whatever. People better start learning that it's, it shouldn't be so easy to get a divorce because you can't get along. Try and work it first.

I know there are people that aren't. When you say traditions and values they get you as putting religion in there.

Usually it follows.

Well tradition can be a religion in itself without committing to a God or a savior. But if you have a moral base that you feel, this is, you have a right and wrong, or that's just the way it is type of thing, that in itself is a traditional, that can be a positive thing like a religion but without the church and whatever. Whatever makes you good is what is right I think, it doesn't matter who your God is I don't think.

MODERATOR—THIS STATEMENT,

THE COUNTRY WOULD HAVE A LOT LESS PROBLEMS IF THERE WAS MORE EMPHASIS ON TRADITIONAL VALUES.

Yeah.

I don't think you can guarantee that. It would be nice if it was true. But you can't guarantee it.

What is a non-traditional value? What would you consider a non-traditional value?

MODERATOR—WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER A TRADITIONAL VALUE?

Traditional? Raise your children. Family, go to church. You stay married. The husband, traditional is the husband usually has the, works. The woman may stay home or not.

The way it was years and years ago.

Your relatives, you embrace your community.

MODERATOR—WAS IT BETTER YEARS AND YEARS AGO?

Yeah.

Oh, I would say comparably absolutely.

Similar.

You think it was easier?

Simpler.

No, I wouldn't think it would be easier at all. Because I can remember my mother, they slaved all day, didn't have the electric washers and fix dinner for, they had probably a very happy fulfilling life but certainly wouldn't be easier than the life I have now. I have money. I have freedom. I can do a lot more and have a lot more, I probably, in the 1960's or '50's I probably wouldn't be in this room. If it was my mother she wouldn't be seen here, it probably be my father who was.

Nowadays we have all these appliances like washer, dryer, microwave, back then, they didn't have all that.

My mother didn't drive. I drive.

She didn't really have the freedom to dress like she wanted. For women, she didn't have the opportunity to go out and even go to college or to you know, we can give our daughters a whole bunch more than was given us.

And you weren't able to vote back then, now you can. It used to be only men that could vote.

Computers were supposed to make our lives easier and life seems more hectic. I don't think computers simplified our lives any.

I don't even have a computer. Now it seems, you have to check your email every day. Who cares?

MODERATOR—GO TO THE NEXT ONE,

PEOPLE LIKE ME CAN STILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM.

Yes.

Probably could.

100 percent I can. Because I can give money. I can talk. I can go to political things and I can give my opinion.

That's probably what the people in Florida are thinking.

Well, that's their problem. They have a dumb state. They're dumb.

Yeah, but in the process they happened to trash everybody else's too while they were at it.

Yeah, but you know what's going to come out of it, something good is going to come out of it.

Yeah, they've learned from that.

Makes you wonder how many other votes were miscalculated all these years.

MODERATOR—TRY AND STAY FOCUSED. DO THE REST OF YOU AGREE, MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

They can fix it, take care of the problem.

It takes this, people in your community can really make a lot of change if you take part.

MODERATOR—NEXT STATEMENT,

GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE SURE ALL PEOPLE HAVE A CHANCE  
FOR AN EQUAL START IN LIFE.

Don't they already?

College loans.

Yeah you do.

Don't all children get to go to school? It doesn't cost them anything to go to school. So, right there, equal.

(Many voices speaking at once)

That's not true. It's not true.

Why?

I don't think it's true either.

That's why I send my kid to a private school, work real hard at it, to keep him there, where they have discipline, they have a lot more structure.

What was the question?

MODERATOR—[RE-READS STATEMENT]

Why can't the kid go to school?

I'll explain that. I work for a private school. It's not really a rich private school but I do, work for a private school. And the last two summers I work at Drake and it's usually 5 and 6 year old children coming in. And they do not have the same framework. They do not have the same nutrition values that we have. They do not have the same, they have no future. They have no hope. And that's the biggest difference. You have kids coming into other schools and they know

that they have future somewhere. They can relate. They can go forward. A lot of these kids come in and they have no, absolutely none, future. They don't believe they'll ever go on to high school. They do not believe they will ever have a job. They believe they'll either be dead or in prison, those are their two options in life.

That's what they're being shown. There's no excuse for a child to go hungry these days. And there's no excuse for a kid not to have something to read, have their parents read to them.

That's true but the parents don't and therefore it's not equal. You can't put the two children together and say, this one, because there's definite advantages for some children over other children.

MODERATOR—SO, ASSUMING WE'RE GOING TO DISAGREE ON WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS AN EQUAL START AND OBVIOUSLY WHATEVER THE REASONS FOR THAT MIGHT BE, SHOULD GOVERNMENT BE STRIVING TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE HAVE AN EQUAL START?

I think as far as equal start is, once they're out of high school, start in college to be able to get a higher education. A lot of people can't afford it. Let's face it, the price of college is outrageous.

Scholarship.

I know in California if you live in the state and Georgia, you go for free if you keep your grades up or if you just live in the state but that doesn't go in all Sstates. Well it would be nice if the government did something for people who want to go to college so they can go to college.

Help them out somehow.

I think there is help, Pell Grants and stuff.

(Many voices speaking at once)

Join the Army or the Navy.

Yeah, that's another option.

