

**DEMOCRACY CORPS
GROUP 2
DES MOINES, IA
NON-COLLEGE MEN, 45-60
INCOME UNDER \$50,000, BLUE-COLLAR
DECEMBER 12, 2001, 8:00 P.M.**

I'm Rick and I work for a trucking company as a route coordinator. I live in Clive.

I'm Jack and I'm from Dallas Center Island. I'm co-owner of Wheeler's Power Equipment.

I'm Ray and I live in Martinsdale and I work at the Indianola as a building maintenance manager.

I'm Mark and I work for Home Depot. I'm off because of an accident right now. I live in Weather Heights, all my life.

I'm Thomas, work in quality assurance for car companies. Things like that...it's not as important as it sounds.

I'm Roger, and I live in West Des Moines. I raise sunken concrete steps and sidewalks.

I'm Mike and I live in Altoona and I do construction work.

I'm Steve and I live in Des Moines. I work in Urbandale for Hack Specialties. Drive a truck and work in the warehouse.

MODERATOR—I WANT TO START OFF TALKING GENERALLY. THINKING ABOUT THE COUNTRY AND EVERYTHING THAT IS GOING ON RIGHT NOW, WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE COUNTRY IS GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION OR THE WRONG DIRECTION?

As far as what we are doing over in Afghanistan?

MODERATOR—JUST EVERYTHING.

Definitely the right direction. As far as the recession and all that is concerned, I think it's going to pick up and it's something we've lived through before.

It seems like we are overreacting a little bit on the recession type thing. Some of the latest interest cuts I don't think are going to affect the common person and are probably intended for business, which isn't bad. Big business maybe.

It will affect big government long before it does us. A lot harder.

I wonder about our role in Afghanistan. I realize that because of the tragedy we really don't have much choice, but I think the way we are going about it is not the best way. We are going to end up causing more and more terrorist actions and that's going to affect the economy, it's going to affect the government. This is what these people want to do. This is their way. As far as the recession, I think that's understandable under the conditions. As a matter of fact, we probably lost somewhere around 100 billion dollars in New York, it's going to have an impact.

I agree that the recession is.....I believe it's going to be short term. It's a long windfall that's happened because of New York and also....I back the President right now almost 100%. I believe that right now the choice that we've made for President was a very good one. He's very....he goes exactly.....he tells you he is going to do something, he does it. I think this country right now needs that. I like that he's a religious person. After the last president we had, not because he was Democrat, but Clinton was not a very good president and our country went down the tubes because of that. And I also believe that he's somewhat the cause of what the recession is now anyway.

I've been working in transportation for many years. One thing we do recognize early is the coming of a recession. We knew in June that we were going into a recession. What happened on 9/11 didn't help it, but it certainly wasn't the cause of it. It was coming on long before that.

I agree with that.

I think about us going to war. I think we have no choice. I don't think there's any other way around it. I think one of our problems right now is young people. Just the drugs and the crime and the stuff like that. We should be worried about overseas, yeah, but I think we have a lot of problems with the young people with the drugs and the things that are going on and crime and stuff like that. That's the future. That's a big problem.

I have a question about that. What do you think causes that?

I think it's the parents. A lot of that is what is on TV nowadays. I see kids out at midnight, 2 a.m. When I was able to drive and I wasn't 18, if I wasn't home by 12 o'clock, Dad would be sitting in the chair waiting for me. Boy, I'd get it too. It just seems like parents....I don't know if they care. I think a lot of people are more wrapped up in their lives with what they are doing for themselves instead of worrying about what their kids are doing. I think this family values stuff is really just going down the tubes. Like what's on TV and everything. It used to be that you'd watch a scary movie and it used to be just the element of surprise. Now it's blood, guts and everything else. I never saw that when I was a kid. All the sex that's on TV. That's one of our big problems. And yeah, we let them watch it, but they shouldn't be on there in the first place.

Where do you think that comes from?

The people.

From parents.

It comes from parents, but what causes parent to be that way? To me, it seems that they are too wrapped up in their lives, in their jobs, their cars and their houses, materialism. Our entire culture is based upon buying things. Buying things you don't need, that you don't want.

The family values aren't there.

I think that's a lot of it because people have two jobs now, they don't have people at home. People are watching TV a lot more, kids a lot more.

You don't have the family time.

No offense to your profession, but marketing, to me that's where the problem is. Never before in the history of this country have we been targeted so obsessively with the messages from advertisers telling us to buy things. The mere idea of the president coming on and saying, the best way to be a patriot in this country is go buy something. I wonder about that. We are so loaded down with credit debt in this country, that's what causes your recession.

I think you are taking that way too far off to one side. I felt that when the president say, hey, go out and buy something, if everybody quits buying stuff, then the recession is going to increase even more. I think his point was trying to say, yes we are in a terrible time right now, but if you all quit buying stuff we are going to be even worse. And now, myself, me and my wife both work, but last year during the winter, we had \$1,000 a month electric heating bills. And I'm still paying those off today.

Why was it so high? Is it because things just jumped that much? Or what?

Look who owns the (inaudible). We are in a time right now that you don't want to chop off the hand that feeds you, but guess what's happening, we are fighting the Islamic nations that have the oil.

I think that generally we are headed in the right direction.

I think this war has brought people together. Big time.

MODERATOR—WHAT THINGS ARE HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION?

We are doing about as good as we can do in the war on terrorism. I think we are doing as good as we can do in the economic area.

I was thinking back to the kids.

But, I wish we had Clinton back. Sorry.

You don't have to apologize.

It's too bad we can't have a little more tough times because I don't think they've ever experienced being told no, or having to cut back. My kids can go through a lot of money quick. I'm sure there are others that go through more.

That's our fault as parents. Not keeping them toned down on the money. I'm as guilty of that as I'm sure a lot of people are. Some of the things, me growing up, when I did wrong when I was little, I got whooped just like that. It seemed as I got older and had my own kids, the states and stuff, if I whooped my kid and you called....they'd come to my kid's defense and I was already guilty and I'd have to prove what was going on. So, that's really gotten pulled away from the parenting. I still try to raise my kids....if he does something wrong, I smack him on the butt. And the other day, he broke something and he thought he was going to get a whooping. I said, it's different if it's an accident. You are not getting punished for that. You get punished for things that you on purposely do that you know are wrong.

MODERATOR—GET BACK TO THE ECONOMY FOR A SECOND. WHAT DO YOU SEE THREE MONTHS DOWN THE ROAD?

I think it will get better.

I think it's already getting better.

I can see in the shipping industry right now, it's picked up a little bit. We are not like we used to be a month ago.

I don't think I've seen it drop down to the point where we were ever in any serious trouble anyway.

I think it's going to stabilize for a little bit and then take off. Get through the winter, then spring things will take off and we'll have a good year next year.

We have to settle on this war first. I wish I could be more optimistic, but I really don't think so. Taking into account the cost of New York, taking into account the economy, that Greenspan just lowered the interest rate another quarter point, eleven times he's done this. That tells me that it's pretty serious, that it's not going well.

I think if gas prices stay down the way they are right now, I think we are going to come through this just fine. If they start spiking back up, we will be in trouble.

This is what I worry about. All of a sudden with all the crisis going on, gas prices are going down. I don't think that's an accident. But, I wonder in the future, if we have to

go into....say we clean up Afghanistan, we get Bin Laden and fine....where do we go next? The president has said that he is going to seek out terrorism in any country, anywhere on the planet, and if the people in that country are lying, he's going to go after them too. That's a big chunk to bite off.

But, I don't think it's only us that's going to be biting off the chunk.

I don't think so either.

Saddam should be the next one in line.

