

Democracy Corps Transcript

Name: --
Company: --
Group Specs: Women, 30-45, non-college grads, household income under \$50K, weak partisans, recruited from OH CD1
Date: June 29, 2006
Time: 5:30 PM

June 29, 2006, 5:30 PM

MODERATOR--ANY QUESTIONS FOR ME BEFORE WE GET STARTED? LET'S GO AROUND THE TABLE REAL QUICK AND INTRODUCE OURSELVES. TELL US YOUR NAME, FIRST NAMES ARE FINE, WHERE YOU LIVE, WORK, FAMILY, HOBBIES, WHATEVER YOU WANT TO TELL US IN 20 SECONDS OR LESS. THEN WE CAN ALL GET STARTED. MY NAME IS CARL, AS YOU CAN SEE. I DIDN'T HAVE A NAME TAG LAST TIME, THEY ACTUALLY GAVE ME ONE THIS TIME. I LIVE IN WILMINGTON, DELAWARE AND TRAVEL AROUND THE COUNTRY DOING THIS. NOT ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT THIS KIND OF STUFF, MOST OF YOU WHO HAVE DONE THIS BEFORE KNOW IT'S LIKE USUALLY DIAPERS OR FOOD OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. BUT THIS IS WHAT WE'RE DOING TONIGHT. I'M MARRIED, I HAVE THREE GIRLS, SIX, THREE AND ONE. AND THAT PRETTY MUCH OCCUPIES ALL OF MY TIME WHEN I'M NOT WORKING. I COACH SOME SOCCER FOR MY DAUGHTER AND PLAY SOME BASKETBALL AND THAT'S ABOUT IT FOR ME.

I'm Alice. I'm separated right now. I have a 9-year-old child with autism. Right now, everything is focused on him, school work, speech, everything that you could possibly think that you could do to improve his lifestyle for when he gets older. So basically that's what I do.

I'm Beth. I'm working as a home health aide right now. I have four children, my oldest daughter just had my first grandson. She is 22. I have a 19-year-old and a 17-year-old, the 17-year-old is still with me and my 8-year-old son who has ADHD and ODT and he's a handful. He requires a lot of extra attention and you really have to know how to do it to get him to do something which, amazingly, my 17-year-old has been able to do quite a few times. I have been a fine arts student, I like to do things with my hands. My life doesn't give me a lot of time for that, so I kind of don't do it very much and I also like to write poetry. I think that covers it.

My name is Claire. I work part-time for a security company. I have four sons, 12, 11, 6 and 10 months. And I don't know, that's about it.

MODERATOR—THAT'S ENOUGH.

Between my boys and my job, yeah.

My name's Danielle. I live here in Norwood in town. I work in retail management. Single, no kids. That's about it.

My name's Eva. I'm married, I have a daughter who's 14 and a son who's 11. They play a lot of sports, that takes up a lot of our time, my husband coaches. I work part-time at the high school that my daughter's getting ready to enter into and I scrapbook.

I'm Fran. I as well do home health aide, I do a lot of respite care. Actually, I'm going back to school. I'm going to be a victim advocate for child service.

Oh, good for you.

So, my time's like consumed. That's all I do is go to work, go to school, come home. Same thing next day.

I'm Gail. I work at (inaudible) and I have two kids, a daughter and a son. That's it.

I'm Holly and I work for Ohio State University Extension Office and I have three children and one grandchild. That's it.

I'm Iris. I'm a part-time property manager and I have a 3-1/2 year old son who was my 40th birthday present and I'm still not over the shock, but he's a joy, he's an absolute joy. So we do a lot of arts and crafts and we're working on swimming right now and he's very musically inclined. And it's just a whirlwind.

MODERATOR—OKAY, WELL THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING OUT. I WANT TO START OUR CONVERSATION REAL BROADLY. THINKING ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING ON WITH OUR COUNTRY THESE DAYS, DO YOU FEEL LIKE THE COUNTRY'S GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION OR IN THE WRONG DIRECTION RIGHT NOW?

Wrong direction.

Wrong.

MODERATOR—HEADS ARE NODDING WITH WRONG. WHAT SPECIFIC THINGS ARE GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION? WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL THAT WAY?

They're taking our elderly's money away. They're taking all their medical, all their food stamps. I mean, food stamps is not a whole lot to help out, but it helps. My mom got \$11 a month and I tell you, she didn't get nothing on it. I hope when I'm old and I can't take care of myself, I've got resources to depend on.

Your mom got more. My mom got \$9.

You know, it's not enough, honestly. They can't get (inaudible) or medicine without owing every month half of their money goes toward medicine.

MODERATOR—SOMEONE SAID GAS PRICES.
I did.

Oh god. That's horrifying. It really is.

And it's going to get worse before it gets better.

Even the food's gone up and milk is outrageous, I think.

Medical care.

Makes you want to keep a cow in your basement.

(Many talking at once.)

MODERATOR—YOU SAID MEDICAL CARE?

Hm-hmm.

They're making all these playgrounds, they should be making free clinics so the kids can get medical care without a lot of extra expenses. Because I know it's hard for me, it's really hard.

MODERATOR—OKAY, WHAT ELSE?

I think that things are getting too much away from everything that this country was founded on. You know, I think it's wonderful that we'll let anybody come here and live but I think it goes a little bit too far when we have to change the, take the word "God" out of the Pledge of Allegiance and . . .

That's completely wrong to me.

It's, that's what this country's always been based on and I think it caters too much to everything else and it's getting away what it should be focused on and I think that's a lot of problems with the kids that are growing up today. They don't have enough foundation in their homes because both parents have to work all the time and I think there should be a lot more focus on . . .