But a lot of people aren't being made aware all of their options. Of course the Army, you know that. I mean, that's an obvious, that's a given, go in the service.

MODERATOR—SWITCH GEARS AGAIN [DISTRIBUTES PACKETS, GIVES INSTRUCTIONS]. IN HANDOUT NUMBER 1 THINK ABOUT ALL THE POSITIVES WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT GEORGE W. BUSH. FLIP TO HANDOUT NUMBER 2, WRITE ANY NEGATIVES YOU THINK ABOUT. FLIP BACK TO HANDOUT NUMBER 1, WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT GEORGE W. BUSH?

Anti-abortion.

He keeps his word about certain things.

He's charming.

I like to hear about his daughters and his ranch in Texas.

Speaking about his daughters, it's good, he tries to keep them out of, of course the public has to know everything and it's nobody's business. But he tries to protect his daughter.

Tries not wash his laundry in public.

Right.

I wrote the fact that he's low key. So far the only thing we've heard about him on the nightly news are things that relate to him doing his job as president. So far there has been no trash in the news about him and that's refreshing.

Wasn't there something in the news about his daughters getting caught in a bar underage.

The media thinks they have to get in there and you know stick their noses in the business. Something that probably half 20 year olds do, aren't of age to be in a bar. It's nobody's damn business.

That's not him.

They're always going to find some long lost brother or cousin that did something bad that's in that position.

Considering his alcoholism it doesn't look very good.

I thought he has a decent wife at least. His wife seems to be like she's really sociable lady. She's just, I mean, she can raise twins, I'm all for her. I don't have that much patience.

He's happy. Seems happy.

Spends time with his dad a lot.

MODERATOR—FLIP TO THE SECOND ONE, DOUBTS, WORRIES ABOUT HIM.

Well, I don't think he speaks very well.

MODERATOR—WHY DOES THAT WORRY YOU?

Well, it doesn't really worry me. But I think it's, it's a bad point that I see. It's a criticism that I have about him. I don't know that doesn't worry me.

MODERATOR—BUT IT'S IMPORTANT?

Yeah. Yeah it is. How you present yourself as president I think is, he acts like he's going to burst out laughing at any moment. Maybe I watch too much Saturday Night Live, the grin. What I'm trying to say is, he looks stupid. He's totally reading, but they all read.

He's too vague. When they ask him a question about something, he's like, yeah that's right, yup.

Never serious.

Yeah, well, we're working on it, we're working on it.

That's a politician.

Well, do something.

That's what it all boils down to.

Always burning somebody.

(Many voices speaking at once)

I guess I come at it differently. If it's proven beyond a reasonable doubt that you killed somebody, don't waste our taxpayer money, do like they do overseas, take a bullet, take him out in the backyard.

Hard labor.

You don't have to kill them.

Eye for an eye.

MODERATOR—I DON'T WANT TO GET INTO A DEATH PENALTY, I WANT TO STAY FOCUSED HERE, DOUBTS ABOUT GEORGE W. BUSH.

He'll cut too much in the military.

I think he's going to rob us blind.

Oh yeah, I think he's definitely for the rich man.

Part of what bothers me about him and the vice president is, they're both basically oil barons. And then you look at what we paid for natural gas last winter which was just insane. When you pay more to heat your house than you do to buy your house it's ridiculous. Or the price we're paying at the pump. It's nuts.

And they're always digging in Alaska. Who's that for? I mean I'm concerned about him digging in Alaska all of a sudden.

Well, who owns it?

Plus that was protected by Clinton when Clinton left office. I forget what that was called. That's one of the things he signed off on at the very end.

He didn't even wait, he started working on that one. Clinton wasn't even cold yet and he already started working on that one.

No, I'm concerned.

I think the price of gas is a joke. Because they lower it and people say, oh that's good. And then what do they do? They no more make the people happy and they jack the price up and it's just getting outrageous.

(End side 1)

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE ABOUT BUSH, DOUBTS, WORRIES, CONCERNS?

Well I worry that what's his name becomes president.

Cheney.

MODERATOR—I'M GOING TO READ YOU SOME WORDS AND PHRASES THAT PEOPLE WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE PEOPLE IN POLITICS. [GIVES INSTRUCTIONS]. FIRST ONE, STRONG LEADER. DOES THAT DESCRIBE BUSH?

No.

He's a leader but I don't think he's strong.

No.

He follows his father's footsteps. He looks up to his dad a lot for what his opinion should be.

With the grin you can't take him serious when he speaks.

He hasn't proved that yet.

Too soon to tell actually.

I don't think he's a strong leader at all.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT, TOO CONSERVATIVE?

Oh, I don't think he's too conservative.

I think he's leaning that way. I think he's a very conservative person. But I think he tries to show that he isn't deep down.

It's too soon actually.

MODERATOR—WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL THAT WAY?

Well, just the way he talks. Conservative, not wanting to spend money. He's always talking about wanting to cut this and cutting that and cutting social welfare, things like that. His whole general appearance of cutting and giving the money back to the people which, he's not giving it back to the right people, he's giving it back to the wealthiest people. To me that's being conservative.

It's too soon. I think. He's given everybody a buck or two.

He didn't give the elderly, I'll tell you that. There's not a lot of people elderly that I know that got a dime. Made everybody think everybody was getting 300 or 500 and it was 160 broken down, totally misleading that whole deal. And you know what? And didn't they have, it's going to boost the economy? People are going to spend 300 bucks, that's going to boost the economy. They made headlines out of this.