What happens if we have to go to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is probably the biggest importer of terrorists in that whole region. Now, we are stuck at a point where on one hand we have to be nice them because they have 25% of the oil, on the other hand we have to protect them and their people don't like us protecting their royal family. And third, if we do go after them, if they shut that oil off, we are screwed.

In this country we are not so much screwed.

MODERATOR—LET ME ASK YOU THIS. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST CHJACKGE FACING THE COUNTRY TODAY?

The economy.

Terrorism.

Energy.

Energy and I think we need to go after some different types of energy.

Get away from petroleum and we won't need it quite so bad.

(many talking at once)

They just opened that wind farm up in northern Iowa. They ought to have more of them. You have plenty of wind in Iowa. If they can use the wind to produce the energy....

But, the wind is not going to drive your car down the street or your semi.

No, but that's going to take care of part of the problem.

Yeah.

And as for that, they ought to mandate that you have better gas economy. You have so many road hogs on there that's getting six or seven miles to the gallon, look how much fuel that is eating up all the time.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE BESIDES ENERGY?

Ecology. What's happening with all the housing developments and such. I'm a naturalist guy, I fish. So, I guess my point is that they are taking too much land to build houses. They are taking more than what we need.

Our water quality. Big time.

I think personal debt is kind of a problem. Some people are digging out and then they go out and buy the car with the 0% interest rate. That takes money out of your pocket until you get it paid off.

Credit cards.

Debt in general.

That and corporate philosophy. It's probably the most damaging value system that we have in this country today. This country is run by corporations. They don't care about anything but the bottom line. You talk about mandating...corporations, the oil industries, automotive industries, let's get away from oil, no? Bill Mohr on Politically Correct last night just bought an electric hybrid car. They fought building that car for the last 20 years. If they wanted to build something without oil, they could do it tomorrow. But, how do you get the government to mandate it?

MODERATOR—THINKING SPECIFICALLY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED ON 9/11, DO YOU THINK IT HAS CHANGED YOUR THINKING IN ANY WAY?

It has changed mine. I've lost my desire to get on an airplane. I like to go places in the winter and I have been invited out to California, which is where I like to go in the winter time, and I don't even know if I want to be in California. It's the big center of population, and who knows. We got off lucky with the Trade Center. People have been expecting a nuclear attack somewhere or a biological attack and the West Coast is one of the first places it will start. I've been thinking about that and thinking, boy, I don't know if I want to get on an airplane or go to California.

To me, it's like you have in your mind these foreigners that come into our country, now that's kind of changed my opinion. They deserve a free life, just what I've got, but now I kind of piss on that.

I don't have that same trust. I couldn't trust anybody who wasn't....some people are from other countries and they look American, but you can look at them and you can't tell because we are all different kind of people. You look at somebody and you think to yourself, have they been over here 30 or 40 years or have they just come over here two or three years ago, and can you trust this person. I don't know.

Our country was founded on trust and if it wasn't for that I wouldn't be here. A lot of people here in this room wouldn't be here right now, if it wasn't for that trust. I don't think I could go with that. I don't care what country they come from. That's what this country is founded on.

If you got on a plane with one and he was on the plane, would you not think about it?

I'd probably think about it, but if anybody tried to pull a knife or anything, I think there would probably 200 people on their ass. I'm not going to worry about it.

But, you would completely trust that person?

No. I'm not going to completely trust anybody. To be honest with you, I never have totally trusted very few people in my life.

I trust everybody unless I get a reason not to trust them.

MODERATOR—YOU ALSO SEE A LOT MORE PEOPLE FLYING THE FLAG SINCE 9/11, WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU SEE THE FLAG?

Unity.

Unity.

American.

We are all in it together.

What we are fighting for. You didn't even see that in Vietnam or WWII, not nearly as much as you do now. I think it's just a devastation of that tragedy, just out of nowhere.

It happened on homeland. It's true. Now like WWII, that was bad, but that was a military instillation. That's what really brought people closer together is the fact that it was civilians. These were people in your neighborhood.

To me, it's the loss of innocence. This country was kind of the biggest bear in the woods for a long, long time. And after 9/11, it took away our innocence, and then finally it dawned on us that we are not the end all and be all in this world. That we are vulnerable too. And I think the shock of that is what caused the flying of the flags and the unity. People suddenly realized, hey, I'm not just an individual. There's something that happened in this country. We are vulnerable, it could be tomorrow. So, I think there's a little bit of that anxiety. I think that's why the flags and unity.

MODERATOR—THINK ABOUT CONGRESS AND ELECTIONS FOR CONGRESS. THINKING ABOUT THE CHOICE YOU ARE GOING TO MAKE, WOULD YOU BE LOOKING FOR A CANDIDATE WHO FOCUSES MAINLY ON TERRORISM AND

SECURITY ISSUES RIGHT NOW, OR A CANDIDATE WHO FOCUSES MAINLY ON THE ECONOMY AND DOMESTIC ISSUES RIGHT NOW?

I'm looking for a candidate who focuses on campaign finance reform.

I'm looking for a candidate who focuses on common sense. Do whatever it takes.

I would say the economy and domestic issues. You have to look at the long picture. 5 or 10 years down the road. You have to take care as you go.

If you don't take care of the security matters, you may not have the down the road.

But, if you don't take care of the economic issues, you are not going to have...you have to have money to go out there and fight it.

I'd have to wait a few months before...let's see how things go I guess. I don't know. Whatever is the most important issue is what they are going to stress.

MODERATOR—SAY THE ELECTION WERE TOMORROW, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I'd say security. Right now, because of what has just happened. I still don't feel comfortable yet.

Like he said, two or three months down the road that might be different.

One might be more prominent than the other right now.

As long as it is still active, you need to take care of your security.

I agree with Jack that right now we need to deal with the security of our nation. And I hope that everybody realizes that I honestly believe that this campaign that the government is on right now is not a short-term thing. And I think it's going to end up...gas and fuel are going to be the least of our problems. I think this is going to get a lot deeper and messier than people. I still think this nation is still naïve. I still think that people think we still live in a glass house, but yet it can't be broken, and it can be. It's going to get shattered considerably before this is over. We are never going to get rid of terrorism, so that's a false hope. But, we do have certain cells in the world that need taking care of. We need to do that.

I was thinking of the economy being the most important. As far as the terrorism, it's such a hot button issue right now, that it can really be used as a political wedge to get people to do something that they might not want to do. Elect me, I'll get rid of terrorism, and he turns around and he doesn't care, nothing gets done. It's too easy and too emotional.

MODERATOR—(HANDOUTS GIVEN OUT) ON HANDOUT #1, WRITE DOWN THE GOOD THINGS THAT COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF GEORGE W. BUSH. THEN GO TO HANDOUT #2 AND WRITE DOWN YOUR DOUBTS ABOUT GEORGE W. BUSH. LET'S TALK ABOUT THE GOOD THINGS FIRST.

Strong minded.

Gets on TV and I listen to him, when he talks about anything, he gets right to the point. It's what I want to hear.

When I listen to him talk, I honestly believe that he ain't filling us full of BS. When he says he is going to do something, that is exactly what he wants to do. He doesn't whitewash the issue, he don't dance around a hot topic and try to weasel his way through it. He's very honest and straight forward and he doesn't exaggerate. He tells you exactly like it is.

That's what I thought.

Family oriented. Leadership. He's kind of God fearing too in the way he talks and acts.

That's about what I said.

Emotional leadership. He's tried to be an emotional leader for the country.

He has taken on the terrorists. There was no long winded talks or anything, he just said what he was going to deal with it.

I just like the basic overall idea that he seems to be more common sense oriented and honest. I don't know whether that's him or his writers. But, his presentation at least projects that.