Children's Services also tells the kids, you know, any time that you have a conflict, you can call us. And that's not fair. What happened to, you know, spare the rod and spoil the child? I got the crap beat out of me when I was a kid and I grew up just fine. These days, you can't even really have words with your kids without someone calling 241 and wanting to have your kid snatched. Come in and do an investigation, let me come to your house for an hour and then tell you what you're doing wrong. That's just my opinion, you know.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE?

I think we're focusing too much on helping other countries out when we should be helping right here, get us under control, get everything in control here. Then, okay, we can help you.

I agree.

It make sense. Instead of having everybody come over and helping them out.

I agree.

I mean, a lot of times they come over and they get a grant for a car, not a grant but whatever it's called for, a voucher for a car, grant for school, open a business and here we are, sitting like, you know, how are we going to feed our kids this week.

Right.

MODERATOR—OKAY, WHAT ELSE?

There are more . . .

(Many talking at once.)

I'm just, I just don't, it upsets me. I mean, I've always lived there and I don't see anything helping or changing. We just have people getting killed and he needs to bring them back.

Not to mention how stupid are we that we implode the place and then say, hey, let's rebuild for them.

I just, I'm just, you know . . .

It was ignorant.

MODERATOR—OKAY, WHAT WERE YOU SAYING, HOLLY?

Oh, I just said a lot of the ones that killed over there, they're kids, you know, 19, 20, 21 years old, don't know nothing about, you know.

The President's (inaudible) instead of doing his job.

Maybe he's on a permanent vacation.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE? OTHER THINGS THAT ARE GOING ON?

Minimum wage is horrifying.

Education. I mean, I think that's a critical issue that, I was in education for a short time, not a short time, a few years, and it's amazing to me that the people, the higher-ups in education are so far removed from ABC's and 123 and multiplication and division and it's more of a what's in it for me deal. As opposed to what can I do for these kids today. And I think the parents are partly responsible too. I think that the parents need to, not every parent I should say, but a lot of parents just need to take a much more active role and just realize that they are the first and primary educator in your child's life for what, 18 years? Some of them 20, some of them 30,

some of them 40. You know? So let's make sure that they're getting it right. I don't know. That keeps me awake at night a lot just worrying about, is Alex, is he getting what he needs and is going to be smart enough and (inaudible) and stuff like that. And everybody's like, Laurie, you're way ahead of the game. So I'm, but I'm not going to slack off because of that.

MODERATOR—OKAY. OTHER THINGS? WHAT'S YOUR OVERALL SENSE OF THE ECONOMY RIGHT NOW? OBVIOUSLY IT HASN'T BEEN GOOD. IS IT MOVING UP NOW? IS IT STILL GOING DOWN? IS JUST KIND OF STUCK? I MEAN, WHAT DIRECTION ARE THINGS GOING?

Down.

Do you shop? The prices are just sky high.

MODERATOR—OKAY, SO PRICES ARE GOING UP. WE TALKED ABOUT GAS.

And salaries are not.

MODERATOR—AND THAT EFFECTS EVERYTHING ELSE. SOMEBODY'S GOT TO DRIVE THE MILK TO THE STORE AND THEY'VE GOT TO PAY MORE SO YOU'RE GOING TO PAY MORE.

That's true what she said right there. Everything's going up but they don't put your hourly or your salary, they don't change that. It doesn't matter how much.

The quality, I think too, is going down for what you pay for things. The quality of everything. I just noticed, and even in everyday things that you buy at the grocery store. It used to be quality control and what you were paying for and I noticed just things from the grocery store, more often, bags that aren't closed all the way or pieces that in the food products that are burnt or broken or not useful. And the prices keep going up for things but what you get for that I think it's pretty sad, but what do you do about it? You have to have it.

Right, a lot of (inaudible) are probably just not paying attention to their job. I'm only making this little bit of money, so . . .
Right.

Like I got cookies and cream ice cream once and it had no cookies in it. I was like . . .

Yeah, how does that happen?

(Many talking at once.)

MODERATOR—OKAY, ONE OF THE OTHER ISSUES YOU RAISED THAT I WANT TO TALK ABOUT BEFORE WE MOVE ON IS HEALTH CARE. TELL ME ABOUT HOW THAT'S, THE WAY THAT IMPACTS YOUR LIFE.

For me, my mom, she dialyzes because her kidneys don't function any more and she has to meet this spend down of \$180 a month she has to pay before they even help her with any of her

medications or anything. It's ridiculous. I just think it should be an automatic, here help her out, she's 67 years old, she's not getting much money in with her \$9 in food stamps.

My thing with health care is I pay over half of my daughter's medical bills because she has a heart problem and my ex-husband pays absolutely nothing. He pays \$67 a week child support and that's it.

At least you get child support, I don't even get that.

Well, we had to garnish his wages to get it. And even without my child support, the medical bills alone would kill me. I mean, I've got six kids. It's expensive. It's really expensive. I only have two left at home, but, you know, my 16-year-old, she had a (inaudible) because her body holds less salt. So I mean it's, running back and forth to the cardiologist, it's expensive.

You have to keep paying more for your portion of what your employer pays and every year, your benefits seem to drop down.

Exactly.

MODERATOR—SO YOU'RE PAYING MORE, BUT YOU'RE GETTING LESS.

And then you pay more when you go to the doctor too. My son was sick a month ago and it used to be we could go to the doctor and it would cost us \$5 for the doctor visit and \$3 for prescriptions and that was 12 years ago when my daughter was little. And now, I took him, it's \$15 when we go to the doctor which isn't bad but we're still paying every month toward the insurance and then now they've changed the prescription plan so you have to meet a family deductible every year which, and we don't go to the doctor that often, so we don't have a lot of medical bills but you take him because he's sick and then you have to fork out \$150 for the medication because you're, and then by the time you meet that \$250 for the year, then the year's up and you're starting over again. It takes a chunk.