Well, my sister got it back. She's not rich. But she got back \$2,800 back. And then she had to pay the IRS off and all her bills. She'll only have about \$300 out of that.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ONE, SHARES YOUR VALUES.

No.

I have no idea what his values are. We were raised completely different I'm sure.

MODERATOR—ARE YOU SAYING NO, YOU'RE NOT SURE OR NO, HE DOES NOT SHARE YOUR VALUES?

I don't know what his values are.

I don't know what his values are.

We don't have the same values.

You cannot relate to people like that at our level.

He can't relate to us.

Oil baron, his family as president.

He was an ambassador.

He went to Ivy League schools.

Education issues.

Maybe if he knew what it's like to be the rest of us we could relate better. But, no. He's never had to, in my opinion he's led a perfect little life, he'll never know what it's like to suffer for anything. He'll never know what it's like to go through some of the horrors that we have to go through. He doesn't know what it's like to be an abused child. To maybe have a mom and dad drunk once in a while. Unless he's lived it he's got no clue. He won't have the same values as the rest of us.

I don't think even being the governor of Texas I don't think, I don't even think he's aware of some of the things that go on out there. Gore was in the Senate and I really think he may have, just because he had to talk to the people more and be more. I don't think Bush did that.

Didn't Texas have the lowest education level? That tells you. He's not even aware.

They're stupid.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ONE, HONEST AND TRUSTWORTHY.

We'll find out.

No politician is honest and trustworthy.

None of them.

You have to be a proficient liar and convincing to be in politics.

They can't please everybody either.

They get an honest and trustworthy one he'll be gone the second he's elected.

Oh, yeah.

Jimmy Carter.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT IN THE REALM OF POLITICIANS, IS BUSH HONEST AND TRUSTWORTHY?

If you compare him to Clinton, yeah.

They all start out good.

But Laura always goes to Texas and stays on that ranch with those girls don't she?

(Many voices speaking at once)

Where's Monica?

Monica is probably with George.

MODERATOR—NEXT ONE, FAVORS BIG BUSINESS AND THE WEALTHIEST OVER THE INTEREST OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

Yes.

Appears that way.

Yeah, really. Well, because, he was an oil man, his family has been in oil. He picks someone for vice president that is a multi-billion, millionaire. His friends are all millionaires and rich people. I don't see his best friends as being me or my neighbor.

I say bring him down to Des Moines for a week and meet with all of us.

But don't we all kind of depend on business in order to make it ourselves?

Yeah, but the oil companies, I tend to think we pay too much for oil and they have too much control. I mean what did the guy do? He owned a baseball team and has an interest in oil companies.

My question is, why doesn't he put a freeze on the oil companies?

He gets into office and the price of gas goes up 60 cents.

Why doesn't he put a freeze on it?

Our electric bills went up like 80 percent. And it stayed there.

The day after he was determined to, they did all this garbage in Florida, I went and filled up my gas tank and this guy said, now look, they made him president and look at the gas prices. He hadn't even got anywhere near them yet and....

Yeah, but he can do something about that.

(Many voices speaking at once)

He wants it to be doom and gloom. Then, oh, our gas is so high, we go drill in Alaska and off the coast of Florida and ruin everything around, and then your gas prices are going to come down. I don't think so.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ONE, CARES ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

That's a laugh.

Don't know, don't feel it.

Hasn't been in office for that long and most of that seems like he's been in Texas.

I think he knows there's someone living in the State of Iowa and hopefully can get the vote by putting stupid commercials on. That's what he cares about.

If he cared how could he let all these people go pay these outrageous prices. Our gas. At the perfect opportunity, always before a holiday, we know the gas prices are going to shoot up.

But it's always been like that not just when he's been president.

Yeah, but I don't remember it ever being this high, ever.

Gas is still going up.

Up and down.

MODERATOR—DOES ANYONE THINK HE DOES CARE ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE YOU?

(Many voices speaking at once)

The next election.

He might care a little bit about me. But out of 100 I would probably be 98.99 that he cares about.

(Many voices speaking at once)

I think I'm on the bottom.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ONE, IN OVER HIS HEAD.

I think they're all in over their heads when they take that position.

I don't know if he's in over his head or he's just stupid, I really can't figure it out. I'm not being mean. I don't know if he's as stupid as he sounds and he really is out of touch with reality or.

There's times I've watched him when I thought he really can't help it. I just don't know if he really doesn't know what's going on or he's that stupid.

He could be.

What's that mean? He won't be capable of doing this job, is that what you're saying? He shouldn't have ever taken this because he's in over his head? Because the way I look at it, any person that takes the presidency would be in over his head from the start. I mean really, that's a tough job.

Being in over his head, the thing that gets me I think probably makes me feel that way is, there will be a major thing, like the oil prices or like when Dick Cheney had his heart attacks and everything. And he'll be fine, he'll be back to work Monday morning. And you look at him and say, do you have a clue? Do you know what's going on here? I mean that's what I want to know. I don't know if he really doesn't know or he just wants us to think he doesn't know.

(Many voices speaking at once)

I think anybody in the presidency is in over their head. But I think he's probably doing the best he can do.

