

**DEMOCRACY CORPS
GROUP 1
DES MOINES, IA
NON-COLLEGE WOMEN, 30-49
INCOME UNDER \$50,000
DECEMBER 12, 2001, 5:45 P.M.**

Mary. I lived in the Des Moines probably about 7 years. And I manage a Blimpie store. I have 3 boys and a cat, Spunky.

Jan. I live in Granger. And I'm a homemaker. I have 2 girls, 1 lives at home and 1 is grownup.

Amy. I work as a clerk. I'm originally from Massachusetts.

Deb. I live here in Des Moines. I work for a heating and cooling and ventilation company.

Ann. I live in Mingo. That's east of town. And I have 7-year-old son.

Julie. I live in Mandred. I work at Iowa State. I have 2 boys, a 17 year old and a 15 year old.

Trish. I live in Carlisle. Moved there from Austin, Texas 2 years ago. Three kids. Full time job. Busy.

Pat. I work part time as a hairdresser. I have 2 young children and now 2 dogs. We found one, it was pitiful, we had to have it, so.

Andrea. I live in Johnston. And I'm a stay at home mom and I'm married.

Beth. I live in Norwalk. I've lived there about 16 years. Still have a daughter at home. No pets. They died. No more.

MODERATOR—GENERALLY, THINKING ABOUT THE COUNTRY, WHAT'S YOUR SENSE, THINGS GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, THINGS GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

We're in a recession. Things are pitiful. Pitiful.

MODERATOR—ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT?

Just the economy. Job security. It's scary. It's a scary time.

I think it's kind of pitiful that so many people have been killed and as a result more people are being killed. I'm not sure if that's the right thing.

I can't understand what religion, that they kill each other. You know, you think about all the Taliban and everything, this fighting has been going on for years. Are they ever going to have any peace?

It's not their religion. As everybody has said, it's not their religion.

It's just so sad that they fight like this.

I guess the route the military is taking, they're doing an excellent job.

I think in some aspects we're headed in the right direction although we're in the middle of a recession now. I think in the last 3 months, in light of the events that have taken place, it's really opened our government's eyes to the things they've neglected over the last few years and decided that, hey, we need to change some things. Maybe they're turning that in to going in the right direction.

MODERATOR—WHAT KINDS OF THINGS?

I think like our military. I think we neglected the CIA and the FBI. I think we have not put enough money in to the intelligence community because I think there's a lot of things that have happened that might have been, not all of them prevented, but maybe some of them.

I think the military is doing a good job.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THINGS IN THIS COUNTRY THOUGH, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

Well, the economy is crappy. I've been laid off because of it but now I'm back full time, which is good, so, hopefully things will turn around and get better.

I've been angry because I felt the government has been full of themselves for so long and this was such a wakeup call. Again, militarily but also within our nation to, how, I can't think of the word. How our citizens are living, truly living, I mean living on credit, living on, you know, bank loans and robbing Peter to pay Paul and, I mean this recession is really giving them a better idea of where we're at. Hello. I mean they just lowered the interest rate again another half a point, it's scary.

I think considering what we're going through we're pulling together better than I have thought we would. And even though the economy is a mess I think because everybody is trying to do something I think that maybe that mess is somewhat contained, at least for now.

I think we're still vulnerable.

MODERATOR—IN WHAT WAYS?

Well, I think once you let your guard down you're still vulnerable to anything.

MODERATOR—IS OUR GUARD STILL DOWN YOU THINK?

If it's not it will be soon I think.

Can we go to the next question?

MODERATOR—IS THERE ANYTHING GOING RIGHT?

I actually think Bush did a good job pulling the people together. I mean he really did. Many of his speeches were very inspirational and motivational really. I thought, he performed in a way that exceeded our expectations.

That's a good way to put it, he did. I mean everybody sitting around saying, oh God, he's going to open up his mouth. Everything he said was wonderful.

He's got good speechwriters.

Yes, he does.

The country pulling together. More respectful. More caring. People coming through even though financially it's tough on everybody and they came through with the 9/11 fund. And now they're coming through again at Christmas for people who really don't have.

I think it's just neat to see, when you drive down a street, almost every house has a flag. I'm just overwhelmed by that; it's really a neat feeling, really neat.

MODERATOR—A COUPLE OF YOU HAVE SAID THE ECONOMY IS NOT IN A VERY GOOD SHAPE RIGHT NOW, RECESSION. HOW DO YOU THINK THE ECONOMY LOOKS GOING FORWARD? ARE THINGS GETTING BETTER? ARE THINGS GOING TO GET WORSE BEFORE THEY GET BETTER? WHAT DO YOU THINK, LOOKING OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS?

I think it's going to get better. Because the stock market isn't nearly as bad as it could be in regards to the situations all around us. Once again they've lowered the interest rate. But I think that's just a measure that they have to take to ensure that things don't get any worse than they are right now.

Worse. Yes.

Doesn't war always like boost the economy?

I like the gas prices.

I'd like to see an initiative for people who pulled all their money out of the stock market be able to start putting some of that money back in the economy again. I feel like there's a lot of people

out there that, that upper echelon that gets the tax breaks that was able to, I mean nobody foresaw what happened on 9/11 but many people were able to take and run while they could.

Wasn't there a crash before that?

I really feel sorry for those people that have no money. I means the guy on the TV the other night, lost all of his 401k fund. I mean it's just pitiful what the companies are doing to the citizens here.

But that goes in phases. That's going to happen regardless of what the situations are.

Believe me I've lost plenty in the last year in stock. I've lost a lot in 401k and stock. But I don't know; I watch it regularly, too.

The company froze everything.

It's unfortunate that it happened.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU GUYS THINK IS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE FACING OUR COUNTRY TODAY?

Staying calm and persevering.

MODERATOR—HOW SO, MORE CONTEXT.

Not getting frightened. Not locking ourselves up. Not helping one another, becoming, staying in the community, staying a nation. Persevering through hard work. Not that we don't work hard, we work very hard, but to continue to keep that as a focus.

Employment. Jobs.

Turn the economy.

It sort of flourishes again.

Fall back into place.

I think it's just how long this is going to take. It's the preserving like she said. Keeping spirits up while you keep going.

MODERATOR—HOW DO WE TURN THE ECONOMY AROUND?

If I knew the answer to that I'd be in the government.

Find a replacement for oil, that's what we need to know. Steven Seagall says we already have it.

Go Steven.

That's a really valid point. There's many little things like, you know, I'm having, I happen to read on top of a yogurt lid that said, if you keep the air in your tires consistent with the pressure you don't use as much gas. There's so many little things that we don't know. If the government made the car companies actually have to give us 1 to 2 more miles to gallon we would save millions of gallons of oil. We wouldn't have to go into Alaska and the national refuge.

I think they should have a different form of.

And absolutely. I'm just saying that I suppose would have to take some time, too. But there's things we actually could do now.

MODERATOR—HOW ELSE DO WE TURN THE ECONOMY AROUND?

Quit giving so much aid to other countries.

I don't know if I agree with that. I think really, what I was kind of hoping would happen with this war situation. I mean in the beginning they were talking about all the different countries coming together, not just the United States, to go to Afghanistan and get rid of that man, that problem. If that really would happen, if everybody did their part and everybody was happy with the result, everybody was going to open their borders and would finish with taxes on imports and exports, so many things could be wonderful from that. And that's what I was hoping would happen from that. I don't know if the world is ready.