MODERATOR—OKAY, ANYTHING ELSE?

I think that there are better models for health care programs for national, if you look at there's so many people driving over the border to Canada. I mean, we need to admit defeat. I mean, the country just needs to admit that our current health care system is not what it should be or not what it could be and look to another model where things are going well.

MODERATOR—I WANT TO THROW OUT THE NAMES OF SOME PEOPLE, ORGANIZATIONS, STUFF LIKE THAT AND JUST TELL ME YOUR FIRST GUT REACTION. I DON'T CARE IF IT'S RIDICULOUS. I DON'T CARE IF IT'S VULGAR. I DON'T KNOW CARE WHAT IT IS. JUST FIRST GUT REACTION. WE'LL START WITH A NAME I THINK EVERYBODY KNOWS, BOB TAFT.

Hmm.

(Inaudible) education reform, that's all . . .

Is he still alive?

MODERATOR—HE'S STILL YOUR GOVERNOR.

I know.

MODERATOR—WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF HIM?

Jokes.

The only thing I know that he's done is done, in my area, is a thing where groups of people get, I forget the organization, they get together and bust up people doing drugs and selling drugs. That's the only thing that I think of him.

MODERATOR—ANYTHING ELSE? HOW ABOUT KEN BLACKWELL? DO YOU KNOW THAT NAME?

Better than Bob.

MODERATOR—WHO ELSE KNOWS THAT NAME?

I've heard it, but I'm not sure who it is, to be honest. I've heard the name, but I don't know.

MODERATOR—ANYBODY ELSE?

Yeah, I've heard it, but I'm blank. I worked all day. My mind's erased.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT TED STRICKLAND? YOU KNOW THAT NAME?

Hm-hmm, I don't.

MODERATOR—OKAY, STRICKLAND AND BLACKWELL ARE THE TWO WHO ARE RUNNING FOR GOVERNOR. TAFT IS SMART ENOUGH NOT TO RUN AGAIN. HOW ABOUT MIKE DEWINE?

Yeah.

Commissioner. Or no. I work for Ohio State and we get funded by the County Commissioners.

He's been around for a while.

MODERATOR—ANYBODY KNOW WHAT HE IS OR WHAT HE DOES?

Is he a Congressman?

MODERATOR—SENATOR. ANYTHING THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF HIM OR JUST HE'S JUST KIND OF THERE?

He's just there getting money.

MODERATOR—OKAY, SHERROD BROWN? ANYONE KNOW THAT NAME? STEVE CHABOT?

Yeah.

MODERATOR—YOU KNOW THAT ONE?

He should be dead too.

Bad hair.

MODERATOR—YOU KNOW HIM?

Yeah. I've heard of him.

You can say it, he should be dead too.

MODERATOR—ANYTHING COME TO MIND?

No.

MODERATOR—OKAY. ANYONE ELSE? STEVE CHABOT? HOW ABOUT JOHN CRAWLEY? DO YOU KNOW HIM?

I've heard of him.

Is he under Chabot?

He's local, isn't he?

MODERATOR—HE'S A CITY COUNCILMAN.

Yeah, that's what I thought. Nothing life-altering comes to my mind that he's done.

I think I've seen him in parades.

MODERATOR—OKAY, HOW ABOUT CONGRESS? WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU THINK OF CONGRESS?

I don't think it has anything to do with us because they don't listen to anything anyone has to say.

That's what it feels like.

Yeah, a bunch of people who make decisions based on keeping the money they make and special interest.

They don't care about this group of people in the room or anyone else.

MODERATOR—OKAY, ANYONE ELSE?

I just think that they need to work more for the greater good, that they're too divisive and there has to be some common ground or common goal established. Everybody needs to just toe the line and get down to business.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE? WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU THINK OF CONGRESS? DO YOU THINK ALICE'S RIGHT THAT IT DOESN'T REALLY IMPACT YOU OR DO YOU THINK THAT WHAT THEY DO UP THERE IN WASHINGTON MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE, EITHER GOOD OR BAD?

I think it makes a difference either way. I just don't think that our opinions make the initial decision on what they do. I mean, they're all for having our opinions and this, that and the other but do they really take the chance to look at what we had to say and read what we think and feel where we're coming from? They don't. They get the paycheck, then they go home and go to sleep just fine.

Or do they just cater to the people who attend their dinners to . . .

Right, \$100 a plate, I can't afford that.

. . . to help them.

I'm value menu, you know what I'm saying? A burger please.

People like us, we can't afford to be at those dinners, to listen to what they might have to say or do. We just have to listen to them dog each other on TV commercials when it gets to be election time.

I think that's terrible.

That's obnoxious.

And other than that, we really don't hear too much more about them or see them.

And it's child play. Putting each other down.

Why can't they just work together and have two in the same office? Two bads are always as bad as one, right? Otherwise, you wouldn't have all of us here for our opinions. You'd just have one opinion and that would be it.

But then they would break it down to whose opinion wins.

Right, right.

We'll have to have an election.

MODERATOR—ANYTHING ELSE THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF CONGRESS? OKAY. ONE OTHER NAME THAT I WANT TO ASK YOU ABOUT THAT I

THINK YOU'LL ALL HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY BUT I WANT TO HAVE YOU WRITE SOME THINGS DOWN FIRST IS GEORGE W. BUSH. SO, TAKE ONE AND PASS IT DOWN.

Wow, how much time do I get?