MODERATOR—IS THAT GOOD ENOUGH?

Well as far as everybody's been saying, paying high prices, who knows what's behind them. Saying he can't lower that.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ONE, BRINGING NEEDED CHANGE TO WASHINGTON.

Too soon to tell.

I can't think of anything he's tried to change.

Too early.

Didn't he redecorate a room there or something?

Too early to tell.

Too early.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ONE, CONTROLLED BY OTHERS.

Sure, they all are. Anybody that takes the president is controlled by others.

At least in my lifetime, I don't know what happened before.

I kind of think, controlled by others, they all are controlled by groups and people like that. But with him I think, and I didn't want to believe this at first, it's really his dad's people. He's got Cheney. He's got a couple other secretaries or something. Rumsfeld or somebody like that. They're all back like when his dad was there.

He couldn't find them on his own.

(Many voices speaking at once)

That's where I think a little bit more.

Yeah, I think he's on his dad's coattails.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ONE, FLIP TO HANDOUT NUMBER 3. BELOW IS A LIST OF PEOPLE, GROUPS, AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO ARE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE ACTIONS OF PRESIDENT BUSH AND OTHER LEADERS IN WASHINGTON. THINKING ABOUT BUSH'S SEVEN MONTHS IN OFFICE NOW, PLEASE READ THROUGH THE ENTIRE LIST AND THEN CIRCLE THE THREE GROUPS OF PEOPLE OR ORGANIZATIONS WHOSE INTERESTS BUSH HAS BEEN MOST CONCERNED WITH ADVANCING SO FAR. THEN PUT A STAR NEXT TO THE ONE GROUP OR ORGANIZATION OUT OF THE THREE YOU CIRCLED WHOSE INTERESTS BUSH HAS WORKED HARDEST TO ADVANCE.

BIG BUSINESSES – 2 STAR - 1

CHARITIES - 1

HMO'S AND INSURANCE COMPANIES – NO.

PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS – 1.

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS – NO.

THE WEALTHIEST – 6. STARS – 2.

RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVES – 1. STARS - 1

OIL COMPANIES – 5. STARS – 3.

THE US MILITARY -

PRO-LIFE, ANTI-ABORTION GROUPS – 5. STARS – 1.

THE NRA, OR NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION -

HIS CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTORS – 1.

HISPANICS - ZERO

THE MIDDLE CLASS - ZERO

HIS FATHER'S POLITICAL ALLIES – 3. STARS – 1.

OIL COMPANIES SEEM TO BE A BIG ONE, WHY?

That's all he's talked about. To me, his family is in oil. And he's from a State that has a lot of oil. His vice president is president of some oil company. And his big thing that I think he's talked about is this drilling off of Florida and Alaska.

The first issue immediately, so, yeah.

The oil.

I put oil. Well mainly because he does a lot of oil.

Yeah, I mean when you got both president and vice president who either own or are part of oil companies what else are they going to push for?

That's what he's known for.

This is their bread and butter. Might as well get it while it's good.

That's right.

MODERATOR—ANOTHER ONE WE PUT, THE WEALTHIEST, WHY?

I circled that because he is for the wealthiest. For us people who's fighting for a living, he's not for us. But if you got big money and stuff, he's for you, he's right there for you.

I did. Well, I guess because I think those are the type of people that are his contributors that are in the oil companies that, I don't think he's giving the breaks to the middle class people like me, I think I am. I don't think we're getting the breaks in our taxes. The \$600 is going to be gone if I ever get it and I still have to pay at the end of the year so it's no big deal. He's not giving me anything long term. He's giving like a little percentage of this and a little percentage of that. And to the wealthy people it doesn't mean anything. They get to keep more. And I don't get it. I'm not getting as much as they're getting. That probably makes me a little mad.

I think he's just looking out for the wealthiest people. If you're below a certain level then he really doesn't care about you until that next campaign comes along.

Right.

MODERATOR—WHAT’S HE DONE TO GIVE YOU THAT FEELING?

He seems to want to give the tax breaks to the wealthier people. Well, what about the people, she’s working Federal Express. What about the middle class people? What about the lower class people?

Well, they just threw us a bone.

They gave us the same. Well, the same, if he gives a ten percent tax break to me and a ten percent tax break to somebody that has 10 million obviously it doesn’t affect them as much as it affects me.

There are those of us that had to choose between a career. We put our priorities in order we had to decide. I could be doing a lot better off, my family could be, if I went to work full time, too. OK? But something would be sacrificed. My children and my husband are my most important thing in this life. So, I sacrificed our chance of becoming, because we’re probably the lower end of the spectrum. We’re not even middle class because of how it is. But it was either the money or it was taking care of the kids, working one on one with the children, being able to take care of them or, I had to make my choices. And I made my choice and I don’t doubt it. But why doesn’t he look at those of us that are trying. People have to work two jobs just because they have to just to keep the income coming in so they don’t go, you know.

The other thing is, I don’t think, maybe he’s not doing more for the wealthiest, but he isn’t doing enough for the poor. So, therefore he’s keeping them poor and letting them keep their money, that’s where I think he’s helping the wealthiest.

MODERATOR—ANOTHER ONE WE HIGHLIGHTED, PRO-LIFE, ANTI-ABORTION GROUPS, FIVE CIRCLED THAT, WHY?