MODERATOR—LET'S TALK ABOUT THE DOUBTS.

Environment. The fact that he is in the pocket of big business. The fact that even before he was elected they were talking about not drilling in Alaska, and the first thing that he did when he got in, they changed all the rules and went behind everybody's head, and they tried to get that opened up for oil. There's oil up there, fine. There's not enough to go drilling and ruining the environment. There's about six months worth of supply. Big business, big oil.

Some of the domestic issues are being set aside right now. Just afraid that he will use this terrorist attack down the road, rather than what it is. Right now, he's doing great. I stand behind him 100%. But, down the road...

Two things that...and they are not really things that I have against him. I just hope that he's strong enough to withstand time and this pressure that he's got. The presidency is

already one of the hardest jobs, and then with everything he's going through now, I just hope mentally he's up to that challenge and can go on like he is. And then the other thing I had was that I just hope he doesn't get assassinated. I really don't have anything else against him.

I couldn't find nothing against him right now. I'm real happy with what he is doing.

Not enough helping the poor people out. That tax break, that little token that was supposed to spur the whole economy, the poor people to get them to spend more money. But, he's doing a good job.

I don't think that he has the knowledge of world history and politics that he needs to deal effectively with the rest of the world. He, for instance, told all the rest of the world that he was going to do what was best for America. The hell with the rest of the world. After the World Trade Center, he changed his tune all of a sudden. I also feel like he's simplistic in his thinking and that for instance, he says that it was a bunch of cowards that attacked the World Trade Center. You tell me about a coward that will go out and kill himself and you call him a coward, he's no coward. And he also calls Bin Laden, Mr. Evil. He has done bad things to us, there's no doubt about it, but the point I'm making is we need to try and understand why these people are feeling so strongly about us, and do something about it. Instead of just calling him all sorts of names and saying that they are bad.

Oil/his Texas connections. I don't know how much the rest of the country thinks about Texas, but I'm not too sure about it. He picked Cheney who was in charge of some type of an oil...a CEO...something that would have been a conflict of interest. I'm not too happy. Down there at the bowl games they were lobbying like crazy to get their Texas teams up....people think they are pretty important down there. The rest of the country doesn't have....I don't think the rest of the country thinks too much of the people from Texas to be honest. I don't think they dislike them, but I think they are always a little bit...

MODERATOR—DO YOU TRUST BUSH TO HANDLE THE ECONOMY IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS?

I don't think the president has much to do with the economy.

Not if he gets his way he isn't doing it right. He wants to give....he wanted to forgive the corporations the minimum tax and give all that they paid in the last five years, he wants to give it back to them in one year. He wants to give all the tax breaks to the large business people, and the large income people, and they don't even need that money to spend. If the money went to the minimum wage or the low wage earners, the tax breaks, it would be pumped back into the economy right now, which is when we need it. Not six months down the road.

I kind of agree. I'm worried that he's missing the boat here. The biggest part of this country is the middle class and below. Like he said, if you give it all to the rich, that's fine and dandy for them, they get to buy another house in the Hamptons, but I don't know if it has that much to do with the economy. He is really saying, we are going to give you ten days worth of tax free spending. They figure that out and it's going to be about \$40. You can't buy a sack of groceries for \$40. It's meaningless, it's useless.

I think he's put people around him that probably know a lot more about the economy than Bush does, but that to me shows that he is a good president. At least he got people around him to have the knowledge of the weakest part of his self.

I don't think that he was a good economist. He did get some good people around him. I think they are trying hard to recover from a lot of damaging things that have happened to us in the last few years. And in the last few months. There's a lot of windfall and a lot of stuff that came down the pike that his administration (inaudible).

You take 9/11 away, what people thought about the economy. By no means did he know this was going to happen, but it has definitely focused people on something else besides joblessness and.....

MODERATOR—LET'S TALK ABOUT ENERGY POLICIES. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT ENERGY POLICY IN THE U.S. RIGHT NOW? WHAT KIND OF CHANGES NEED TO BE MADE?

Taking away from the oil.

Methanol. Why aren't we using that?

Make it standard across the country.

I think we need to decide that we need a major psychological shift in this country toward alternative energy. But, that's the most difficult part. You are going to be fighting everyone in big business that doesn't want it. But, I think that if the world is to survive, we are going to have to change. Hydrogen, wind power, all of this.

MODERATOR—WHAT KIND OF ALTERNATIVES ARE YOU GUYS THINKING ABOUT?

Solar energy.

Battery.

Solar energy has gotten a lot cheaper over the years. Solar cells, batteries. It used to take how many batteries to run something and now they can do it with a small battery, but it's getting better. And the price on all that electronic stuff is starting to come down. It's getting more affordable. And that's what they need to do is to make this alternative

energy affordable. And they need to look at it and see why it is so costly. Is it the materials, the cost of labor or what?

That's what I wonder. What is the (inaudible) that is going to be used to finally bring this about? And my feeling is that it is going to take some sort of major catastrophe before they finally realize that we cannot be dependent on oil anymore.

I think we are on the verge of that now.

Over the years, they are depleting the oil so they can jack the price back up.

I didn't make myself clear. When I said we are on the verge, it's not that we are on the verge of the world running out of oil to run everything. We are on the verge of losing our great big pump. I see that the nations of Islam and all of the big Arab countries, they are backing us right now that okay we won't be apart of this terrorism, we'll do what you want and let you land here, but then after we get done with Bin Laden and then we go to Iraq and all these other countries, pretty soon they are going to...if you step on toes and that's where it's all coming from. What are we going to do when we lose it? Well, we need to make a decision now. I would like to see the country...I would hope that they've already been doing this, working towards alternative energy sources. Put out a dollar amount. Here's a billion dollars, they are spending so many of them anyway, that's just a far fetched figure. All these scientists and everybody get together and then make their groups like cell groups, and just invent something. Let's figure this out and get away from this oil completely.

My question is, how do you do that? That's a political decision.

MODERATOR—GO TO HANDOUT #3. WE ARE GOING TO READ A COUPLE OF STATEMENTS ABOUT ENERGY POLICY.

PRESIDENT BUSH AND REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS HAVE CALLED FOR THE IMMEDIATE PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION TO REFORM OUR ENERGY POLICY. THEY SAY THE LESS DEPENDENT WE ARE ON OIL FROM THE MIDDLE EAST, THE MORE SECURE OUR NATION IS. WE NEED TO INCREASE DOMESTIC PRODUCTION OF OIL, COAL AND NATURAL GAS. OUR NATIONAL SECURITY REQUIRES THAT WE OPEN ALASKA'S ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE TO OIL DRILLING, SUBSIDIZE THE DEVELOPMENT OF CLEANER COAL TECHNOLOGY AND BUILD NEW POWER PLANTS.

DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS SAY WE NEED A LONG TERM ENERGY SECURITY PLAN THAT REDUCES OUR RELIANCE ON OIL FROM THE MIDDLE EAST. WE NEED TO USE AMERICA'S TECHNOLOGICAL KNOW HOW TO DEVELOP NEWER, CLEANER ENERGY SOURCES SUCH AS WIND AND SOLAR, AND TO BUILD MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT CARS AND APPLIANCES. WE CAN SECURE OUR ENERGY SUPPLY USING CLEAN FUELS LIKE

NATURAL GAS, BUT WITHOUT DRILLING FOR OIL IN THE PRISTINE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THESE? IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE ONE THAT YOU WOULD AGREE WITH MORE, WHICH WOULD IT BE? THE FIRST ONE? THE SECOND ONE? OKAY, IT'S A CLEAN SWEEP ON THE SECOND ONE. WHY?

It's only common sense. It's good that we need to find new technology. It's definitely...we can't rely on oil for the rest of our lives. How long is oil going to last?