MODERATOR—AS I SAID, HONESTY ABOVE ALL ELSE. HONESTY, HONESTY, HONESTY. WE'RE GOING TO LOOK RIGHT NOW JUST AT HANDOUTS 1 AND 2. ON HANDOUT 1, I WANT YOU TO WRITE DOWN ALL THE GOOD THINGS THAT COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF PRESIDENT BUSH. ON HANDOUT 2, ALL THE NOT SO GOOD THINGS THAT COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF PRESIDENT BUSH. AND AFTER YOU FILL THEM BOTH OUT, WE'LL GO AHEAD AND TALK ABOUT THEM.

I put my last name. Do you want me to redo it?

MODERATOR—YOU'RE NOT GRADED ON SPELLING OR GRAMMAR. JUST GET THE IDEAS DOWN. IF YOU'RE STILL WRITING, TAKE YOUR TIME. BUT IF YOU'RE DONE, FLIP BACK TO HANDOUT 1 AND TELL ME WHAT ARE THE GOOD THINGS THAT COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF PRESIDENT BUSH. KAREN'S GOT NOTHING.

I can't think of anything.

MODERATOR—THAT'S FAIR. IF YOU CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING, YOU CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING.

He has some pretty good promises. But the thing of it is is he didn't carry through on any of them. You know? I mean, I was all for him. That's why I voted for him, but had I known then what I know now? Hmm, boy.

MODERATOR—OKAY. POSITIVES ABOUT BUSH?

I put down that he attends church.

Does he really though?

So he says he does. And I think that they do seem to be stopping terrorism somewhat. Since 9/11, at least they seem to be, they're telling us that they're looking for more and . . .

He could've prevented it all together.

Right, but too little, too late. But it seems to me that, at least they're now more, looking more into it and taking better precautions which, of course, that should've been done before but it seems that they're . . .

That's my view. It should've been done way before Bush. It should never have been allowed to happen instead of them spending all this money, it should've been put, like, oh I don't remember who it was saying about putting in parks and stuff. Stuff like that needs to be put in for the airport. I don't think it's over, I really don't.

MODERATOR—OKAY, OTHER POSITIVES ON BUSH? ANYTHING ELSE YOU'VE GOT?

He's not with Monica.

Or is he?

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT. FLIP TO HANDOUT 2. WHAT DOUBTS DO YOU HAVE?

All doubts.

I put what she said on the positive, he may promises but he doesn't follow through with anything. He didn't follow through with any.

MODERATOR—ANY ONE PARTICULAR STICK OUT TO YOU?

I'm not real political. That's why, you know . . .

(Many talking at once.)

I won't raise taxes.

Yeah, taxes.

Even the jobs.

(Many talking at once.)

I don't see many positive. A lot of the . . .

MODERATOR—WHAT WERE YOU SAYING, DONNA?

Letting more jobs go overseas.

MODERATOR—OKAY, WHAT ELSE?

It seemed to me that he seemed to be a little bit wrong about Saddam Hussein and what was going on over there with all the weapons of mass destruction. Then when they actually get over there, they really didn't seem to find a whole lot and I think he needed to be stopped, but I don't think it was to the degree that they thought it was. And now, look at the situation we're in.

That's what they get for thinking.

MODERATOR—OKAY, WHAT ELSE?

What I had to say is what I think of him. The man is not of the people. He has a vested interest in oil, that's where he money lies. He's (inaudible), intellectually deficit and self-centered. I doubt he'll do much for myself or anyone I care about before he leaves office. I'm not rich.

MODERATOR—SO HE'S FOR SOMEBODY, BUT IT'S NOT YOU.

That's basically what I put. He's not for the middle class working people or the poor.

Right.

Because they're, like they're saying, they worry more about other countries, but what about the poor people here, the elderly, the children?

(Inaudible) right downtown Cincinnati.

That type of thing.

Some of the same things. Again, I think he had the right intention with the war but I don't think the follow through was all there. The economy, some of the same things.

MODERATOR—OKAY. WHAT ELSE?

Why can't they find Bin Ladin? They found everything else over there in Iraq that they thought they were looking for, but why can't they find that guy? He seems to be the one that people should be worried about and all of the money and things that they seem to be spending, why can't they find him? It doesn't make sense to me.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE? EVERYBODY'S GOT PRETTY LONG LISTS. THERE'S GOT TO BE OTHER THINGS HERE.

I just put that he's narcissistic, that he's misguided, his direction is misguided, his allegiances are misguided.

MODERATOR—WHO ARE HIS ALLEGIANCES TO?

Iraq now. I mean, now we're in bed with them. When, you know, earlier on, then we were in bed, talking about getting in bed with Iran. I just think he was way too eager to, I think somebody else said that too, to out Saddam Hussein where he didn't form the proper allegiances, you know, or coalitions to do the job effectively. We just kind of took it all on ourselves or with Tony Blair, however many hundred troops he committed. That he doesn't have any concept of fiscal responsibility and the long term impact it will have on the nation after he leaves office. And finally that anyone who cannot pronounce the word "nuclear" should not be in charge of nuclear weapons. I know he can hire a speech therapist, but . . .

I'll give him my son's.

I know he can afford it. It drives me nuts.