Well, recently the stem cell.

He sort of stood on the fence on that though.

Yeah, that was kind of wishy-washy.

He wanted to make some people happy and yet he didn’t want to step on anybody’s toes.

And it’s a fine line.

Right, it’s a very fine line.

It reminds me of the don’t ask don’t tell.

If it’s successful he’ll take all the credit for it. If it’s not he’ll get around it.

He’ll get around the anti-abortion issue.

MODERATOR—YOU THINK THAT’S SOMETHING THAT’S IMPORTANT TO HIM?

I think it’s probably important to research FDA and...

He’s trying to make people happy, that’s what he’s doing. He’s trying to make the pro-lifers happy and the scientists.

...but eventually private sectors are going to be able to do that stem cell. And I also think they’ll use some, the umbilical cords of babies. I think it’s all going to go into a business of abortion eventually, the stem cell thing.

I don’t understand the stem cell thing. I read, OK, this doesn’t make any sense to me, well.

Something will come out of it.

MODERATOR—DID YOU FOLLOW THE STEM CELL DEBATE?

What he was saying was not whether he was for it or against it. The real issue was the federal money. And I kind of have to think that it might be a good deal but we have a lot of research companies and a lot of fancy doctors and universities, you know, they got the money, let them do a little bit more before we put federal money in.

I have to disagree with that. A lot of the companies that need more money for research on multiple sclerosis.

How long is that multiple sclerosis thing going to go on? How much money? And cancer. Jesus.

What about AIDS?

This little tidbit. The congress has voted 20 times more money for the research of prostate cancer than breast cancer. But they’re mostly men.

MODERATOR—ANOTHER ONE, HIS FATHER’S POLITICAL ALLIES. WHAT HAS HE DONE TO LOOK OUT FOR THEM TO ADVANCE THEIR INTERESTS?

Well, he made one vice president. And he made a couple of them secretary of something. And it just seems they appear here and there, everywhere.

Yeah. Just because I heard him say, did the cabinet and the secretaries and all this stuff, he kept saying, he was with his dad. I was wondering, did he have his own mind on this or did daddy sit here and say, listen you got to go with this one, this one, this one.

That’s the way it sounded.

He doesn't have anybody on his own.

MODERATOR—WE TALKED A LOT ABOUT THE WEALTHIEST AND OIL COMPANIES BUT NOBODY CHOSE HIS CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTORS. ONE PERSON THAT DID CROSSED IT OUT.

They're up there with the wealthiest and oil companies.

You already got it on there twice.

MODERATOR—YOU CONSIDER THOSE THE SAME CHOICE?

Yeah, I'd say so.

MODERATOR—I WANT TO TALK IN MORE DETAIL ABOUT THE JOB BUSH HAS DONE ON SOME SPECIFIC ISSUES. THE FIRST ONE IS EDUCATION. WHAT COMES TO YOUR MIND WHEN YOU HEAR GEORGE W. BUSH AND EDUCATION?

Oh, like the voucher. He was going to give a voucher for private schools so people could put their children in private schools. Then all of a sudden that fizzled out. And I think it actually, yeah, that kind of got lost. But that was one of his campaign issues.

(Many voices speaking at once)

Tax break?

No, to give them like on their tuition.

But they had to flunk three times before they were eligible.

Oh, no.

It was only up to a certain amount which wouldn't cover. I work in a private school and it isn't even going to come close to paying for the tuition.

Well, his wife not really him. But she is in favor of reading to the kids and trying to educate the children more.

They all are. They all pick on.

To me it all comes from your level, where you live. The state level. I don't know how you can control, unless it's pay wages, they do need to be paid, they're totally underpaid we know that. But I don't know how he can control what goes on in your school, your kid's school, your grandkid's school, other than wages.

Yeah, he can, he can cut programs. He can cut the hot lunch programs. He can cut the reading programs. The book programs.

But that's on a state level.

It's on a federal government level.

A lot of that does come from federal government.

(Many voices speaking at once)

Well, if they don't have enough kids to go into the programs they lose it. And that's sad.

It depends on how many kids sign up for hot lunch as to how much reading assistance you get. Which is stupid.

MODERATOR—LET ME ASK YOU THIS, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT EDUCATION, WHO DO YOU TRUST MORE TO HANDLE IT ON THE FEDERAL LEVEL, BUSH OR THE DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS?

Bill Clinton.

The Democrats.

The Democrats and Congress.

I would say Democrats.

Democrats.

MODERATOR—ANYONE SAY BUSH?

Nope.

MODERATOR—WHY WOULD YOU TRUST THE DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS?

They have more of a concern at a local level, seems like.

To push the issue.

And they start programs more than cut programs.

(Many voices speaking at once)

Bush is too busy shmoozing everybody to be into anything.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ISSUE, GEORGE W. BUSH AND FOREIGN POLICY?

[Laughter]

That's scary.

You didn't see that look.

He doesn't have very good communication and I'm afraid of what he's going to start.

I think he's arrogant. And I don't think they like him. Everywhere he's gone they've got, like, billboards and giant rubber dolls that are showing him being hung. I mean you just, you get on CNN or the Internet, wherever he goes there's just like this big rally against him.

I think he looks stupid. Hi, how are you.

They don't like you to look stupid.

Look at him, he does kind of look like a cartoon character.