I don't think that will happen.

MODERATOR—THINK SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THE TERRORISTS ATTACKS ON SEPTEMBER 11TH, HAS YOUR THINKING CHANGED AT ALL AS A RESULT OF WHAT HAPPENED?

It has for me. Much more compassion for other people.

The country fell into a thing where, for years we've had a false sense of security. A security that was never there. We thought we were guaranteed that we should have that right and that was, I think that was blown up now. It's not a right we ever had and we still don't have it, so.

MODERATOR—WHAT RIGHT?

Well, I mean we think we have the right, we think just because we live in America that we are not going to be faced with terrorism and attacks and people dying. And that showed everyone that it's right next-door, it's not like across the ocean.

It happens every day in other countries.

But we're a free country so we'd like to believe that's why we live in a free country.

But we've never been guaranteed that.

No one every guaranteed that. We just got relaxed and comfortable and felt like we lived in a safe country.

Right. A false sense of security.

I actually, I mean I've always been a worrier. And now I'm thinking, maybe I should take one day at a time and see what happens and not fear as much.

MODERATOR—WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU SEE THE FLAG?

I feel good. It makes me feel very proud.

I'm a little upset that it took a tragedy to have Americans fly the flag more.

Thank you, I feel that way, too. I've always flown the flag and wanted to be patriotic.

It's brought our country together, not democrat or republican, it's about unity. Now we don't have time to be fighting with each other. We have to fight something, it's time to be a country.

MODERATOR—WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU SEE THE FLAG? ANY PARTICULAR WORDS, PHRASES, IMAGES?

Freedom.

Patriotism.

Freedom.

Unity is good.

Freedom.

And power.

We're the most powerful nation in the world.

And history. I mean history of, you know, previous, how that flag came to be, the wars fought, the battles won.

MODERATOR—THINK ABOUT THE ELECTION FOR CONGRESS NEXT YEAR, ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A MEMBER OF CONGRESS WHO MAINLY DEVOTES THEIR TIME AND ENERGY TO SECURITY AND TERRORISM AND THOSE KINDS OF THINGS

OR MEMBER OF CONGRESS WHO MAINLY DEVOTES HIS TIME AND ENERGY TO DOMESTIC ISSUES AND THE ECONOMY?

I want both.

Yeah, can't we have both?

MODERATOR—I'M NOT SAYING ALL OR NOTHING. IF YOU HAD TO PICK A FOCUS OF ONE OR THE OTHER.

Primarily domestic.

Me, too.

MODERATOR—WHY?

Because, if they're not taking care of us like with health insurance and all that kind of stuff, then what's the use in boosting our economy, what's the use of having security and all that stuff if, I mean, if we're crumbling, we need a strong base.

Are we going to crumble from within or from without, that's the question.

Domestic. Well, someone higher up, like Roosevelt or someone like that to lead security. One of the Bush team as I see it. She's right, you need to be able to look at insurance, take care of our elderly, make sure everybody has some kind of medical insurance that should be their focus. Let the higher ups take care of security for our nation.

But they didn't do it.

We became complacent.

Yeah, but this is a learning lesson for all of us.

Who would ever think anyone would ever drive a 747 into the World Trade Center. I mean that took some balls to do that. I mean, seriously.

The planning. I think they started planning; this was years in the making.

That's right.

But what about, playing devil's advocate, I would say domestic, but, what about all the terrorist groups still within the country?

Well, we're working on that.

They're chipping away better than they were before.

Absolutely a slap in the face in how naïve we were.

But where does that come from? Does it start like with the immigration people and looking at student visas? Who's responsible for that stuff? Our congressmen? Is it going to be coming from our congressmen?

Walk up to the plate, that's me, I messed up. Got to do it.

All this, there's INS; there's so many agencies out there that are looking at things.

I don't know why they let in some of the people they let in. They were obviously bogus.

MODERATOR—[DISTRIBUTES PACKETS, GIVES INSTRUCTIONS]. HANDOUT NUMBER 1, WHAT GOOD THINGS COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF GEORGE W. BUSH. THEN FLIP TO HANDOUT NUMBER 2, WHAT DOUBTS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT BUSH. WHAT GOOD THINGS COME TO MIND?

Well, I think he's a true person to his word, compassionate and really cares about the American people. Unless he's just a really good actor. But I think his speeches do come from the heart. He does, he cares.

Well, first of all, I didn't vote for him. I still think he's doing a good job handling the war, better than I thought at first.

MODERATOR—WHAT SPECIFICALLY IS HE DOING?

Going forward with it, getting Bin Laden.

I think he surrounded himself with intelligent advisors. Intelligent advisors. I think he finally grew up. I think he's becoming a more believable speaker and he's not smirking as much.

That's exactly what I said. No, not that part, he couldn't do anything before without smirking.

Well, I wrote, I felt like he's an excellent leader. And I think he's had brilliant speeches to unite the country. I think he's compassionate. And I think that September 11th brought out the best in him. And it's allowed him to prove himself as an effective Commander in Chief.

I said, Bush bloomed with leadership in the worst crisis we've had in this country for 30 years. He seems more powerful and still has a human side to him.

Kind of what she said.

I think he's honest. An honest person.

MODERATOR—WHY DO YOU THINK THAT, ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR?

Because I've never, even living down in Texas and being down there when he was elected governor and seeing how the state was ran at that time, he was just real honest in his way of speaking and what he believed in. He wasn't a wish-washy type person. He took a stand on something and he would remain firm in his and what his goal was and what was going to be accomplished. I've never seen that he's been involved in any controversial anything. Good family background.

Just that he feels compassion and has a strong stand against aggression. I like that he served his country.

MODERATOR—NUMBER 2, WHAT DOUBTS, WORRIES DO YOU HAVE ABOUT HIM?

I think the war is taking a lot of focus away from what he might be doing if there wasn't any war going on.

MODERATOR—SUCH AS?

Well, I don't know. What kind of state the economy would be in, if it would have improved, would have been worse, if he would have been...

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU THINK, BETTER OR WORSE?

...I don't know, I kind of think he'd still be smirking to tell you the truth.

Well, I think militarily he, again I think he's surrounded himself with some extremely intelligent people. But militarily he makes me nervous because I think he's more of a yes man. I mean, I think they have to bring the things up and he, I think he's really, the second point being, he's scrambling to learn his position. Again I think he's growing up and that doesn't mean that I don't think he's not making some smart moves but I think he's had to learn a lot fast.

I put none. You know what, I don't have any doubts. I can't think of anything that comes to mind as. I think he's been thrown into a situation that most people probably could not have handled after only being in office for a short amount of time.

And I do think what did happen makes him look better as president because all the issues are focused on how he's handling it and he's doing such a good job. So how do we know how well he'd be if we didn't have any of this, just regular times.

What started it all was the tax cut. This money, this free money we got.

I wasn't impressed a bit.

Well, I was the first one to the mailbox. But I can honestly say, I don't think it was a good idea.

MODERATOR—WHY NOT?

I think that was just the beginning what's going on now with the recession.

I think that started a long time before these tax rebates came.