Spending money drilling for oil and in the long term, we are going to be away from that anyway, you need to spend that money on technology to produce other fuels.

If we allow everything they are asking for in Alaska, and we have pumped everything they want to pump out of Alaska, it would amount to less than six months of energy for this country.

MODERATOR—LET ME PLAY DEVIL'S ADVOCATE HERE. ALL THESE NEW TECHNOLOGIES ARE NICE, BUT WHEN YOU GO OUT TO THE CAR DEALERSHIP, YOUR SUV IS STILL GETTING 16 MILES TO THE GALLON AND WE NEED TO INCREASE SUPPLIES NOW. DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT? DO WE HAVE AN IMMEDIATE SUPPLY SHORTAGE THAT WE NEED TO ADDRESS?

No.

No.

No.

Not really.

What we need to address is why is your SUV only getting that 16 miles to the gallon. I drove a car back in the 1970's and I got better than that and it had a carburetor, not a fuel tank, and it did not have a computer.

You talk about unity in this country, if you want to be united and patriotic, don't buy SUV's. It's a question of what are you willing to sacrifice for this country.

It seems to me that refining is the bigger problem than oil. That's where we supposedly had our energy strikes because refining capacity is...no one wants to go to new refinery and there's so much red tape when you go through it, that I think they probably can get as much oil as they want, but they can only process so much of it.

I have one question and if anybody can answer this, we are an agricultural based country, we have the technology to make corn into fuel. Who would benefit most from that and why aren't we going after it?

It's not cost efficient for the big power companies. Unless they can get their fingers in and say, we are going to make ethanol, but the money is going to come to us instead of another industry, who is that going to be most beneficial for? The United States, but oil companies don't care what's beneficial to the United States, they care about what's beneficial to them. It's going to cost them more money.

Is it going to be big business or is it going to be us people in this room right here?

It's going to be big business.

Who is going to benefit from it more?

No, we are.

That's true.

Because we are an agricultural based country, who is going to make the money, this whole country is.

We are not an agricultural based country.

MODERATOR—LET' SWITCH GEARS. LET'S TALK ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY. WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD LATELY ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY?

Some options, some alternatives. Jobs for the financial planners to me.

They want to have individual retirement accounts that you yourself invest in the stock market. That would be absolutely disastrous.

Working off your own money. To me, I think that's a bad idea.

The people that need it the worst, that need the benefits the worst, will get the least and maybe lose everything they have in that program. I would think that if...when they first initiated social security, if they had left it alone, we wouldn't have this conversation right now about it. But, the fact that there was so much money in social security and the government took that money out to do all this other stuff with, that was a very wrong thing to do. And now that the government knows it and it's in such dire straights, and that me at 45 will probably not retire and see my social security. To turn around and tell me, well we are going to let you...seeing that we have shot it to hoot, we will let you try to save whatever is left. And then put that on to me, which I'm going to tell you right now, I'm not a wizard at the stock market. And I don't think the stock market is doing that darn good right now. So, now they are going to shove that towards me and let me

just...and then what that does is they are going to get it out of their hands, the blame, and it's going to put it into my hands. Then they will say you lost it because you lost it. It's not our fault.

I came into some money from my parent's estate. I went down and found the best investment counselor I could find. Three people to invest this money and I told them to invest it in the most conservative possible investment you can. I cannot afford to lose this investment. Over the last ten years, I've lost 25% of that money. That's having experts take care of it.

Well, they did a good job because I lost 50%.

MODERATOR--IT'S CALLED PRIVATIZING SOCIAL SECURITY, IS IT A GOOD OR BAD IDEA?

I think it's going to hurt the fellow working.

I don't think a whole lot of my social security. I don't plan on it being there when I get ready to draw.

I don't know if social security was ever intended to live off of when you retire, it was just a supplement. And here, people are trying to live off of it, and I honestly don't think it's going to be there when I retire. I'm making my own retirement.

I agree. I don't think it's going to be there and I'm 51. You add to the mess they have now and you can't rely on that. You have to have something else, another plan in place somehow to have something. If there is something, it's just going to be a token amount. Take the rough edges off. It won't be enough to live on.

Spending money.

MODERATOR—TURN TO HANDOUT #4.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S COMMISSION ON SOCIAL SECURITY JUST RELEASED A REPORT CONTAINING THREE OPTIONS FOR PARTIALLY PRIVATIZING SOCIAL SECURITY. THE COMMISSION SAYS UNDER EACH OF THEIR PLANS FUTURE RETIREES CAN EXPECT TO RECEIVE BENEFITS THAT ARE AS LEAST AS HIGH AS THOSE RECEIVED BY THOSE RETIREES, BY GAINING THE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN SUBSTANTIAL WEALTH THROUGH VOLUNTARY AND PERSONAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS. THEY SAY THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO ENSURE THE LONG-TERM FISCAL HEALTH OF SOCIAL SECURITY.

DEMOCRATS SAY THE COMMISSION'S REPORT PROVES YOU CAN'T PRIVATIZE SOCIAL SECURITY WITHOUT CUTTING BENEFITS FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE BENEFICIARIES. PRIVATIZING SOCIAL SECURITY WOULD

COST ONE TRILLION DOLLARS IN JUST THE NEXT DECADE, REQUIRES DRASTIC CUTS IN BENEFITS AND AN INCREASE IN THE RETIREMENT AGE, AND DESTROYS THE PROMISE OF GUARANTEED BENEFITS FOR MILLIONS OF TAXPAYERS. THE COMMISSION'S REPORT IGNORES THE FACT THAT THE CURRENT BUDGET TAKES HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND TO PAY FOR TAX CUTS.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT ALL THAT?

That's a mouthful.

I have to go with #2.

I think they are both a little bit hard to understand, but those first three words, President Bush's commission, that takes any credibility out. I don't care if it is President Clinton or President Bush or whomever. It's biased. You can find the best...plusses and minuses in anything. I can't be specific, but there's another topic I want to discuss eventually. We'll see if we get to it.

On the second one, if I'm understanding right, both ways are having it privatized. There's not a choice, yes or no. If that's the fact and we are going to privatized social security, all the older folks that are on it now, there's not enough money there to sustain them until they are done. For crying out loud, people are living past a hundred and not just a few of them. So, if you are paying a guy from retirement age until he is 100, that's going to run out, so what are they going to do? They can't take money that they ain't making enough in, in a year's time or month, to buy their medicine and food and housing anyway. And then they are supposed to invest that? The country can't take care of that and let us all do our own thing with it. I'm totally against privatizing anyway. The Democrats are all right with that. And I'm sure the President has to realize it. It's a dead duck. That's what is going to happen.

The main point to me is that it is mathematics. You only have so many people paying into this and you have so many people needing it. One way or the other, some generation is going to get cut. The question is who, and how is the politicians smooth that over so they can still get them to vote for them? But, as far as privatizing, again I say, I'm sorry but people in this country are just not qualified to deal with the stock market. You have better odds in Las Vegas than you do in the stock market. You just cannot do it.

The crunch has always happened once. My Mom was one of those people that at age 72 or something, they cut the benefits. Didn't they cut benefits once?

Oh yeah, two or three times.

I'm talking about in three years you don't get anything at all.

The notch people. If you were born in 18, 19 or 20, something like that, you are not entitled to anything. Even though you worked all your life and paid into it, but you get nothing for it.

You don't get anything at all?

There's a penalty of some sort. I don't believe anybody has been cut completely out.

I don't think 65 is a retirement age anyway for a lot of people. The younger people are more like 66 or 67.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT SAYING IF WE DON'T TAKE THESE KINDS OF STEPS, THERE IS NO WAY THAT WE CAN SOLVE THIS PROBLEM LONG TERM?