MODERATOR—HAS HE DONE ANYTHING THAT'S STOOD OUT TO YOU?

What was that? A couple of weeks ago. In Israel or Palestine or one of those places.

Yeah, I can't remember what it was.

He talks tough but I don't think he really is.

I wouldn't put him on a ship with him in charge of the guns.

MODERATOR—WHO WOULD YOU PREFER HANDLE THE ISSUES, BUSH OR THE DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS?

Why bother?

Democrats in cCongress.

Democrats.

I think Jesse Jackson.

Oh yeah, he's doing really good for himself isn't he.

He goes over there and talks to them.

MODERATOR—WHAT ABOUT THE DEMOCRATS, DO YOU THINK THEY COULD DO A GOOD JOB?

Bush I think is good with Mexico. He lived in Texas, it was right there, it was close, he could handle that, he knows the president and he can trade back and forth. But I think the Democrats are better at trading and negotiations with everybody, with all the European countries especially.

China, I don't know if anyone is really good.

I don't hear he's gone to Russia and talked to anybody. Even before when Clinton was in there, you hear him talk back and forth about this and that. You see some oddball from some country you never heard of from Bush. They're not beating down our doors to come and visit us or anything.

MODERATOR—NEXT ISSUE, SOCIAL SECURITY.

I think it's nuts to even think about sticking part of it in the stock market. I mean it's great if you happen to catch the stock when it's up but what if the bottom falls out? Then you're more screwed than you already are now.

Oh my God, I can't even imagine doing something like that. I'll be happy to see my social security.

(Many voices speaking at once)

I'll never see it. I'm 33, I'll never see it.

(Many voices speaking at once)

I know too many people that, they claim they can't work, which I go out there and I see disabled people that aren't collecting social security and they're busting their butts. And there's people that could work and they're not even trying to and they're collecting SSI.

MODERATOR—THINKING ABOUT BUSH AND SOCIAL SECURITY?

And Bush isn't really cracking down on any of that.

Somebody needs to look at the system and say, listen, this, this, and this, figure it out so that maybe by the time we get up there we can use it. Because the way it's going now it's going to be gone before I get anywhere close.

This is kind of like social security, Medicaid or whatever, when, it won't be that many years really that, well, over 10, but anyway, 12, 15 years, when I can retire and I can collect social security and I have a little tiny pension plan that will probably buy me a peanut a week or something, it's not going to do anything. But what scares me the most is, just in the last year I've been put on blood pressure medicine, two blood pressure medicines, a water pill and a diabetic

medicine. And fortunately through my husband's work we have a real low co-pay, 5 or \$10 a month. And I thought, I know what the costs of these drugs are, it would probably be \$400 a month. And I thought, well, we don't have that insurance, how are we going to pay? The doctor says, yeah, you're probably going to be on these for life. And the pharmacy, they're doing great things, all these ads and all that. But how am I going to pay for them? It kind of gets me. Am I going to sell my house to pay for the drugs that I've been on for 15 years? Or what if he loses his insurance how am I going to pay? Lose his job, how on earth would we ever pay for these?

(Many voices speaking at once)

MODERATOR—SAME QUESTION, BUSH OR THE DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS WHEN IT COMES TO SOCIAL SECURITY?

I don't have any faith in any of them.

I don't know, Bush or Democrats.

MODERATOR—NEXT ISSUE, GEORGE W. BUSH AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

Greedy.

MODERATOR—HEARD SOME LAUGHING FROM ROSE.

Well, I'm sorry, I don't think he cares a whole lot, he wants to drill for oil in Alaska. That's beautiful country and he should be like, there's reserves we have here in the States.

If we had improved relations with oil countries we wouldn't feel so threatened about being, having to drill in our own country. And if we are self-sufficient and we don't need oil companies, if we can be self-sufficient in this country and not have to rely on other countries for oil and he presents that to us and says, look, that's going to drag down prices and give us good reasons why we should drill in this country, then fine, I might consider it. But I've not heard really anything telling me why we need to dig up a national monument area or whatever it's called, national wildlife area preserve. Is he telling us, we'll do this and you'll have 300-\$400 in your pocket a month? And how long is this going to last if we drill it? Is this going to be a lifetime deal? Don't get any answers.

Well, I think pollution, like the big company farms, you have to have controls. We have to watch it so it doesn't pollute our drinking water, doesn't pollute our ground or the fertilizer doesn't. And air quality in the big cities. There's so many kids with asthma or people with asthma and breathing disorders.

MODERATOR—AND HAS BUSH DONE ANYTHING ON ANY OF THESE YET?

Haven't heard.

Not that I know of.

I think they need to put money into other things besides oil, like maybe ethanol.

Here in the United States so we're not dependent on other countries.

Solar.

(Many voices speaking at once)

MODERATOR—BUSH OR THE DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

I think they have a long history of being real watchdogs. And the reason I probably think that is probably because of our senator here.

Yeah, he's always coming out very, very supportive of environmental issues.

MODERATOR—WOULD ANYBODY CHOOSE BUSH OVER THE DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS? OK, NEXT ISSUE IS THE ECONOMY.

I think he's keeping it just the way the Democrats made it. Bill Clinton, all the bad things he did, when it came to the economy, he made it very stable. Unemployment went down. And George Bush so far is just riding on his shirttails.