Well, that's why they gave the tax rebates, because we're like slipping in to bad shape and they're trying to prevent that.

But what about the millions that it cost to print the checks and to put it in the mailbox and to deliver it? I mean, where did that money go?

Why didn't they just, the next tax season? That would solve a lot of those issues.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE ABOUT BUSH, YOUR DOUBTS?

I had almost identical to Trish, nothing bothers me about him. Total faith in him.

I just don't want him to get up there and not read off his speech and say the wrong thing. One war is enough right now.

MODERATOR—DO YOU WORRY ABOUT HIM DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

I used to. Not any more. All of a sudden this guys got a brain.

[Many voices speaking at once]

Now all of a sudden he opens up his mouth and all this wonderful, intelligent things fall out and you're just sitting there.

He says the same thing though.

MODERATOR—DO YOU TRUST BUSH TO HANDLE THE ECONOMY?

No.

Social security scares me to death. I don't want my social security money; I don't know how to invest it to make money in the stock market now. When I do, if I ever do retire before they take me out on a gurney, I want to know it's there.

I'm not even planning on my social security.

Me either.

I have 25 more years to work, I'm not even planning on any social security.

And that happened before Bush was in.

[Many voices speaking at once]

But I don't want him to say, here, go and invest it in the stock market. I don't know beans about the stock market. And how much is that going to cost me?

Isn't that going to be an option, you can do it?

I don't know. I just heard a little bit about it. They just kicked it around on the news a little bit.

When did the economy go south? Was it right when Bush was elected or was it heading that way before that?

No, it was heading that way before.

[Many voices speaking at once]

Who could handle the recession? Who could we have faith in?

They're all the same.

Throw the whole congress out and start over.

MODERATOR—BUSH IS THE PRESIDENT AND THIS IS THE ECONOMY WE HAVE NOW AND HE IS GOING TO HAVE SOME ROLE, WHAT DO YOU THINK, DO YOU HAVE CONFIDENCE IN WHAT HE'S GOING TO DO, THE STEPS HE'S GOING TO TAKE?

I don't think I have confidence in any president, what he says about the economy. They always make promises and never come through.

Everyone. Doesn't matter which one.

That's true.

If he's got such smart advisors like you said then we should be in pretty good shape.

Well, he has good military advisors.

And smart speechwriters.

Yeah but the first person people want to blame when things are bad, when things don't go right, is the President of the United States. Even though he has veto power that doesn't necessarily mean that it's going to happen, not going to happen. That's when people really need to pay attention to politicians that are elected. You have a lot of people out there that say, well, I don't

like this, I don't like that, and they didn't do squat for me. Well, it's like, did you even vote last time? Then you don't have a right to complain.

Well, and I agree totally, it is not totally the president's fault. That's what I just said, I think we ought to kick congress out and get new people in there and really pay attention. And maybe that's what all of this is really supposed to teach us, to pay attention better. Everything since 9/11, to pay attention to what people, what our congressmen and what our leaders are doing for us.

MODERATOR—THERE ARE A LOT OF ISSUES OUT THERE FACING US TODAY AND I WANT TO TALK SPECIFICALLY ABOUT A COUPLE OF THEM NOW. FIRST, ENERGY POLICY. WHAT CHANGES DO WE NEED TO MAKE IN ENERGY POLICY?

Alternate energy has to be developed, there's no other way around it.

Mass transit. More mass transit. We look, it's coming. Trains are coming back. They're coming into this country where they've had it in Europe for so long, the faster trains are coming. But we're in the Midwest and it seems to be more difficult. Minneapolis, you have to carpool, you don't have a choice, you have to do it. Maybe it needs to be mandatory for a while until we can turn things around.

It is mandatory?

I didn't know that.

Yeah. Yeah.

I don't like that.

Anybody that works in Minneapolis has to carpool? You can't drive your own car?

I think it's like, if you all work downtown, you have to carpool. They will literally set you up with people because there's so many people that go into the city. I mean it's not surprising that 4, 10 people in your neighborhood are all going downtown. That's my understanding.

Conservation and global warming. My kids are doing that at school this week, this month. Big, big thing on global warming and conservation.

MODERATOR—WHAT DOES CONSERVATION MEAN TO YOU.

Actually I didn't realize how the energy of leaving, all of us leaving our computers on all night and leaving the lights on upstairs while you're gone all day long and forgetting to turn the heat down can make such a difference towards conserving energy.

I think we need to work on long-term preparation for any energy issues. California last year, look what happened there. Those people did not prepare themselves for what was going to happen.

They should have been working on it 10, 15 years ago and they let it all go to hell in a hand basket. And I know nuclear energy is not the choice of what people would probably like to have, but it's better than what they got stuck with last year. And they want to blame everybody else but themselves and that's what really made me mad about it.

MODERATOR—LOOK AT HANDOUT NUMBER 3, ENERGY POLICIES.

PRESIDENT BUSH AND THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESS HAVE CALLED FOR THE IMMEDIATE PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION TO REFORM OUR ENERGY POLICY. THEY SAY THE LESS DEPENDENT WE ARE ON THE 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 ARTIC 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 AMERICAN TECHNOLOGICAL KNOW-HOW TO DEVELOP NEWER, CLEANER ENERGY SOURCES, WIND AND SOLAR AND TO BUILD A MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT CARS AND APPLIANCES. WE CAN SECURE OUR ENERGY SUPPLY USING CLEAN FUELS LIKE NATURAL GAS WITHOUT DRILLING FOR OIL IN THE PRISTINE ARTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE.

SHOW OF HANDS, HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD SAY THEY AGREE MORE WITH THE REPUBLICAN MESSAGE? 2.

HOW MANY WOULD SAY THE DEMOCRATS. 8.

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE DEMOCRATS FIRST, WHY?

It just makes sense.

MODERATOR—WHAT PART STANDS OUT TO YOU?

Cleaner energy sources.

Such as wind and solar. It would be cheaper to build whatever they got to build...

No smog.

...and turn around and make this huge power plant again. And you see those little things out in the, looks like a whirlybird or something. That's wind power.

I read somewhere they were making fuel from garbage.

Oh, yeah. What a great way to get rid of garbage.

Laundry soap, where did I hear that? Laundry soap that was going to fuel, had a chemical in it in some way.

How many years have they worked on a solar power car or a battery-operated car? They've been doing it for 30 years and we still don't have an efficient running car?

Why?

I think it's because of the government.

They do that in universities all over the place. They have money that they have available for their use to develop and work on these kinds of things.

They worked on them for so long now.

My relatives live in Minnesota. We just happened to go up there for Thanksgiving. On our way up there, there is an area up there that has, have you seen that wind powered, there's apartments heading toward Omaha, has wind power. There are hundreds and hundreds of these wind powered...

Turbines.

...turbines, thank you, that help with the electricity all in this area in this countryside. I had not remembered seeing that before so it must be fairly recent. But somebody's experimenting with something, whether it's powering a town or what it's doing.

MODERATOR—WHY DID THE REST OF YOU PICK THIS DEMOCRATIC MESSAGE?

Cleaner energy resources, wind and solar.

It sounds pretty. It sounds like, oh, let's not get this wildlife refuge and let's just save the world. But it's not feasible. It's not going to happen in our lifetime.