There is a way. I don't remember the details of it. But, there have been several proposals that cure the problem and the way that they have been saving some money is to increase the age at which you can take benefits. But, there have been several proposals to take care of the problem and I think it can be done.

I just want to say that we can take care of the problem if we want to. How many trillions of dollars have we already spent out to bail out the airlines and everybody. I have a problem with total bailout of the airlines and some of the big business that got hurt in the World Trade Center. No disrespect whatsoever. I do believe as a nation we should have helped. But, to totally bail out the airline industry completely, why couldn't they instead of giving them a trillion dollars, why couldn't they give them half that and put it into our social security? The money is in our system, we just have it in the wrong areas. We still have strange priorities on what is most important. Half the people don't even want to fly anymore.

After this happened and they are bailing them out, I can see them helping them out, but it's hurt every place. I have a business too. It's hurt my business too. It cost them a lot more money, but they make a lot more money than I make. If you took a percentage, it probably works out about all the same.

There's Wall Street too.

That's a chance, that's a risk. That just happens. One of them planes could have landed on my business and that would have cost me more than somebody else. It just happens.

MODERATOR—LET'S TALK ABOUT ECONOMIC POLICY ON HANDOUT #5.

GEORGE W. BUSH SAYS WE NEED TO REVITALIZE OUR ECONOMY BY PUTTING MONEY BACK IN THE HANDS OF INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESS INVESTORS. WE MUST MAINTAIN OUR PLANNED TAX CUTS AND ENACT FURTHER TAX CUTS THAT WILL STIMULATE THE ECONOMY AND EXPAND

INVESTMENT. TO ACHIEVE THAT, WE NEED TO RESTRAIN AND CUT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SPENDING, WHILE CONTINUING TO MEET OUR COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL SECURITY AND TO FUND OUR EDUCATION AND DOMESTIC SECURITY INITIATIVES.

DEMOCRATS SAY WE HAVE IMPORTANT NEEDS AS A COUNTRY AND MUST RENEW OUR ECONOMY. WE SHOULD CANCEL MOST OF THE MASSIVE TAX CUTS FOR NEXT YEAR. ALMOST HALF OF THE MONEY GOES TO THOSE EARNING OVER \$375,000 A YEAR, WHICH IS IRRESPONSIBLE IN THESE TIMES. BY CANCELING THESE MASSIVE TAX CUTS FOR THE WEALTHIEST, WE CAN CONTINUE TO CUT MIDDLE CLASS TAXES, RESTORE THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND AND SUPPORT OTHER NEEDS INCLUDING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, EDUCATION AND IMPROVE DOMESTIC SECURITY.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THESE? HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD GO WITH THE FIRST ONE? THE SECOND ONE? (MODERATOR DOES NOT COUNT)

It seems that our military is going to be spending an awful lot of money and at the same time we are going to have more tax cuts. That's disaster.

In the early 1970's I think we had negative inflation or whatever you want to call it, certain things doubled in like a five or six year period. I used to sell concrete by the cubic yard, now they sell it by the foot. It's stuff like that. This war has to be costing something.

I wonder about this statement in the first paragraph, business investors. I want people to understand how important that is because that is his central focus, not us, business.

If I'm buying stock, I'm a business investor.

He's talking about corporations that spend 500 million dollars on....

I didn't vote for either one but, I guess when I read it again a second time, the question....it's almost just like a one question. Down here, there's quite a few points being made. I almost feel misled by reading this. We are going down to...and I would believe a Democrat wrote this Democratic saying. They are talking about middle class tax cuts, restore social security, prescription drugs, and you go up to the top and it's tax cuts and a little bit about domestic

(end of side)

And with the Democratic side of this here. There's not enough said here. I don't think the Democratic way of solving our problem is to cancel the tax cuts for this country.

They don't want to cancel the tax cuts for the country.

That's what they are saying. They want to keep everything in tact. And I'm not saying because of Republicans, but they are trying to keep us afloat and if you can't bring some taxes down right now for some of the businesses because they are not selling what was sold before....we just had this conversation.

They can go buy stuff which will put the businesses back in business. But, when you talk about the tax cuts, they are just talking about the tax cuts for individuals making over \$375,000 a year. They are not talking about taking away all the tax cuts, just those.

The tax cuts in the first paragraph are talking about those that we would consider to be rich. The idea of being Reaganomics trickle down theory will never work. If you give the rich all the money, they are going to go out and buy stuff and put other people to work and invest in businesses, well.....

MODERATOR—LET'S STRIP THIS DOWN TO THE BARE BASICS. THE FIRST ONE SAYS, WE ARE GOING TO CUT TAXES, GET MONEY BACK INTO THE HANDS OF PEOPLE WHO CAN SPEND IT AND BUSINESSES. DEMOCRATS SAY WE HAVE TO PULL BACK ON THE TAX CUTS BECAUSE WE HAVE ALL THESE OTHER OBLIGATIONS THAT WE HAVE TO MEET. GIVEN THOSE KINDS OF BARE BONES BASICS, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Hold off.

Hold off on tax cuts.

Didn't we just have a tax cut.

Give the tax cut to the poor people so they have the money to spend. When you have a family and only making \$25,000 a year, you've got no money to spend anyway, but you are still being taxed. Take that money and give it back to the people. It could be their groceries for the week, just what they are paying in the taxes. There shouldn't be any taxes for a family of four if you are only making \$25,000 a year. You shouldn't have to pay any taxes at all. You are having a hard enough time just trying to support your family.

It's a hard issue. But, I have to agree with the second statement just for the simple fact that I think we are giving too many tax cuts to the wealthy. They are the ones that are reaping the most benefit out of this whole thing.

MODERATOR—THIS LAST SENTENCE IN BUSH'S STATEMENT, CUT TAXES WHILE CONTINUING TO MEET OUR COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL SECURITY.....IS IT POSSIBLE TO DO THAT? CAN WE CUT TAXES AND STILL AFFORD THOSE THINGS?

The math just doesn't add up.

They are not being specific here. They are using smoke and mirrors trying to convince me that they are going to do something good. Same way with terrorism, they use it as a hot button issue.

You can't do it.

You are going to have to raise money to pay for the programs that you want to serve with the tax cut money that you get back. It's a big circle. Two years down the line, you have to raise taxes.

I don't think the state of Iowa did too well. They made a lot of loop holes and made cuts and now, there's not enough money coming in to deal with things.

A quick fix. It's good now, but later on it's going to hurt us, and we'll have to go someplace else to get the money.

If we are going to have a tax cut, let's give it to the poor people who will immediately be spending it and helping the economy.

I don't have a problem with that.

Instead of buying a Ferrari, buying loaves of bread.

MODERATOR—THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT THIS YEAR'S BUDGET IS GOING TO BE IN A DEFICIT UNTIL AT LEAST 2005. WHAT'S YOUR GUT REACTION TO THAT?

Why are they talking tax cuts?

Yeah.

It's the same old thing. They always spend more than they take in.

It's always been in the hole.

Why are they talking tax cuts?

Bring down the deficit with taxes.

(many talking at once)

You just change two letters and you have taxes.

Didn't we have a couple good years? But, maybe they weren't paying into the social security fund and just taking that extra. It's hard to figure out what they are actually doing.

When you figure out Alan Greenspan, the most brilliant man as far as the economy on this planet, and he can't tell you whether we are in deficit or not. I think there's always been a deficit. It's just smoke and mirrors and say, okay, we are a little closer this time where it's going to be balanced.

They just tell you what you want to hear.