Bill Clinton ran on the previous presidential coattails. He improved what they did.

He hasn't done anything.

It's kind of hard to tell so far.

There's been layoffs. This layoff thing really has me going. It's becoming increasingly, it is becoming, it's not far between the way these businesses are.

MODERATOR—DO YOU GUYS FEEL THE ECONOMY IS STRONG?

No.

No.

The economy strong? I think it's good.

How do you define economy?

Unemployment.

The state just laid off, oh my God, they're laying off everywhere. These packing plants. The car companies, laying off 7,000 somewhere in the Midwest.

MODERATOR—WHO DO YOU TRUST TO HANDLE THE ECONOMY MORE, BUSH OR THE DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS?

I don't know. I don't know whether it's because of Bush or if this was before Bush. What's the purpose? I can't say.

MODERATOR—NEXT ISSUE, PATIENT'S RIGHTS.

I think he's OK in the HMO's. Keep the cost down.

It's been in the news but I don't know who's pulling on it.

MODERATOR—WHAT'S BUSH'S POSITION ON IT?

He doesn't want regular people to be able to sue the HMO. And he's, my opinion is, the HMO is a good thing because it will keep the cost down. But they have to have an equal amount. If you cut them too low well then, you know, obviously you can get hurt real bad.

MODERATOR—LET ME LAY THIS OUT A LITTLE BIT. AS YOU MAY KNOW, THE DEMOCRATIC-CONTROLLED SENATE AND THE REPUBLICAN-CONTROLLED HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EACH PASSED A PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS, BUT THERE ARE SOME MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO BILLS. THE SENATE VERSION PRESERVES STATES' RIGHTS TO PASS STRICTER BILLS IF THEY WISH AND ALLOWS PATIENTS TO SUE THEIR HMOS FOR DECISIONS THAT COMPROMISE THE QUALITY OF THEIR CARE. THE HOUSE VERSION, SUPPORTED BY PRESIDENT BUSH, WOULD CREATE ONE UNIFORM SET OF LAWS FOR EVERY STATE AND SEEK TO KEEP PREMIUMS DOWN BY PUTTING FINANCIAL LIMITS ON LAWSUITS. WHICH BILL DO YOU SUPPORT? WHY?

I would say the House version.

MODERATOR—WHY?

Then it's equal for everybody so Tom in Nebraska gets the same thing that Mary does in Iowa for the exact same complication.

That doesn't mean a lot to me because you have to be able to afford the insurance to even start with. And when you look at some of the insurance policies. Like, if you go to the emergency room and all that covers is you walking in the door, what good is it?

MODERATOR—I THINK BOTH BILLS WOULD HANDLE THAT.

But like she points out, if you can't afford the health insurance.

They won't cover labs. The company I work through, I don't even bother with their insurance because it doesn't cover labs. I mean there's more of a list of what it doesn't cover than what it does. So what are you paying all this high dollar for? Nothing.

So, what category does that fit in?

MODERATOR—WHAT'S THAT?

What category does that fit in?

MODERATOR—I'M JUST TALKING ABOUT THE TWO BILLS THAT WE HAVE RIGHT NOW, THE SENATE VERSION AND THEN THE REPUBLICAN VERSION [REITERATES DIFFERENCES OF BILLS].

OK, let's look at this, say you were a person and you were, you were, this happened to me. I was bitten by a dog. I went to the emergency room. And they said, lady, you're nuts, go home, put some ice on it. I said it hurts really bad. They said, you go home and you rest and if it doesn't feel better call your own doctor. The deductible was \$50 and I paid \$50. You go home and stay up all night and you still have pain in your hand. The next morning you call your doctor. You call the emergency room back at 6 and they say, you're fine. So then finally you could get a hold of your doctor at 9 o'clock. You go in there and he says, well, you really have to see a specialist, you got an infection. Comes back and says, we can't get you in there until 4:30 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon. So, we go out there at 4:30, 5 o'clock in the afternoon. It's 7:30 when you finally see the doctor. He looks at your hand and says, you have gangrene, you're probably going to lose it. All right? So you go to the hospital and you're there for a month and you have lots of surgery, Christmas and the whole thing. And they come back and say, all over the country all you can get because they didn't believe you, the HMO didn't send you to the specialist to begin with and you had to wait that long because you have an HMO, you can only get \$100,000. And you say forget it. This could have killed me. It could have taken my life. Only \$100,000.

MODERATOR—SO, YOU'RE OPPOSED TO THE LIMITS?

That's right.

(Many voices speaking at once)

If they put a cap on charges then I would say then put a cap on malpractice. And that's what you're talking about. The price that doctors can charge. Because if you say, OK, I want to be able to sue for whatever, these doctors are going to have, their prices are going to vary and they're going to be very expensive and their insurance not going to cover so much. But if you make a tonsillectomy X amount, if you make a cold visit X amount, I don't know if that's even doable...

That's what they do, they have a certain amount they charge.

...but I don't think it's set in stone on anybody. Because I've been to several different doctors and one will charge more.

(Many voices speaking at once)

My insurance, I have to go to the one they tell me to. And if the doctor tries to charge me more, they don't charge me.

(Many voices speaking at once)

MODERATOR-- IMAGINE THE REST OF THE YEAR PASSES WITH THE HOUSE AND SENATE UNABLE TO WORK OUT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE TWO BILLS. NO PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS IS PASSED THIS YEAR. WHOSE FAULT IS IT? WHY?