MODERATOR—DO THE REST OF YOU AGREE WITH THAT?

It's not feasible.

We're not going to drill?

We're not going to be driving solar powered cars. I mean it's not feasible that, we'll probably drill at that wildlife refuge. It's nice to say we wouldn't but we will.

MODERATOR—SHOULD WE?

No.

MODERATOR—WHY NOT?

Because we need to save it as a wildlife refuge. And find other ways to get it.

Another reason is the ozone layer. OK. The ozone layer and the polar cap being there.

When it comes down to it, the wildlife are wildlife and we are human and we need energy to function. And it's not nice, it doesn't sound pretty, but I need to go places in my car and I need gas, so, and I need to keep my house warm.

MODERATOR—WHAT WAS IT ABOUT THE REPUBLICAN MESSAGE THAT YOU GUYS LIKED OR WAS IT THAT THE DEMOCRATIC MESSAGE WAS JUST NOT FEASIBLE?

The democratic message is flowery, it's beautiful but it's not feasible.

It's not. And I'll tell you why it's not feasible. I think yes we need to continue putting money in to finding alternate energy sources, cleaner energy sources, but if we start putting all our money finding these, we're going to run out of our other sources and then we're going to be stuck like California. We'll have all this money spent and nothing to show for years.

MODERATOR—SO, INCREASE SUPPLY?

We have to make sure we have enough of what we use right now for our use and for our benefit, a big enough supply. Yeah, we can concentrate on these other sources.

MODERATOR—ANOTHER ISSUE, SOCIAL SECURITY. HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY LATELY?

I heard something last night about them privatizing it. I heard it on the radio.

MODERATOR—WHAT WERE THEY SAYING?

I just caught the tail end of it as I was wandering in and out of the kitchen. They were talking about privatizing it for younger people.

What's privatizing it?

Making it a private entity instead of a government agency.

Taking the social security money and investing it in something else.

MODERATOR—HAS ANYBODY ELSE HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT PRIVATIZING SOCIAL SECURITY OR WHAT THAT MEANS?

I'm going back to before this happened in September, there was a lot of discussion about, even back to the campaign, discussions about what was going to happen to social security. I'm really concerned about what has been spent and what is left of social security. I'm real interested in finding out what they're going to do to rectify the situation. What's going to happen to social security? I agree, I don't think it's going to be there when I retire.

We just got a letter from social security, when they give you an estimation of your earning. It's really pitiful anyway, so. If somebody is depending on that for their life it's not going to be enough anyway.

I don't ever see retiring. You have to work somewhere.

Do you think you could make money on what you have in social security if they allowed you to take that money and invest it yourself?

Yes I could. Yes I could.

You're for taking the money and investing it yourself?

Yes I am. I'm not the normal person. I can see a lot of people being destitute.

[Many voices speaking at once]

Not everybody is educated in stocks.

Our elderly now are the people that planned on it and don't have it. I mean we're seeing now that it's going to pot, so. People now, looking for pop cans, it was on the news, she was looking for pop cans.

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT NUMBER 4, SOCIAL SECURITY.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S COMMISSION ON SOCIAL SECURITY JUST RELEASED A REPORT CONTAINING THREE OPTIONS FOR PARTIALLY PRIVATIZING SOCIAL SECURITY. THE COMMISSION SAYS THAT UNDER EACH OF THEIR PLANS FUTURE RETIREES CAN EXPECT TO RECEIVE BENEFITS AS LEAST AS HIGH AS THOSE RECEIVED BY TODAY'S RETIREES OR [COUGHING] OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD SUBSTANTIAL WEALTH THROUGH VOLUNTARY PERSONAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS. THEY SAY THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO ENSURE THE LONG-TERM FISCAL HEALTH OF SOCIAL SECURITY. DEMOCRATS SAY THAT THE COMMISSION'S REPORTS PROVES THAT YOU CAN'T PRIVATIZE SOCIAL SECURITY WITHOUT CUTTING BENEFITS FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE BENEFICIARIES. PRIVATIZING

SOCIAL SECURITY WOULD COST 1 TRILLION DOLLARS IN JUST THE NEXT DECADE, REQUIRE DRASTIC CUTS IN BENEFITS AND INCREASE IN THE RETIREMENT AGE AND DESTROY THE PROMISE OF GUARANTEED BENEFITS FOR MILLIONS OF TAXPAYERS. AND 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.

I don't believe either of them. I think they're both trying to make it sound pretty.

What does that mean, 'partially privatize?' Does it mean they're going to set a portion for an individual and the rest is going to some sort of entity to invest?

MODERATOR—MOST OF IT WOULD REMAIN UNDER THE CURRENT SYSTEM BUT THEN YOU COULD TAKE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF THE MONEY YOU PUT IN OUT INTO THESE PRIVATE ACCOUNTS AND INVEST THAT IN THE STOCK MARKET.

A person can do their own, not some other entity?

MODERATOR—IT MEANS IT CAN BE INVESTED. IT DEPENDS ON THE DIFFERENT OPTIONS. YOU COULD INVEST IT YOURSELF, A COUPLE OF CHOICES ON HOW IT IS INVESTED.

It might be all right.

MODERATOR—THE IDEA IS THAT YOU COULD SET ASIDE SOME OF THE MONEY YOU PAY IN NOW INTO THESE INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS WHICH COULD THEN BE INVESTED IN TO THE STOCK MARKET.

That's scary.

Would you have to pay taxes on that?

MODERATOR—IT WOULD BE INVESTED IN THE STOCK MARKET AND WHAT HAPPENS TO IT FROM THERE WOULD DEPEND ON THE STOCK MARKET?

You have to pay taxes on your retirement account, so.

Only if you withdraw, right? You withdraw with penalty, right?

I don't know but that has nothing to do with social security. Why they say the commission's report, ignores the fact the current budget takes hundreds of millions of dollars from the social security trust fund to pay for tax cuts. It's been going on way before this last year. I think this one is a scare tactic. I'm not real sure about the republican way but I don't agree with the democrats, it's a scare tactic.

I don't really want either the republican or the democrats in charge of my retirement. That kind of scares me.

MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK THEY SHOULD PRIVATIZE IT THEN? THE PARTIAL PRIVATIZATION THAT BUSH IS TALKING ABOUT?

I think they ought to...

I think that would be all right.

...I'm not sure about privatizing it or maybe partially privatizing it. I think they ought to test it first to see how it works.

Even though I don't know if it would be all right but taking part of my money and investing it that way, I might not have a problem with that.

If it's your way.

Yeah, I would like to invest it my way. If it's my way. I don't want to say, yeah, for sure now, I want to hear more about it. I'm not against it.

More research.

Give me an option.

If we lose our money at least we know it's our fault not theirs.

I was just wondering, if somebody blows all their money though are we going to pay for them or, you know...

One way or another.

...welfare and things like that.

We do already for people.

I thought they were trying to kind of whittle that down a little bit. Saying you could only be on welfare for a certain amount of time and then it's by-by.

That's all true but if an elderly person has to go into a nursing home, we do pay for that. We do take care of them.

I would hope so.

People find ways around that though.

My take on that is, the people that go there and blow their social security money that they're given to go and invest are the same people that aren't going to be smart enough to have IRA's and 401k's anyway.