That's my whole point. If I was to give one bit of advice to any of these parties, have the balls to stand up and tell the truth. The American people will be scared at first, but we'll get over it. As far as these tax cuts, the first thing you've got to understand is, we don't save anything in this country. Two things, do not buy on credit and save. That is our only way out of this. When you look at the Japanese, they save 30% of their income.

MODERATOR—THE BUDGET AS RECENTLY AS A YEAR AGO, WAS OFFICIALLY IN SURPLUS. WE WERE TAKING IN MORE THAN WE WERE PUTTING OUT. THE BIGGEST SURPLUS IN A GENERATION, NOW WE ARE BACK IN A DEFICIT. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT'S HAPPENED?

Maybe they forgot to add something in.

Maybe that's what we wanted to hear. Maybe that's what they wanted us to hear.

Probably wasn't in surplus. Probably everything wasn't added in.

The Democrats are going to tell you that we spend all this on programs, so they get the money for the programs. Republicans are going to say, we are in office now, we know how to run things, we are going to give it to the rich, and the rich are going to take care of....either way it goes out. It's just a matter of....

If we were in surplus for five years, then maybe I'd believe it. But, not just all of a sudden we are, and now we aren't again. It makes you wonder if we really were.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU, WERE WE IN SURPLUS?

Absolutely.

I think based on the unemployment numbers, if you can believe those, what was it like 5.7 and it's down to 2.7.

There was a shingle hanging out in every fast food joint.

MODERATOR—WHAT'S HAPPENED IN THE LAST YEAR TO TAKE US FROM THERE TO THERE?

The American philosophy. We have money now, let's spend it. They bought houses, cars, stuff they don't need.

Stealth bombers.

Plain and simply, we spent it.

Spend more than we have surplus for.

Those tax cut checks to everybody. They have to be backed by something because you take it to the bank, the bank is giving you money, they want their money. That's a lot of money being taken out.

I think the tax cut was part of it.

A very small part of it was.

It basically comes down to philosophy. I think part of the problem was, some of the things started in the Clinton administration were carried over. I don't think that many, but I think the Republicans went on a buying binge.

I don't really know what caused it. That's why I voted for my President so he can try to keep track of that. That's way beyond me. I don't think that cutting taxes put us in the hole. And the war that we are in now, it's been too soon to have shown that effect already. So, that effect came long before. I don't know.

Maybe things were not quite as good as they said they were, and maybe things are not quite as bad as they are now.

This goes back to my point about standing up and telling the truth for once.

MODERATOR—ANOTHER THING THEY'VE BEEN DEBATING IN WASHINGTON IS AN ECONOMIC STIMULUS PLAN. HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT THIS?

Is this like stimulating...bail out the airlines?

MODERATOR—THAT'S PART OF IT.

I think George Bush is very much backing that. He wants to do that, he's done that. I don't think that's a choice we have to make, it's already happened. And a lot of the businesses....

(inaudible) but the idea was that they wanted to give hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars to big business, just a blank check, here do what you want to do with it.

I don't know if I agree or don't agree, if I can actually do that. Yes, he wants to give a check, not blank, he has set a dollar amount I think which was quite high to the airlines and stuff like that. It's not to do with as you will, it's to keep them from going under. I see what he's trying to do with it, I just think that he has gone way to far with it. If I disagree with anything, this package that he's putting together as far as the stimulus package, I think he's shooting way past as a country we should go with private business.

I haven't heard much about it.

I heard something about bail outs for companies, but in turn, taking a piece of the action for the money that we are giving them. We end up with 25% ownership of that company that we are bailing out, so at least we have something for the money that we are giving them.

MODERATOR—IS THAT A PART OF THE PLAN?

Not the original one. The last six weeks they've come up with that.

(many talking at once)

Can we do that?

(many talking at once)

I don't think legally we can do that.

MODERATOR—ANYBODY KNOW WHAT THE DEMOCRATS WANT OR WHAT THE REPUBLICANS WANT?

That's what we have been talking about all night, isn't it?

MODERATOR—FLIP TO THE NEXT ONE. HANDOUT #6.

REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS SAY WE DON'T NEED MORE GOVERNMENT SPENDING, WE NEED TO GET MONEY BACK INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO WILL INVEST IT IN OUR ECONOMY. THEY SAY WE MUST SPEED UP TAX CUTS PASSED EARLIER THIS YEAR TO GET OUR ECONOMY MOVING AND PASS FURTHER TAX CUTS, INCLUDING TAX CUTS FOR BUSINESSES HIT HARD BY 9/11, WHO NEED MONEY TO INVEST AND CREATE JOBS.

DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS SAY WE MUST ADDRESS OUR IMMEDIATE NEEDS, INCLUDING REBUILDING AFTER THE TERRORIST ATTACKS, HELPING THE NEW UNEMPLOYED, FUNDING NEW SECURITY PROJECTS AND INCREASING SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION. RATHER THAN PERMANENTLY CUTTING TAXES FOR THE WEALTHIEST, WE SHOULD MEET

OUR OBLIGATIONS BY PROVIDING INCENTIVES TO BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS TO INVEST THIS YEAR.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THOSE? AGAIN, IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE ONE STATEMENT OR ANOTHER, WHICH ONE WOULD YOU AGREE WITH MORE? HOW MANY SAY THE FIRST ONE? HOW MANY SAY THE SECOND ONE? (MODERATOR DOES NOT COUNT) WHY THE SECOND ONE?

The second one because they are putting these tax incentives into the right places and such, and helping out our education, we will be further educated to handle this down the road.

It's interesting that of the statements, the Republican statement is always very vague and the Democrat statement is always very specific. If the Republicans want to do something, give me specifics.

I can't understand how they are not going to need more government spending when they are going to have to replace all this military stuff that they are using. Isn't that government spending?

Most of that, you are paying for them anyway. They are already in the service.

Well, a tax cut is government spending too. We are just giving money back to somebody.

Well, that's true.

So, it's still government spending.

I don't know. The last part about helping the newly unemployed, there's going to be a lot of those. There's more now than there has been in the last year. The job market is just for shit right now.

A permanent tax cut to help a temporary situation doesn't make any sense.

True.

MODERATOR—IS THERE ANYTHING IN THE DEMOCRATIC ONE BESIDES HELPING THE UNEMPLOYED THAT JUMPS OUT AT YOU AS A GOOD THING?

I liked the incentives to business and individuals. If they don't give that tax cut to the poor person, he's not going to have that money to invest and put back into the economy.

And supporting education. Getting these colleges down to the tuition that we can afford. I've got a daughter coming up that will go to college in the next year, and I haven't a clue how I'm going to pay for it.

I don't think either one of them did much for education. I'm sorry. They talk, but they don't do anything.

I would like to see the people that...big business I don't see that we as a nation should have to...or not that we have to, we are going to, bail them out. That money which is being spent for the victims that are still alive, it was nice that they waived insurance policies and paid those premiums to people, even though they couldn't find a body. I like to see that happen. I don't know if that came about because of our government saying, here's the stimulus, now give these guys the money. I don't know if that is part of the stimulus package or not. That's very humanitarian and I'm glad our nation is finally becoming unified, but still we can have disagreements, but we still seem to be a very tight community. I don't know which one of these to pick here.

You get rid of some of the government fat now would help right there. The assistant to the assistant to the assistant. You go down here to the courthouse building to change registration, you have all these windows that are supposed to be open, but you've got two people working. But, the others, that's when they are supposed to start working, where are they at? They are getting paid for it. If they are not going to be at their job, then eliminate them.

MODERATOR—THERE'S A LOT OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE TWO. WHAT HAPPENS IF THEY JUST GO HOME AND SAY WE CAN'T AGREE ON THIS AND NOTHING PASSES?