MODERATOR—OTHER THINGS WE HAVEN'T TOUCH ON YET? OR THINGS WE HAVE TOUCHED ON YET THAT YOU WANT TO REPEAT? NO? OKAY. LET'S TALK ABOUT THE ELECTIONS COMING UP. A LITTLE LESS THAN FOUR MONTHS, ELECTIONS FOR CONGRESS. STAY ON HANDOUT 2 FOR A WHILE. ELECTIONS FOR CONGRESS ARE COMING UP IN LESS THAN FOUR MONTHS. WHEN WE TALKED ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE COUNTRY, YOU GUYS SAID A LOT OF NEGATIVE THINGS, OBVIOUSLY NOT HAPPY ABOUT THE DIRECTION THE COUNTRY'S GOING. HOW DOES THAT IMPACT

YOUR THINKING ABOUT VOTING OR NOT VOTING? ARE YOU PISSED OFF AND YOU'RE DEFINITELY GOING TO GO OUT THERE AND TRY TO DO SOMETHING? OR ARE YOU LIKE JUST READY TO THROW UP YOUR HANDS AND SAY, YOU KNOW WHAT, IT DOESN'T MATTER?

Throw up your hands and say it doesn't matter.

No, I'm pissed off and I'm ready to vote.

Yeah, I mean, I wasn't before, but now since it seems to have gotten really, now it makes you want to vote more I think, to try to at least have that every counts, you know, and try to change things.

Because that's what, if we don't care, then what about kids when we're dead and gone? What about our kids? Those are the ones that are left behind to deal with the way the country's ran, the things, and that's who I'm concerned about is my kids. I probably (inaudible) but I've got my kids to worry about. If I just wash my hands of it, then . . .

MODERATOR--WHY ARE YOU SAYING IT'S LIKE, YOU KNOW WHAT . . .

Because I don't think Congress really is where we need to start. I think we need to start with presidents and make them follow through with what they're doing which fall down onto the Congress and make them do what they're supposed to do. Because Congress ain't gonna do nothing if our president isn't pushing them to say, hey, these are the things that you said you're gonna do. You need to follow through with. You know what I mean? It's just, we need a good kick in our president's butt to push it down on Congress.

MODERATOR--WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK? HOW DOES THIS IMPACT YOU?

I think it's frustrating, but I still think, would like to think that every vote counts and I'd still like to think it can make a difference.

MODERATOR--OKAY.

It is frustrating, but I will listen to them go back and forth and right now, I can't say that I have any opinions or decisions about what I will do when it comes time to vote, but I will read and I will listen as it gets closer and then base my decision.

MODERATOR--WHAT IMPACT WOULD THE CAMPAIGNS THEMSELVES HAVE ON YOUR DESIRE TO VOTE? THE TELEVISION COMMERCIALS START AND ALL THAT STUFF AS IT REALLY KIND OF BUILDS UP TOWARD THE ELECTION. DOES THAT MAKE YOU MORE ANXIOUS TO VOTE OR DOES IT JUST KIND OF TURN YOU OFF?

Turns me off.

It's obnoxious.

MODERATOR—WHAT IS IT? IS IT JUST THE NEGATIVE TELEVISION ADVERTISING AND THAT STUFF OR IS IT MORE?

I think that's a big part of it.

Instead of pointing out the good things in each other, they're pointing out all the bad things and that's what we're supposed to base our decision on and they don't really talk about the good things that they've done or the good things they intend to do.

The negative things, it's all about, yeah.

Exactly.

Not the positive.

I see negative every day. I want to see something good from the government. You know what I'm saying?

MODERATOR—OTHER THOUGHTS ON THE CAMPAIGN COMING UP?

No.

MODERATOR—FOR YOU PERSONALLY, WHAT'S IT ABOUT? WHAT'S GOING TO DETERMINE HOW YOU VOTE? IF YOU DECIDE TO GO IN THE POLL, WHAT ARE THE ISSUES OR WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT ARE GOING TO DETERMINE, I DON'T CARE WHICH WAY YOU'RE GOING TO GO, BUT WHICHEVER WAY YOU GO, WHAT'S GOING TO DETERMINE THAT?

Good question.

Well, you always hope that they, of the things that they say that they will do for you or for everybody, you listen to those and that's what I will base my decision on. If they're saying that they are going to fight for the troops to come home or they say that they'll fight for minimum wage to be increased or that they'll go for health care, that's what I will look for and will tend to lean towards. Not that I would have a whole lot of expectations that those things will be accomplished, but that's the best that you can hope for. That's what I will listen. I'll listen to what they say and have to trust somewhat that they're going to follow through with some. So, I would probably do the same thing based on what sounds better and what, you can just tell after, you know, watching everybody, you can just get a feel for how people are too. Just even what they're saying sometimes is . . .

MODERATOR—THAT'S PART OF WHAT I'M INTERESTED IN. IS IT JUST LIKE THE FEEL THAT YOU HAVE FOR THEM ON A PERSONAL LEVEL, ARE THEY A GOOD PERSON, THEY HAVE INTEGRITY, OR IS IT MORE ABOUT SPECIFIC ISSUES, LIKE EVA HIGHLIGHTED SOME ISSUES. SHE SAID THE WAR AND MINIMUM WAGE AND HEALTH CARE.

I think it's going to be both, a little bit of both.

MODERATOR—HOW DO YOU GET THAT FEEL FOR SOMEBODY?

The way they come across and how they talk, I think makes a difference. And then it isn't like we'll see a lot of them around town. But, you know, maybe it's just, maybe they'll something about their family that you'll connect with, so it will be a personal thing and I think maybe consciously you realize that as much but I think it does make a difference.

MODERATOR—OKAY, OTHER FACTORS THAT'LL DETERMINE HOW YOU VOTE, HELP YOU MAKE THAT DECISION? OTHER ISSUES? EVA HIGHLIGHTED A FEW, BUT ARE THERE OTHER ISSUES THAT MATTER?

I don't have kids, but I think that would have education and that kind of stuff would have to do. All of you guys have kids. That would make a big difference when I would vote.