Well, you're not safe in 401k's these days anyway.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK ON THIS IDEA? DO YOU THINK THERE'S ANY PROBLEMS WITH THIS IDEA OF LETTING PEOPLE INVEST THEIR OWN?

I think they need to do a lot more fine print and really be very specific.

MODERATOR—WHAT WORRIES YOU ABOUT IT?

Losing money when I get old and gray, maybe I can't work a Wal-Mart.

How are they going to regulate where people, how people do that? They need to regulate it some way.

You take some of your social security and you say, I'm going to pay my house off, is that legit, could you do that? You're house would be paid for wouldn't it? Is there going to be any guidelines, any stipulations on what I can do with my money.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THIS IDEA THE DEMOCRATS ARE SAYING, TAKE THAT MONEY AND DIVERT IT OUT OF THE SYSTEM, MAKE IT UP SOMEHOW. THEY SAY IT'S GOING TO COST US A TRILLION DOLLARS IN THE NEXT DECADE, HOW DO WE MAKE THAT UP?

It's not right they should spend our social security money anyhow.

They're way too used to spending the social security money.

Like I said, this is a scare tactic because they are so used to spending it.

I think they're both so used to spending it.

You must be a republican.

MODERATOR—HOLD IT, LAST THING TO TALK ABOUT IS ECONOMIC POLICY, GO TO HANDOUT NUMBER 5.

GEORGE W. BUSH SAYS WE NEED TO REVITALIZE OUR ECONOMY WHICH REQUIRES PUTTING MONEY BACK IN THE HANDS OF INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS INVESTORS. WE MUST MAINTAIN OUR PLANNED TAX CUTS AND ENACT FURTHER TAX CUTS TO 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 FUND OUR EDUCATION AND DOMESTIC SECURITY INITIATIVES. DEMOCRATS SAY THAT WE HAVE IMPORTANT NEEDS AS A COUNTRY AND MUST RENEW OUR ECONOMY. WE SHOULD CANCEL MOST OF THE MASSIVE TAX CUTS SCHEDULED 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 LIKE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, EDUCATION AND IMPROVE DOMESTIC SECURITY.

SHOW OF HANDS, HOW MANY PEOPLE AGREE MORE WITH WHAT BUSH IS SAYING?

HOW MANY WOULD AGREE MORE WITH WHAT THE DEMOCRATS ARE SAYING?

I think I'm with George. I think so.

I'm still going over it again.

Democrat.

MODERATOR—MOST OF YOU SEEM TO BE WITH THE DEMOCRATS, WHY, WHAT STOOD OUT FOR YOU?

The upper echelon getting the highest tax cuts. When they already have the ability to invest because they have more earnings they have the liberty to invest and procure long-term, hopefully if you're doing that right, procuring more long-term monies, you don't have to worry so much about social security where those of us are struggling so much for these other things.

I agree with her. Being a single parent and only having one income, it, this tax cut doesn't even affect me. I don't even know if I can be classified as middle class. So, it doesn't really affect me one way or the other, the tax cut.

How come it seems like all tax cuts are for rich people and they're never for us?

It's just the way it is.

Doesn't matter...

(End side 1)

That's why I liked the \$500 I got in the mail.

It was like Christmas, wasn't it?

Went for my car insurance. Whoopie, it was paid.

At least they saw that everybody got it, not just big businesses.

MODERATOR—TRISH, ANDREA, REPUBLICAN ONE, WHY?

Well I'm all for cutting the federal spending. And if these tax cuts can stimulate the economy, then I'm for it.

Because I don't, this sentence that says almost half the money goes to those earning over \$375,000 a year. If you look at the tax percentages it's basically a falsity because the tax differences are not that much different from your lower to your, well, between your lower and middle they're different, your low and high they're different. But basically I think the misconception that people have is that the people that are wealthy are paying enough taxes because they are wealthy. And really all that's basically doing is penalizing somebody for being wealthy. Oh well, you're rich; you need to pay more taxes than that. And essentially the percentages, based upon what this person makes and what their tax bracket is, it's pretty in line with what they do.

MODERATOR—LET ME ASK YOU, BUSH SAYS, WE NEED TO CUT TAXES WHILE CONTINUING TO MEET OUR COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL SECURITY AND EDUCATION AND DOMESTIC SECURITY INITIATIVES

Isn't that an oxymoron, that you can do both?

MODERATOR—THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO ASK YOU, CAN WE DO BOTH?

It's very difficult.

If you're not making the money for the tax cut it does you no good.

But then again, you're never going to get immediate relief from a tax cut, that's a long process. And they way it's set up is to be a process, to work for the next 10, well, 9 years now.

But look how much money the federal government spends on taxes. Why can't we be cutting taxes? I think the federal government needs to learn how to spend our money a little bit more wisely instead of taking it all.

MODERATOR—SHIFT GEARS A LITTLE BIT, THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT THE FEDERAL BUDGET IS GOING TO RETURN TO DEFICIT THIS YEAR AND IT'S GOING TO REMAIN IN DEFICIT UNTIL AT LEAST 2005 AS FAR AS THEY CAN PROJECT AT THIS POINT. WHAT'S YOUR GUT REACTION TO THAT ANNOUNCEMENT?

When were we out of deficit? I thought we were always in a deficit.

We've been out for a while.

I don't think we've ever been out of a deficit have we?

The budget balanced, Clinton right before he left. Wasn't there a balanced budget?

For how many months?

Still, for a day.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT IT?

I don't think it affects us very much.

Same old, same old.

It surprised me, with what's going on.

Hey, the government get right in line with the American Joe, we're all in deficit.

Like she said, we're all in deficit.

It's the American way, no money.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT BEING IN DEFICIT UNTIL AT LEAST 2005?

In for a penny in for a pound, doesn't matter.

There's nothing, what's new?

MODERATOR—THE DEFICIT WAS IN BALANCE AND WE ACTUALLY HAD, AS RECENTLY AS A YEAR AGO, WE HAD RECORD SURPLUS.

We were in the green for, was it a couple of years, a year?

MODERATOR—AND NOW WE'RE BACK IN DEFICIT LESS THAN A YEAR LATER, WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS, WHY HAS THAT HAPPENED SO QUICKLY?

It was a false reading to tell you the truth.

It's politics. It's just like when Jimmy Carter was the President and they had those hostages. And when Reagan was elected and he took office they let the hostages go. It's politics.

I have no idea.

Just how you look at it.

MODERATOR—HOW YOU LOOK AT THE NUMBERS?

Maybe.

The way the republicans look at the democrats and the way the democrats look at the republicans. I mean everybody has a different opinion.

But how can you fudge numbers?

Yeah, so they're just making it up?

I don't know. That's what somebody needs to explain to all us lay people, why were we balanced here and all of a sudden it's gone. Where'd it go? And why did it go?

Because George Bush took office.

MODERATOR—IS THERE ANYTHING THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THIS, ANYTHING THAT HAPPENED?

I think 9/11 contributed a lot to it. I mean we've had to beef up our military immensely. We haven't planned on anything like that.

How so?

Money-wise.

We're spending so much on security now.

[Many voices speaking at once]

MODERATOR—SEPTEMBER 11TH, ANYTHING ELSE CONTRIBUTES TO THIS?

What about all the money that other countries owe us?