It's the president's fault because he should have said, get back in there and figure something out. I'm the president and I'm telling you to get in there and figure it out. Or the vice president or somebody.

Like you do with the kids. Stick them in a room until they can work it out.

There's 10 million or however many people waiting for this.

MODERATOR—THE FEDERAL BUDGET, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WHEN YOU HEAR BUSH AND THE FEDERAL BUDGET?

I think the numbers are so high that it's incomprehensible about the budget. I don't think we have a budget.

(Many voices speaking at once)

Let's put it this way. I have \$1,000 credit card bill, all right, and I have an extra 200 bucks. I can give it to my daughter and tell her to have a good time or I can put it on my credit card bill. Common sense.

I think we probably need to firm up a little bit and give this budget thing, whatever heck is the imbalance on it, that's all I've heard my own life, is the deficit and the budget and it's never, ever been good. What about the budget? What can you say about the budget?

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT NUMBER 4.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, PRESIDENT BUSH AND THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESS PASSED A \$1.35 TRILLION TAX CUT OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS. BUSH SAYS HE PUSHED FOR THE BIGGEST TAX CUT IN HISTORY BECAUSE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE OVERTAXED, AND WE NEED TO PROVIDE TAX RELIEF IN ORDER TO PRESERVE OUR

COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC STRENGTH. DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS SUPPORT MANY OF THE TAX CUTS, INCLUDING MAKING COLLEGE TUITION DEDUCTIBLE AND ELIMINATING THE MARRIAGE PENALTY, BUT THEY SAY BUSH'S PLAN IS TOO BIG AND IRRESPONSIBLE, AND GIVES MOST OF THE TAX CUTS TO THE WEALTHIEST 1 PERCENT – THOSE MAKING OVER \$375,000 A YEAR.

I got to believe the Democrats.

I believe the Democrats.

Democrats.

MODERATOR—WHY THE DEMOCRATS?

Why, because all the tax breaks go to the wealthiest 1 percent, they always have. Nothing has changed.

I think the college tuition should be deductible and also the marriage penalty. I really believe in both of those. Strongly.

MODERATOR—THEY SHOULD STILL BE INCLUDED IN THE TAX CUT?

Right.

MODERATOR—DO YOU AGREE WITH THE DEMOCRATS THAT BUSH'S OVERALL PLAN IS TOO BIG AND IRRESPONSIBLE?

Well, yeah.

I just want to know what portion of this 135 trillion I'm going to feel. Where's it going to hit me?

MODERATOR—HANDOUT NUMBER 5. [GIVES INSTRUCTIONS, DESCRIBES RATING SYSTEM]. READ ALL FOUR AND THEN WE'LL DISCUSS THEM REAL QUICK. THE FIRST ONE IS,

CANCEL THE RATE CUTS FOR THE WEALTHIEST ONE PERCENT TO INCREASE EDUCATION SPENDING BY 200 BILLION DOLLARS OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS.

+3? 5. +2?

PLUS 3'S AND 2'S, WHY?

'Cause they need to make sure they put the money into education. There's too many kids slipping through the system right now that can't read and they're just passing by. Maybe if they

had extra people to help, make sure these children are actually learning. Nobody is going to lose if a child graduates high school and goes on to college, nobody is going to lose in that situation.

I put a plus 3. Education the way it is now, if you live in a certain part of the area that's mostly little class and you move to an area that's higher class, you find a difference in education. If you live in Des Moines the education isn't quite up to what it is if you move to West Des Moines. You live in Des Moines you have kids that come from poor districts that are...

It also depends on what part of the city the school is in.

...that's what I'm saying.

One of my friends had a child in public schools to private schools because she was having a hard time with children that were coming in that were causing problems. And she's moved to a private school and now she's way behind.

MODERATOR—NEEDS TO BALANCE OUT, THE QUALITY.

Right. For the parents that are in the higher tax bracket.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ONE,

CANCEL THE RATE CUTS FOR THE WEALTHIEST ONE PERCENT TO  
CREATE A REAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT FOR ALL SENIORS

+3? 8. +2? 1.  
WHY?

We need to take care them and us.

It's a real need.

A very big need.

I see for people 71 and 72 what it costs for their meds each month, it's ridiculous.

It's a matter of life and death.

MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK WE CAN AFFORD THAT IF WE CANCEL THE RATE,  
THE TAX CUTS FOR THE WEALTHIEST 1 PERCENT?

How many trillions was that?

Try it.

One percent, almost 72 trillion.

It's a lot of money.

Whatever it takes.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ONE,

CANCEL THE RATE CUTS FOR THE WEALTHIEST ONE PERCENT TO FUND  
THE MODERNIZATION OF AMERICA'S MILITARY

+2? 2. +1? 1. 0? 4. -1? 1. -3?

OK, NOT AS POPULAR, WHY NOT?

Is our military not modern?

It's modern, but shutting down so many bases, they're leaving us so vulnerable. I mean if you shut down certain key bases here in the States, like they're talking about the possibility of doing it, you're asking for somebody to come overseas, you're begging for them to do it. Because your defenses are down. And I have a different perspective because I was a military brat, I saw all this stuff growing up.

(End tape)