MODERATOR—HOW BIG A ROLE WOULD THE WAR PLAY?

Big, for me.

MODERATOR—OKAY, OTHER ISSUES?

For me, I would say down the road, as far as retirement being there, Social Security being there, that's something that I worry about. By the time that I get to that age . . .

What's the age going to be by the time we get there too? It's going up.

It'll be 80 by that time and you might not be able to drive to work no more.

MODERATOR—HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT THE ELECTIONS LOCALLY FOR YOU, THE CANDIDATES WHO ARE RUNNING FOR CONGRESS? ARE YOU HEARING ANYTHING FROM THEM?

I haven't seen anything.

No, not yet.

MODERATOR—OKAY. HOW ABOUT, ON A BROADER, NATIONAL LEVEL, IN WASHINGTON OR WHATEVER, START WITH THE REPUBLICANS, WHAT ARE REPUBLICANS TALKING ABOUT? WHY ARE THEY SAYING YOU SHOULD VOTE REPUBLICAN THIS YEAR? ANY SENSE OF WHAT ISSUES THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT OR WHAT POSITIONS THEY'RE TAKING?

I haven't heard too much lately. I don't read the paper a lot. I don't watch the news a lot. I will start noticing that kind of thing when it'll start coming in the mail, but right now I don't put a lot into it. I don't pay attention to those things that are going on.

MODERATOR—ANYONE ELSE? ANYTHING THAT YOU HEAR FROM REPUBLICANS OR REASONS WHY YOU VOTE REPUBLICAN? NOTHING?

Not right now. It's too soon. Because you now you're just going to get bombarded or inundated with it when it gets closer. So I put that off as long as I can because half the time, I'm like, oh okay, I'll remember they said that and then I'll be like, well which one of them was it. That short-term memory.

MODERATOR—LET ME ASK YOU THIS WAY. WHEN YOU THINK OF REPUBLICANS, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF?

For the rich people.

MODERATOR—OKAY, WHAT ELSE?

Conservative.

I was going to say (inaudible)

MODERATOR—LIKE I SAID, WHATEVER COMES TO MIND. ANYTHING ELSE YOU THINK OF? HOW ABOUT DEMOCRATS? WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF DEMOCRATS?

Jimmy Carter.

MODERATOR—REALLY REACHING BACK.

I remember him. I was in elementary when he was president.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE? WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU THINK OF DEMOCRATS?

Maybe a chance, I don't know.

MODERATOR—OKAY.

Maybe it can make a difference, I don't know. I don't think that who we have as president now is doing anything.

MODERATOR—SO, IN THIS ELECTION, YOU DON'T GET TO VOTE FOR PRESIDENT. THAT'S BEEN DONE. YOU DON'T GET ANOTHER CHANCE UNTIL 2008 FOR THAT. BUT IN THE VOTE FOR CONGRESS, RIGHT NOW REPUBLICANS CONTROL THE WHITE HOUSE, THEY CONTROL THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THEY CONTROL THE SENATE. AND THEY'RE GOING TO LOOK AND THEY'RE GOING TO SEE PEOPLE PISSED OFF AND THEY'RE GOING TO SAY, WELL WE'RE GOING TO CHANGE THINGS. THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT WE'RE GOING TO CHANGE. DO YOU THINK THAT THINGS ARE GOING TO CHANGE IN WASHINGTON IF REPUBLICANS MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE AND THE WHITE HOUSE? DO YOU THINK THINGS ARE REALLY GOING TO CHANGE?

What will be the motivation to do that?

MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK THINGS WOULD BE ANY DIFFERENT IF DEMOCRATS HAD CONTROL OF THE HOUSE OR THE SENATE OR DO YOU THINK THEY'RE ALL . . .

I think they're all . . .

(Inaudible), shall we say?

I think with Democrats, there's a better chance of things like, there are socialized medicine programs that work. I've heard different things about that, like you have to wait longer and you may not get the doctor you want, but there are other models that could be used. I just, when Democrats are in office, there's more of a chance that they will be concerned with people across the board or at the lower end of the financial spectrum, not just the higher end. My experience with Republicans is they don't give a crap about me or my situation. They don't have to.

MODERATOR—OKAY. HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU?

Well, I always tended to vote Republican but I did vote for Bill Clinton when he ran and then I kind of was sorry that I did that and tend to lean back toward the Republicans. I think that health care-wise, he did make some good changes and I think a lot of that has fallen apart since he's left. But just the kind of person that he was on a personal note and the controversies that surrounded him I think is what turned me off to him and maybe to Democrats in general. And something that always sticks with me is a comment that a man made, a man that I worked for, respected and still do, but I still remember this. It effected me because my husband and I, we work very hard for the little that we have and he did work hard, this man did, and he was in my standards wealthy and I remember when it was, he was upset about a Republican being voted into office and he said that things were just going to go to pieces tax-wise and on things and he was just concerned for himself because of all the money that he had and investments that he made and things like that, that it was going to hurt him, be hard for him to have a Republican in office. And that just kind of always stuck with me because it was like, you know, well there you go. It just goes to show you that the people who have money, to me it seemed like and that's all he was worried about is how much it was going to cost him and his pocketbook. He wasn't worried about how it was going to effect other people or what it was going to do for them. It was just what it was going to do with him and his money. That really bothered me and I still think about that and how people with money can influence things, I think.

MODERATOR—ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU THINK WOULD CHANGE IF DEMOCRATS WERE IN CONTROL IN CONGRESS?

I disagree with her. It might be a chance that things could change. Who's to say? But I just feel that it's better than what's going on now.

MODERATOR—OKAY, SO IT'S AT LEAST A CHANCE.