We write that off so they'll be our ally. And then they're not.

I think congress spending everything so very, very much that it's not fair to the average Joe sitting around here. Their salaries. And they give themselves raises all the time.

So, what did happen?

MODERATOR—THAT’S WHAT I’M ASKING.

Probably we’re not spending either so our economy is weak because we’re holding on to everything we have so because we’re not sure we’re going to go so you know, essentially they have to keep cutting the tax rate hoping that will be spending more.

That makes sense.

MODERATOR—ANOTHER THING BEING DISCUSSED, AN ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE. WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THAT? HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING?

I’m so tired of hearing about Bin Laden, where he is.

[Many voices speaking at once]

You know, I just don’t have a lot of faith in that right now. So, I just don’t. I mean I know they’re trying but it seems like for the last few months it hasn’t done anything so. And you know what, that’s not necessarily true. I think housing-wise it’s done a lot for the economy.

Lowering the tax rates and all that.

I think American people in general are in like a wait-and-see mode. Not doing much of anything right now.

I read an article today about, the whole point of the article was, it’s an argument between how we’re going to once again utilize government money while working on consumer confidence, how money is so much more important in one person’s eye than working with the people themselves. And I can’t think.

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT NUMBER 6,

REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS SAY WE DON’T NEED MORE GOVERNMENT SPENDING, WE NEED TO GET MONEY BACK INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE THAT WILL INVEST 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 SEPTEMBER 11TH WHO NEED MONEY TO INVEST AND CREATE JOBS. DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS SAY WE MUST ADDRESS OUR IMMEDIATE NEEDS INCLUDING REBUILDING AFTER TERRORIST’S 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 OBLIGATION WHILE PROVIDING INCENTIVES TO BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS TO INVEST THIS YEAR.

IF YOU HAD TO PICK ONE OR THE OTHER, WHICH WAY WOULD YOU GO?

HOW MANY WOULD GO WITH THE REPUBLICANS?

It's too vague. They're both too vague.

I think they should just combine the two. I think they go together. Both of them got this good idea, why don't they merge it?

MODERATOR—HOW MANY WOULD GO WITH THE REPUBLICANS? HOW MANY WOULD GO WITH THE DEMOCRATIC ONE? OK. ONES FOR THE DEMOCRATS, WHY?

They want to address the immediate need.

MODERATOR—THAT LAST LINE, IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT?

I don't know.

I would like to see businesses get incentives so they can, keep them going, keep them strong, less unemployment. There's a lot of businesses, medium size businesses, one in particular I know about that is just about to go under that's been in business for many, many years. And it is going to directly affect many people, 130 people are going to lose their job. It was very secure. And it may be gone by March. My husband, we're both self-employed, we've both seen this. It's just been tooth and nail trying to make our way, so, I guess I'd have to go with that one at this point in time for us, where we stand.

I want to know, all those accounts that they froze, where they taking that money? Where's that money? That could solve some problems.

They said support for education. That's always important, republican or democratic.

The wording is all uplifting; they're all good things.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REPUBLICAN ONE?

I just have faith in the republican attitude because don't need to be spending more government money. I just, I just don't think that's necessary.

Why are the democrats concerned about rebuilding so soon after the terrorist attacks when our economy is in this bad a shape number 1. What are they going to do to help the new unemployed? It's not, it's bad but there are jobs out there. Why do they not, what's wrong with somebody that's unemployed, why should the federal government give them all the money they earned before when you can still go out and find a job that might not pay as much and still be subsidized the rest paid by the federal government?

What about people that have 8 kids and we're all paying for them?

[Many voices speaking at once]

That's neither here nor there. You can't say, I mean, unemployment right now, what, we have 1 million that have recently went on unemployment, 1 million people. And it's more and more and more, it's going to happen faster and faster. I can't go on unemployment, collect 80 percent of my wage and keep my house payment. I mean I can't tell my loan officer, can you lower my loan payment 'cause I'm only getting so much of this and I can go get another job and it's only going to pay me, it's going to pay me 4 bucks an hour.

So, how do you want the businesses fix this? Do you want them to pass further tax cuts so that they can stay open?

Yes, I want our businesses to stay strong.

What I'm trying to say is, what are they going to do help the new unemployed? Are they going to subsidize all their pay? That's the point. If they're helping the unemployed, yes, I understand these people need money, they really need to make the money they were making before. But it's not like there are zero jobs out there. I want to know what they're planning. Are they planning on helping subsidize their income if they go out and get a job that's less than what they were making, what's going to happen? It doesn't say anything. It doesn't tell how they're going to do it. This one is a little bit better because it says including tax cuts for businesses.

But they're talking about businesses hit hard by September 11th. My husband has been struggling way before September 11th. The manufacturing business has gone down the tubes over the last years. So, are they going to exclude what was already going downhill before and only include the businesses that were hit hard by September 11th or, I don't know. I wish we could combine them both.

They're both vague.

They're both vague but they both have valid points.

I have something I have to say. I know September 11th was terrible and many businesses were destroyed and people died. But you know in 19, before in California businesses have been destroyed by earthquakes for years. And FEMA came but they don't give you that much money. What's the difference? Why are they cutting taxes for those and not for people like in Oklahoma?

In California, that's the risk of living there.

There's a risk everywhere.

Not a risk of being hit by a plane in the World Trade Center. I mean that was that false sense of security. But if you move to California you know that you're going to have a possible earthquake. They're very common.

MODERATOR—DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS, THEY HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO COME TO A COMPROMISE, WHAT IF THEY DON'T AND NO ECONOMIC STIMULUS BILL GETS PASSED AT ALL, WHAT THEN?

We ought to kick them out of there.

Something will happen.

What are we going to do about it? We can't in the next 2 weeks change that. I mean how, it doesn't matter if we all go home or go someplace and email our congressmen, what are we going to do in 2 weeks? It takes time.

MODERATOR—BUT IS IT GOING TO HURT THE ECONOMY IF THEY DON'T PASS SOMETHING?

Yes.

Not in 2 weeks.

MODERATOR—NOT IN 2 WEEKS, BUT IS IT A BAD THING IF THEY DON'T PASS SOMETHING?

Yes.

Yeah, they should be working for a common goal.

Have to stimulate the economy somehow.

MODERATOR—IMAGINE IF THIS SCENARIO PLAYS OUT, NO STIMULUS BILL IS PASSED AT ALL AND EVERYBODY STARTS POINTING FINGERS AND TRYING TO EXPLAIN WHY IT HAPPENED. DEMOCRATS ARE GOING TO SAY, IT'S BETTER TO DO NOTHING THAN TO PASS A STIMULUS BILL THAT WOULD CREATE HUGE DEFICITS AND RAID THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND TO PAY FOR HUGE TAX CUTS FOR BIG CORPORATIONS AND WEALTHY INDIVIDUALS. REPUBLICANS ARE GOING TO SAY, IT'S BETTER TO DO NOTHING THAN PASS A BILL PACKED WITH GOVERNMENT SPENDING THAT'S NOT REALLY GOING TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY OR GET MONEY BACK IN THE HANDS OF PEOPLE WHO NEED IT.

And who needs it, the rich people? You said the opposite with the republicans.