You mean as far as congress and all that?

MODERATOR—YEAH, THIS ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE.

When the State of Iowa legislature doesn't agree, the governor says hey, you guys aren't leaving yet, we are not done. I don't care if you are going on vacation or not, you need to stay. Maybe they need to make it mandatory that certain things that they put on their agenda have to be accomplished. I don't think they are doing that yet.

You serve one term, you get a retirement plan for the rest of your life. Where else can you work a couple years and get a lifetime retirement?

(many talking at once)

It will only go on to next year's budget anyway, so nothing is going to change.

I think that's probably normal behavior. It's too close to elections, everyone is getting itchy about trying to stand up for issues. They might pass one or two tiny, tiny feel good issues, but that's it.

I think it goes back to an earlier question. What we think things are going to be like three months from now. Maybe we need more time between this anda few more months to see....I don't think anybody knows. Rick said that transportation things appear to be good. Heading back up, we are not going to need these things.

Heading back up because fuel prices are down.

MODERATOR—ARE WE JUMPING THE GUN?

Absolutely.

That's what you said, if they went home. It wouldn't bother me. I kind of think, maybe we are. We've been through this before and it wasn't war that made it, it's just something we are going through right now.

Before was 1973.

Yeah, we've gone through this before. Is it any worse now than it was then?

You just don't need to drive as much. You just have to slow down a little bit and things will work out.

In the 60's, Chrysler Corporation was ready to go under, but we did bail them out, we loaned them money and they paid it back ahead of schedule.

MODERATOR—LET'S IMAGINE THAT IN A FEW WEEKS CONGRESS SAYS, NO WE CAN'T AGREE ON THIS, NO STIMULUS BILL IS GOING TO PASS THIS YEAR, AND THEY GO HOME. I WANT TO READ YOU A STATEMENT AND GET YOUR REACTION TO IT.

REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS SAY IT WAS BETTER TO DO NOTHING RATHER THAN PASS A BILL PACKED WITH GOVERNMENT SPENDING THAT WOULD DO NOTHING TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY OR GET MONEY BACK INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO NEED IT TO CREATE JOBS.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

It's not surprising how partisan politics are. They jump back into play after they say we are not going to be party politics because of this thing. We are going to be united, we are going to do....

The best would be to get a new Congress.

(many talking at once)

MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER TO DO NOTHING THAN TO DO THE DEMOCRATIC THING LAID OUT IN HANDOUT #6?

I don't know. I don't think so because at least on the other one you are making some attempt. That's a hell of a lot better than just throwing your arms up and saying, we can't do it.

I would think if nothing else, if they only could do one thing, I would go with education. In the long term, that's what is going to help this country the most.

But, it's the short term where we are having the problems.

The short term is going to take care of itself whether we do anything or not. That's just the natural way of the law.

MODERATOR—ANOTHER STATEMENT.

DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS SAY IT'S BETTER TO DO NOTHING THAN PASS A BILL THAT WOULD CREATE HUGE DEFICITS AND RAID THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND TO PAY FOR HUGE TAX GIVEAWAYS FOR LARGE CORPORATIONS AND THE WEALTHIEST INDIVIDUALS.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Not too loaded is it?

I believe the Democrats are the people that raided the social security money to begin with, so I don't agree with that.

The Democrats are the ones that created social security.

And then once it got full of money, who was it that started taking it?

Was Reagan a Democrat?

It was taken way before Reagan ever got in.

No.

The last time we had a war, they tried to have the same standard of living and still fund everything, and it doesn't work. Vietnam.

(many talking at once)

It's not cheap to fund a war. We all know that.

MODERATOR—I DON'T WANT TO GO OVER HISTORY LESSONS TOO MUCH HERE. THINKING ABOUT THIS DEBATE RIGHT NOW AND THIS STATEMENT, DOES THAT RING TRUE?

Yes.

Yes.

In a sense it does. It's oversimplified and it's looking for an emotional response.

It does ring true. It's pretty simplistic, but it does.

MODERATOR—DOES THE REPUBLICAN ONE RING TRUE?

No.

I think the money....something needs to be done to get money back into people's hands. You just can't do nothing to the situation.

You have to do something.

They need the word compromise.

That's what I was thinking.

Republicans and Democrats are too much like women and men.

MODERATOR—GO TO HANDOUT #7. HERE ARE A SERIES OF STATEMENTS ABOUT CANDIDATES FOR CONGRESS (RATINGS SCALE EXPLAINED).

THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE SUPPORTED A PLAN THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY, BUT INSTEAD OF TRYING TO HELP THE ECONOMY, THE PLAN INCLUDED BILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF NEW GOVERNMENT SPENDING, INCLUDING HUNDREDS OF PORK BARREL PROJECTS FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

HOW MANY PEOPLE GAVE THIS A -3? 4. -2? 1. -1? 0? 3. FIVE OF YOU WERE IN THE MINUS, WHY?

I don't want my money to go to those projects, I want it to go to worthwhile projects.

I said no because that's just another waste of our money that we have been spending. We've got programs in the state of Iowa, paying a farmer to not grow grain on that land and then we pay him like he grew the grain on that, just to try to raise the price of grain up, which the farmer isn't going to get that money anyway, it's the world market seller

that's going to make the money anyway. The farmer never does. That part of the Democratic side, I'm totally against.

The pork barrel projects, they are not working for what the solution to the real problem is. They are just handling out more fat to their friends.

Take care of other more important issues.

MODERATOR—MY ZEROS?

I was thinking about pork barrel. I spoke to somebody in New Jersey about having a national park in (inaudible) and that would be a pork barrel project, so I think pork barrel is kind of where you are and how you look at things.

I think that's exactly what it is. Any bill that comes out (inaudible) something on the side for their district. I think they are both bad on that.

MODERATOR—GO TO HANDOUT #8.

WHILE THE WHOLE COUNTRY WAS COMING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT AND RISE ABOVE PARTISANSHIP, THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE WAS VOTING AT A PARTISAN BLOCK AGAINST THE PRESIDENT'S ECONOMIC PROPOSALS. THEY EVEN HELD UP THE ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE WHEN THE ECONOMY WAS IN NEED OF EXTRA HELP.

-3? 1. -2? -1? 1. 0? 3. +1? 1. +2? 2. MY NEGATIVES, WHY?

I guess just politics in general. Everybody came together on this terrorism thing, but yet they are not willing to....why aren't they willing to come together to save the lives of this nation? The whole nation in general. And now they are so behind in these things, they are fighting everything else to try to get us back on our feet, but they want to be waving the flag though.

Just the fact that they want to hold up a bill that needs to be taken care of right away. They are going to put it on the back burner and deal with it later and then it may be too late.

MODERATOR—MY ZEROS?

It doesn't say why. It's politics.

He's voting with his party. When you get into politics, nothing ever happens.

MODERATOR—MY PLUSSES?

Just because of partisanship. I think that's important to bring out. I think it's probably the same on both sides, they are both doing it. I would rather have it brought out and shown to maybe bring some light to the issue and if they can accomplish that, then it's worth rocking the building. There may be a reason to do that.

This is not a hypothetical question. This is what's been going on right now. It's what we have been talking about all night. We agree, pretty much, that we agree that the tax breaks and the stimulus need to go to the guy that is going to spend it. The low income person. And a Democrat holding up this legislation posed by Bush for this reason, ought to get our support, if that's what we are thinking. That's what I'm thinking. That's why he would get my support.

MODERATOR—A LOT OF PEOPLE WOULD SAY THAT IT'S WRONG AT THIS TIME TO BE ACTIVELY OPPOSING THE PRESIDENT, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?

Why?

I think that's a crock.

It's wrong.