What can you do? I mean, there's nothing helping probably none of sitting here now so what will we lose by it, you know?

MODERATOR—OKAY. KIND OF THE CAN'T GET ANY WORSE KIND OF STRATEGY. THAT'S FAIR. LET'S TALK A LITTLE MORE DETAIL ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN IRAQ.

THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF DEBATE IN CONGRESS RECENTLY ABOUT IRAQ AND ABOUT WHAT WE DO FROM HERE. REGARDLESS OF HOW WE GOT TO THE POINT WHERE WE'RE AT, REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THE DECISION TO GO TO WAR AND ALL THAT, GIVEN WHERE WE ARE TODAY, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? WHAT DO WE DO?

Apparently we keep going down there.

MODERATOR—WELL, THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW. HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT THIS DEBATE? DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DEBATING OR WHAT THE CHOICES ARE OR WHO'S ON EITHER SIDE? ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

No.

I heard a little bit about it from the cable, I can't remember what show it was, but they did the debates and they have them all in the same room and they're up there speaking just about their, if they should pull them out or not pull them out. (Inaudible) opinions. I heard a little bit about them kind of arguing about what should be done.

MODERATOR—ANYONE ELSE?

I have mixed feelings about it. I think it's terrible that so many young people are over there being killed but, at the same time, you hear that well they've almost got this government into place over there but then every day, you hear about more bombings and things all over the country. And if we just pull our troops out and let them go, I think the bad people there will end up taking over again and is that going to make any difference to us? Maybe it won't. Maybe they never would ever have enough to come after the United States and be able to do any harm here. So it's just, it just seems like nothing is happening. It's just all back and forth. They're supposed to be trying to get the government in place and they can't seem to go forward with that. I don't know.

I mean, if they just, you know, I look at how hard it is for us to go into another country but they let anybody in, anybody come in this country. But you know could any of us get into other countries that easy? Probably not. And that's why they've got terrorists where they talk about down south and all these places and you know, just like the, and I agree with her a little bit about the, you know, I've got mixed feelings about the war. A lot of them are getting killed, your young guys and stuff and they've got family and kids and just start, just really starting life right out of high school. And so a lot of it I disagree with the war, but then you, sometimes you think like well if they didn't go there and do something like about the September bombs in New York, then it's like we didn't do nothing about that. So I kind of got little mixed feelings about the war, but it's been going on for almost three years and what's really accomplishing with all them guys getting killed over there? I question that too.

I go back on Eva when she was saying about how if we just left them be that they would maybe not be able to get up enough bombing power to come back and hit us. I fully believe 100 percent yes they can. I believe it 100 percent. I do not believe in leaving the situation alone because those little buggers, they got that stuff hidden and they'll come back and hit us again.

And I have another comment also, I'm sorry. I had another comment. Just like, you know, they tell everything on the news but do you hear everything that goes on in the other country like where Bush is at, if he's at a Reds game, if he's golfing, if he's doing this, they tell any and every little thing that there's terrorists probably here in the country right now, I believe that . . . Oh, yeah.

And like I said, they let anybody and everybody come over here, but can we go to their country and do things like that? And the media, I think they tell a lot of, too much information so if the terrorists, you know people watching that, they hear it. My mother was making that comment. They tell everything on the news, she said they would know where, you know, I don't know if we ever hear of everything that goes on over there unless it is a bombing or something like that. But we don't hear where, like she said, Bin Ladin, where's he at? We don't hear if he's golfing today or if he's whatever.

MODERATOR—SO, BACK TO THE DEBATE OVER WHAT WE DO FROM HERE IN IRAQ, WHERE DO REPUBLICANS STAND ON THIS? DO YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF WHAT THEY THINK WE SHOULD DO?

I think the Republicans are just saying send our men in and one by one, let them get killed. I mean, my point in view, when it first happened, I am sorry to say this, probably a lot of people won't agree with me, when 9/11 happened, they should've just went straight to where the country that bombed us, the area where all the bombing came from and just blew the whole damned thing up. We wouldn't have to worry about all these damned little bombs going off here and there right now. It should've just been taken in, taken out.

I partially agree, but at the same time that wouldn't make us any better than they are.

Well, then again, you've got to look at too all those kids over there.

Yeah, they're there but they're being raised to kill us.

But they raised (inaudible)

But it needs to be stopped.

I agree.

I don't want my kid dying in one of the World Trade buildings or some building because that kid grew up to be an assassin.

MODERATOR—SO, WHAT DO YOU GUYS THINK WE SHOULD DO FROM HERE? GIVEN WHERE WE ARE TODAY, WHAT DO WE DO?

(Inaudible) home. Don't worry about what happens overseas and just take care of our own.

It would be nice if that, that's what I think too.

It would keep our money for our own needs instead of catering to them.

It would be nice if we could do that, you know, worry about our own but it's . . .

If we let our defenses down . . .

(Many talking at once.)

It's kind of the ostrich approach too. You can't, we're not a discrete, we're the United States, we're in a certain place on the globe, but you can't just shut yourself off. I mean, it's like the idea of building a huge wall to keep Mexicans out of the United States. Where there's a will, there's a way so there's going to be a way around it, under it. You can't just take a whole country and say well we won't look and it won't hurt.

I wish we could. It would be a nice, beautiful thing to live under like we're all safe, but we're not.

It doesn't work that way. Bombing and mass annihilation doesn't work either. You bomb one place, you kick somebody else off. I mean, once you get it started . . .

Just like they were talking about, what was that, was it Korea or whatever? Wasn't that Korea they were talking about on the news having that mass destruction weapon or whatever?

Something like that.

That's Korea or something.