It's the rich people that own the businesses. The major businesses. Your bigger businesses. I'm sorry, but if you want the bigger businesses, your airline industry, your private, not even private, major corporations.

Let the public decide.

Unfortunately, that's not the way it works.

But if we don't give the break, a lot of that money somewhere, it's not going to happen. But like I said, everybody screams about the rich getting more money, if it's the rich people running the businesses that are going under that own them and they need that money and those tax breaks to keep them above water, to continue to employ people, what's more important at this point?

MODERATOR—IS IT BETTER TO DO NOTHING THAN PASS A BILL THAT'S GOING TO DO THIS? LET'S SEE WHAT THE DEMOCRATS ARE SAYING, THEY SAY IT'S BETTER TO DO NOTHING THAN PASS A BILL THAT'S GOING TO CREATE HUGE DEFICITS AND TAKE MONEY OUT OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND TO PAY FOR HUGE TAX GIVEAWAYS. ARE THEY RIGHT OR DO THEY NEED TO SIT DOWN AND FIGURE SOMETHING OUT?

Well, doesn't that sort of contradict our earlier handout? The democrats said we need to do something to stimulate the economy and here they're saying we should do nothing.

MODERATOR—THEY'RE SAYING IT'S BETTER TO DO NOTHING THAN TO DO THE WRONG THING?

Well, we got to do something, so.

I think it's easier to sweep a little bit of water constantly than a whole flood.

Tell that to the unemployed though, make them understand that.

I'd rather step back and reevaluate than make a mistake.

MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK THAT'S A REAL DANGER, THAT WE COULD BE PASSING HUGE TAX CUTS THAT ARE GOING TO HURT US FOR YEARS TO COME?

Absolutely. And either party. I don't think it's just one or the other. I don't think anybody really knows. I think that's what 9/11 brought about, nobody really knows, just need to step back and think a little bit. Why make decisions under so much pressure? I don't know.

I don't understand why they say we don't need more government spending because we do need more government spending. We need it for the military. This war is going to go on for years. I mean how can they make that statement?

I think the second part of that sentence; I think it all concerns consumer confidence. I really do. If we don't have the money in our hands to spend, it's not being, it just, it topples like dominos. So, government spending, tax cuts for whatever, it's all scary.

MODERATOR—EVERYONE ELSE SEEMS TO WANT A COMBINATION OF THE TWO, IS THAT IT? SEE HEADS NODDING. LET'S GO TO HANDOUT NUMBER 7, [CANDIDATES FOR CONGRESS, GIVES INSTRUCTIONS, DESCRIBES SCALE].

THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE SUPPORTED THE 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 INDIVIDUALS IN CONGRESS.

-3? 4. -2? 1. -1? 4. 0? OK.
THOSE WHO GAVE IT A MINUS 3 OR 2, WHY?

I think he's looking at the needs of the few and not the needs of the many.

Yeah, exactly.

MODERATOR—HOW SO? WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL THAT WAY?

All the different projects. And not that that wouldn't stimulate the economy, that particular state might need that economic stimulus. But it doesn't, it's not widespread.

It doesn't say what kind of project it is either. We don't know if it was to stimulate the economy, what he brought in there with him.

Government spending. Not that government spending in and of itself is not good but spending for the projects along with it. They're not saying how much money goes with the cost.

MODERATOR—THE REST OF YOU, WHAT DID YOU THINK?

I did zero. I want to know more about it. What he's done. The good parts. The bad parts. This is just one example.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ONE, NUMBER 8,

THE WHOLE COUNTRY WAS COMING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT AND RISE ABOVE PARTISANSHIP THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE WAS VOTING IN 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? 6. -1? 3.
MINUS 3, WHY?

Well, if the country was in dire need for some economic stimulus and to hold it up. But I'm wondering, I didn't give it a 3 because I was wondering, what was the reason for holding up, putting up the block against the economic proposals. Maybe they weren't good and just proposals. Maybe they thought it wouldn't help. I guess I would have to know more.

I would be frustrated that, I would like to see the country come together and rise above partisanship. And you're right; we need to know why he's holding it up. But even so, it would seem that he could go beyond that once the country's come together, they should work on what it is, with that.

It seems like if the majority of the country is supporting what the President wants then somebody holding it up, just doesn't seem quite right.

We need some unity here. We've been through some terrible times, we need to be together to do this. There's always one, hey, wait a minute; he can give a little, too. I don't know, got to give it up sometimes.

MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK IT'S WRONG FOR PEOPLE TO BE OPPOSING WHAT THE PRESIDENT IS PROPOSING AT THIS TIME?

No.

No.

I like a devil's advocate. I like people to question because I think you have to have someone be able to see differently.

Exactly, that's why we have two different parties.

They may not be large issues. They may be small issues.

This just makes it sound like there was one single person that was just being a dickhead.

There was apparently a bunch of them there, but. I think there's enough room for discussion. The part they held up, the economic stimulus package when the economy was in need of extra help. Not enough detail. Not enough detail.

MODERATOR—LOOK AT HANDOUT NUMBER 7 AND HANDOUT NUMBER 8, WHICH ONE WOULD MAKE YOU LEAST LIKELY TO VOTE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE?

7

7

7

Yeah.

MODERATOR—HOW MANY SAY NUMBER 7? OK, WHY?

The pork barrel projects.

I think they should probably put those projects forward when the economy is more secure.

I think number 7 statement sounds more selfish. And the number 8 one sounds like they're just being cautious.

I agree with what she says, yeah.

Needs of the few. Needs of the many. Just again, affecting, even though it may be many, many people within those projects, it's not nationwide as handout 8 is, they're talking national economy.

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT NUMBER 9, THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE.

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

-3? 3. -2? 1. -1? 3. 0?

I haven't voted yet.

I'm confused by the question.

MODERATOR—WHO ELSE? GIVE IT A MARK.

Minus 3.

Probably less likely because of the first sentence.

MODERATOR—GIVE IT A MARK.

Minus 3.

MODERATOR—YOU WERE MINUS 3, WHY?

It's not for the general good. That's basically it.

MODERATOR—WHY THE FIRST SENTENCE, WHAT IS IT ABOUT THAT?

The 60 billion jumped out at me. The social security jumped out. Tax cuts for the wealthiest. And those were the three basic topics in that sentence I don't agree with.

Again, you hate to, and I agree with her, there comes a point in time you spend what you make a lot of times, when you're talking wealthy, I'm not talking billionaire, they do pay their taxes. But for the most part there are more people who are going to depend on the social security than there are the wealthier people who need the big tax cuts. Yes, 160 billion dollars in the same sentence with social security is very frightening.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK ABOUT THIS IDEA OF THEM SPENDING MONEY FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND?

Get their mitts off my money.

Well, they're confused on what they're spending. They're not listening to what we need or what we're asking.

The other taxes we pay, we do pay other taxes, why are they going to the social security thing.

It's the biggest.

That's what they take from the general spending, too, so that sentence doesn't bother me.

Does it take away from the elderly now?

No, but it's not going to do the elderly any good in 20 years when there isn't any social security there to take care of.

Well in a way it does, Medicare doesn't cover anything for elderly people, pays very little. Right now they have no prescription insurance.

I'm just wondering if it would affect them immediately. Going to take 160 billion but how much is in there?

Live another 20 years.