You are entitled to your own opinion. You don't like what he's done or you do like what he's done.

That's what this country is founded on. Dissent.

MODERATOR—DOES ANYONE AGREE WITH THAT, THAT WE SHOULDN'T BE OPPOSING THE PRESIDENT?

This is two separate topics. The rally was to show our unity because we had been attacked, and the other, the economic problems, did not occur on 9/11, they occurred over a period of time.

The unity is for our country, not our president.

MODERATOR—LOOKING AT HANDOUT #7 AND #8. WHICH ONE MADE YOU LEAST LIKELY TO VOTE FOR THE DEMOCRAT? #7? CLEAN SWEEP ON #7. LET'S GO TO HANDOUT #9.

THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE VOTED TO USE 160 BILLION DOLLARS FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND TO PAY FOR BIG TAX CUTS FOR THE WEALTHIEST. HE SHOULD BE LISTENING LESS TO SPECIAL INTERESTS AND MORE TO THOSE WHO COUNT ON SOCIAL SECURITY TO MEET THEIR MOST BASIC RETIREMENT NEEDS.

-3? 5. -2? 1. -1? 1. 0? +1? +2? 1. SIX OF YOU WERE MINUSES, WHY?

The wealthiest.

Seems to me that they are not being fair to the less fortunate. There again, they are just looking at that big man in my opinion. In the long run, that's not going to help people down the road for their social security.

That's what stuck out for me the most. That's what I got out of it. That first thing.

Then you are agreeing with this statement if you say that. If you feel that way.

I'd vote against taking money out of social security. He should be listening to it so it makes you less likely to vote for him. He did go in and grab 160 billion dollars. Both of my parents are on social security. What they get from it....

You don't have to say that they took it out for the trust fund. That would affect me.

Would you clarify this question for me? What is the question on this?

MODERATOR—DOES THIS STATEMENT MAKE YOU MORE LIKELY OR LESS LIKELY TO VOTE FOR THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE?

If the candidate made that statement...

Okay. I'm a -3 now.

MODERATOR—IS IT THE FACT THAT THEY RAIDED THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND ABOUT THIS OR THAT MONEY IS GOING TO THE WEALTHIEST?

Both of them.

Both of them.

Both.

Psychologically go toward class, rich versus poor. That's going to hit more people in their gut.

They are eliminating the middle class. You are either rich or you are poor.

That's exactly what they want to do.

MODERATOR—GO TO HANDOUT #10.

THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE RUSHED TO GIVE FUNDS TO THE AIRLINE AND INSURANCE INDUSTRY AND TO USE 75% OF THE ECONOMIC STIMULUS FOR CORPORATE TAX BREAKS. BUT, THE CANDIDATE DIDN'T THINK IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HELP THE ORDINARY PEOPLE WHO LOST THEIR JOB AFTER 9/11, ¾ OF WHOM WERE INELIGIBLE FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE.

-3? 6. -2? 1. -1? 0? 1. WHY?

There again, I would say they are helping the big man rather than helping the little guy who just lost his job. We are going to help him because he's got more money.

Rich are going to get richer.

Myself, I agree with what they are saying. I think it was the government who did this and there's more than one party in that government other than the Republicans. I'm not sure and I don't have any fact to back this but, I believe that we are trying to help the people that are directly affected. But, there is a lot more money going to the big business airlines and those other businesses, than it is to these people that are directly affected.

My understanding was that the republicans were against any unemployment compensation for those who lost their jobs because of 9/11.

I didn't know that.

MODERATOR—WHAT IS IT ABOUT THIS STATEMENT THAT STICKS OUT THE MOST?

The fact that they say they won't help the unemployed, ¾ of whom were ineligible for unemployment insurance.

MODERATOR—WOULD IT HAVE BEEN SO BAD IF THEY HAD GIVEN THE MONEY TO THE AIRLINES, BUT HAD SAID YOU GOT TO USE THIS MONEY TO HELP PEOPLE OUT, OR DON'T CUT JOBS?

That would have been a different story. Then you are helping out or creating jobs.

Part of the stimulus.

It's two evils as opposed to one evil. As it states now, they are both evil. Don't give that money...not qualified, just carte blanche to the industry. And the hot button issue of not helping the poor little orphans from the disaster. They are both bad.

Ordinary people, that's a pretty good play on words, to help the ordinary people.

MODERATOR—GO TO HANDOUT #11.

THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE GAVE INTO THE SPECIAL INTEREST LOBBYISTS AND SUPPORTED A PERMANENT TAX BREAK OF 20 BILLION DOLLARS THAT ENCOURAGED COMPANIES TO INVEST IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES RATHER THAN IN THE UNITED STATES DURING OUR ECONOMIC CRISIS.

-3? ALL OF YOU. WHY?

Can we go any lower?

I don't want to invest in any foreign countries. Why would you invest in foreign countries when it's our own economy that is liable to fall down.

I don't see that as a stimulus package to help our country. That's the last straw maybe.

Special interests.

The basic interest here is to say if we ship the jobs overseas and we've got Taiwanese kids getting 25 cents an hour to make NIKE shoes, we can sell them back here for the greedy little public that we are.

I didn't know that they did and if they did, I'd like to know why they did. That's lack of information on my part.

They've been doing that for the last couple years.

MODERATOR—LET'S LOOK AT HANDOUTS #9, #10, #11. WHICH ONE OF THESE WOULD MAKE YOU LEAST LIKELY TO VOTE FOR THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE? #9? 1. #10? #11? 7. WHY #9?

I think that's the most important and reaches the most people. The tax cuts proposed by the republicans would not really help the economy. The social security is important to us.

Losing our manufacturing base, which is what we have been doing for the last 20 years, is going to have more of an impact on this country than social security, considering we've lost over 40% of our manufacturing base.

The manufacturing that we've lost to foreign countries has been to the very lowest income.

MODERATOR—THINKING ABOUT EVERYTHING WE TALKED ABOUT TONIGHT, WHAT'S THE BEST REASON TO VOTE FOR A REPUBLICAN FOR CONGRESS?

I think they have a fix for some problems I guess. They can repair the economy, I guess, maybe by next month or election time or primaries or something.

That depends on the republican. Our republican congressman, whose name I can't recall, has proposed rights...benefits...a patient's rights, and I believe they are very important. I think he has tried to get it passed and his own party is the one that is keeping it down.

They are not afraid to take some money out of somebody's pocket to straighten the economy out. Where a Democratic party, they seem to kind of lay back and stay away from that.

Personally, I'm independent. And I like it that way because I can vote either side without any guilt. But, I think the republicans are trying very hard to overcome some very hard issues here, and I'm happy with what's going on. I'm not against Democrats either. This is the first time in a long time where I've seen everybody trying real hard to work together. But, I still right now, like the republican party.

When I vote, I vote for the man's idea rather than if he is a democrat or republican. I basically vote the democratic party, but I'll vote for a republican if I feel he's a better man.

MODERATOR—GETTING DOWN TO AN OVERLY SIMPLISTIC THING HERE, WHAT'S THE BEST REASON TO VOTE FOR A DEMOCRAT?

The fact that they try to be fair with everybody. Rather than just take it from that one side and give it to the other, they want to keep it even down the middle for everybody. They want to put back what they take out.

They want to help the underdog.

If you believe that I am my brother's keeper, then you are a democrat probably.

It's just traditionally they have been known as the party of the common man. It's not so much that way anymore, but all that you are asking, they would be more in tune with what the populous needs.

MODERATOR—GO TO HANDOUT #12. IF YOU HAD TO PICK ONE, WHICH ONE WOULD YOU PICK AND WRITE DOWN WHY. THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING....

(end of session)