Yeah, I think I read somewhere where they're expecting the life expectancy like 75, 80 and by the time you retire at 65, you're only getting...

It's 70 now isn't it? Retiring age.

66.

Everybody better have children. Send them to college. Have good jobs so they can take care of us.

MODERATOR—IT SAYS THAT THEY'RE TAKING THE MONEY FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND TO PAY FOR THE TAX CUTS. CANCELING THE TAX CUTS WOULD MEAN THEY'RE NOT TAKING ANY MONEY FROM SOCIAL SECURITY, WOULD THAT BE A FAIR TRADE OFF?

Oh then the democrats would just want to give them money. That's where everybody wants to go for the money. They all want to use that same source whether it's tax cuts or general spending.

That's the way our history worked itself, that's exactly what happens, that's where they take it.

Repeats itself.

MODERATOR—THE NEXT ONE, HANDOUT NUMBER 10,

THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE RUSHED TO GET FUNDS TO THE AIRLINES AND INSURANCE INDUSTRY TO USE 75 PERCENT 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 JOBS AFTER SEPTEMBER 11TH, THREE-QUARTERS OF WHOM ARE INELIGIBLE FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE.

-3? -2? 3. -1? 3. 0? 2. ANYONE ON THE PLUS SIDE? PLUS 2, OK. MINUS 2 OR MINUS 3, WHY?

It sounds like they're spending money for one sector. And I didn't understand why some were ineligible.

These people worked.

[Many voices speaking at once]

I don't get that part.

If they worked they get it.

Well, they're calling it, 'economic stimulus,' for the airline and insurance industry, but I don't know insurance-wise, I do not know. The airlines were going down the tubes anyway, so, and this is, even spending so much of this money on them, how many are so close to going under still?

But 75 percent of the economic stimulus. I know ,you have to do it, you have to do it, but.

The major airlines were in no threat of going down. Their business was increasing like 25 percent or 50 percent over the last year.

Everyone ran scared and wouldn't get on a plane so everybody went bankrupt. The little ones went down.

It's just stupid.

They don't need that baggage worker. They don't need that ticket clerk. They just lost their jobs. I don't understand why they don't get unemployment, that's too much for me, I don't understand that part of it.

MODERATOR—WHY WEREN'T THE REST OF YOU NOT THAT IMPRESSED WITH THIS ONE?

Well, I'm not a republican but it wasn't that bad.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS GENERAL IDEA THAT THEY WERE GIVING PLENTY OF MONEY TO THE COMPANIES BUT NOT LOOKING OUT FOR THE ORDINARY PEOPLE?

It doesn't say the ordinary people.

The third line up from the bottom.

I think you have to be an employee for a certain amount of time to collect.

Actually the airlines and insurance industries are the biggest industries in the country and if they're in so much trouble financially they're probably the two industries that need to have the tax breaks because it's not just their industry alone, it trickles down into other areas. You've got your travel businesses. You have your hotel businesses. Your taxis. If it's going to stimulate the airline industry and it's going to stimulate more travel, it's going to affect everything down the line.

MODERATOR—LET'S GO TO THE LAST ONE, NUMBER 11,

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

-3? 8. -2? 1? 1. AND?

Plus 1.

MODERATOR—MINUS 3, WHY?

We need to leave our money here. Hello, I'm just about fed up with that. We never see a dime of it back.

We still have to go to war.

We see how hungry they are on TV every day.

Their government wastes our investment.

I'm hungry too. My family gets hungry, too.

And we're in an economic crisis so don't give it to other countries.

I feel sorry for those people but yet, we give them so much, where does it go?

It's great that they get it but let's cut them off for now, do our own.

They're not talking about foreign aid. They're talking about investment in foreign countries.

Exactly.

[Many voices speaking at once]

It trickles down to them just like you said the airline industry trickles down to us.

How many people work in an office setting where they use a Xerox copier or a Cannon copier or a Nikon. Or how many people own a Dell Computer or an IBM.

Nothing is made here. We know that.

No, I'm not talking about made here. When they're talking about investing in other countries, do you realize that when one of our countries, say Dell Computers, or Xerox Corporations, they have so many people working worldwide. They have plants in Mexico and they have plants overseas. Dell Computers has support centers.

What's the point?

Here's the deal. They get to keep so much of our money because the customer service representative, and they have a lot of them here, they have people in other countries that speak that language that can offer customers support in order for people in those countries to buy Dell Computers but it also has a second purpose too. If you have a college graduate in one of those countries who works for a major corporation, that corporation is saving a lot of money, and it's

an American based corporation, what they might pay a technician or service representative here, say 10-12 bucks an hour, you know what they're paying them in India, \$4 dollars an hour.

My point exactly, leave that money here. We need the money here. People are looking for jobs.

We need to invest our money in the United States.

We spread ourselves so thin.

Well, she was talking about all the money we invest in foreign countries, why can't they build the same companies here? Move here.

[Many voices speaking at once]

Put stuff here and help us out a little bit.

I think I read somewhere that Bin Laden had a lot of investments in this country and something went sour and then our Trade building were hit.

There's a lot of foreign investment in this country that employs a lot of people.

MODERATOR—LOOK BACK ON HANDOUTS 9 AND 10 AND 11, WHICH ONE OF THESE WOULD MAKE YOU LEAST LIKELY TO VOTE FOR THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE?

11.

9.

MODERATOR—SHOW OF HANDS, HOW MANY SAY 11? 4.
HOW MANY SAY 10?
HOW MANY SAY 9? 5.

FIVE AND FIVE. THOSE THAT PICKED NUMBER 9, WHY?

Social security again.

Big tax cut for the wealthy.

Probably because it affects, I see it affecting me more personally than I see the other two.

Well, I'm just real stingy with the money and I don't like the idea of people using my social security without my permission to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy. I wouldn't want them using my savings account money, a bank, without my permission.

MODERATOR—THINKING ABOUT ALL THE STUFF WE TALKED ABOUT TONIGHT, REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU WOULD VOTE, WHAT'S THE BEST REASON TO VOTE FOR A REPUBLICAN FOR CONGRESS?

They mean well. I think they're real passionate about their beliefs.

To me it's going to have to be a real good reason.

If you're wealthy you'll probably do well now.

I guess for me it would be, they generally are more conservative.

MODERATOR—IN WHAT WAY?

Just in their views on many things.

MODERATOR—YOU THINKING OF ECONOMICS, SOCIAL, MILITARY?

All of those.

I would personally always vote for the person that I believed in the most. Although I lean toward democratic. I would say because they're more military-minded.

I think they're more for, I think they watch out for our money a little bit better. I like their policies in regards to big government spending. I'm not talking military. They want to see the public have more control over their own money instead of the government having control over most of our money.

MODERATOR—WHAT'S THE BEST REASON TO VOTE FOR A DEMOCRAT FOR CONGRESS?

They seem more conservative on this. I don't know.

I think the republican party in general are worldwide and the democratic party is more domestic conscious.

They think about our people. What's best for us.

I think they're more environmentally minded.

I think they work for the middle class more so than the republicans.

I think that they, they're a little more environmentally minded. I'll leave it at that.

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT NUMBER 12 [GIVES INSTRUCTIONS, VOTE FOR AND WHY]. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

(End tape)