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT 3 IN THOSE PACKETS YOU HAVE AND LOOK AT SOME OF THE POSSIBILITIES HERE IN TERMS OF WHERE WE GO FROM HERE IN IRAQ. WHAT YOU HAVE HERE IS BASICALLY FOUR DIFFERENT POSITIONS THAT PEOPLE ARE TAKING ON THIS AND I WANT YOU TO READ THROUGH ALL FOUR OF THEM AND THEN MARK SOMEHOW, X, STAR, WHATEVER, THE ONE THAT YOU AGREE WITH MOST. YOU DON'T HAVE TO COMPLETELY AGREE WITH ANY ONE, BUT THE ONE THAT BEST REFLECTS YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT WHAT WE SHOULD DO. EVERYBODY PICK ONE? LET ME GET A QUICK SHOW OF HANDS. HOW MANY PEOPLE PICKED THE TOP ONE? THREE. OKAY, THE SECOND ONE? ONE. AND THE THIRD ONE? FOUR. OKAY, MORE THAN HALF OF YOU WENT FOR THE THIRD ONE. OUR CURRENT OPEN-ENDED COMMITMENT IN IRAQ IS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND COSTS OUR COUNTRY TOO MUCH. BY BEGINNING TO REDEPLOY U.S. FORCES BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, WE'LL FORCE THE IRAQIS TO ASSUME GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN SECURITY. WE WILL NOT WITHDRAW PRECIPITOUSLY OR ALLOW TERRORIST ELEMENTS TO SEIZE CONTROL, BUT WE MUST BEGIN THE PROCESS NOW FOR IRAQI SELF-SUFFICIENCY. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT ONE? NUMBER ONE FOR YOU? ALL RIGHT, FIVE OF YOU PICKED THE THIRD ONE. WHY? HOLLY?

I just, I'm trying to figure out why I picked it. It just sounded like that sounds like the most, the smartest way to go. I don't know.

I was torn between the two, to be honest. I mean, I think part of what jumps out at you is that the third one is about the counterproductive and the costing the country too much. I mean, that's kind of what jumped out at first.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE IN THAT THIRD ONE STANDS OUT TO YOU?

I mean, right there where it says, you know, allowing terrorist elements to seize control, I mean we don't want them, like I said if we didn't do nothing about them, about the 9/11, then what's that say about our country? So we had to do something, but that's why I'm kind of mixed on the war about that. But kind of like what the other Holly said, that's not just that it sounds better, I mean just by what the paragraph says. Personally, to me, it makes more sense.

When I think of it, that's what I think of what I would like to see happen. It says by the end of the year. I don't know . . .

MODERATOR—AND IT SAYS BEGINNING TO REDEPLOY BY THE END OF THE YEAR. IT DOESN'T SAY THAT THEY'D ALL BE OUT BY THE END OF THE YEAR, BUT AT LEAST BEGIN OUR PROCESS.

Yeah.

MODERATOR—WHY'D YOU PICK THAT ONE?

I just think that there needs, the open-ended commitment is what struck me and right now there is no set time table. And I just think that there should be a time table. This is it. And that we do have to, that Iraq does have to become self-sufficient and not just, it can't be our problem for the next 10 or 15 or 20 years. It just can't be. We've done, I mean we've done so much over there already and I certainly don't think that they would have any room to complain if we said we're going to have to draw the line, you know.

MODERATOR—THIS ONE KIND OF MAKES THE IMPLICIT ARGUMENT THAT, LOOK, THEY'RE NOT GOING TO DO IT UNTIL WE MAKE THEM DO IT. DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT BASIC IDEA THAT IT'S SAYING IF WE DON'T FORCE THE ISSUE AND SAY ALL RIGHT, LOOK, WE'RE STARTING THE PROCESS, WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE AND YOU GUYS HAVE GOT TO STEP UP, THAT THEY'RE JUST GOING TO STAY, THEY'RE GOING TO KIND OF HANG BACK AND LET US KEEP DOING IT UNTIL WE FORCE THEM TO DO THAT?

Absolutely.

I agree.

I think there's a tendency. If something or someone takes over, what you can do for yourself and you don't have to do it. I mean, that's human nature, you know. So it just seems to me it makes sense if they're going to be self-sufficient, you know, they're going to take over their own country, they've got to start doing it. They can't just always have big brother or big sister there.

MODERATOR—OKAY, AND FOUR OF YOU WENT WITH THE TOP ONE. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE TOP ONE?

The top one says kind of what my feelings were before that I stated. If we leave now, and just leave them to go on their own, you just don't know what could happen. There seems to be so

many people who are against that, them having their own government, and running in that way that if we leave, it's really going to be bad and then what would that do for us? If we leave there and force them to do things on their own, in the long run is that going to help us any? Because then a few years from now, then they may come after us again. Is that a good thing?

I thought leaving now would be like leaving the guns behind but with no bullets. And all they have to do is find the bullets and start again.

MODERATOR—OTHER THOUGHTS ON THE TOP ONE?

The part about wavering from commitment I think stood out.

MODERATOR—IS THAT WHAT HELPED YOU . . .

A little bit, yeah.

MODERATOR—OKAY. AND WHO ELSE PICKED THAT TOP ONE?

I did. Just because I think that the security that our government says they have for us, yet they're protecting the other countries. What about protecting us? You see what I'm saying? They're sending all our money, our ammunition and everything over there. Why? So they can pull our boys out and keep everything we take? You know? It just doesn't make sense to me.

MODERATOR—OKAY, SO THOSE OF YOU WHO CHOSE THE TOP ONE, IT'S NOT ENOUGH THAT THE ONE, THE THIRD ONE SAYS THAT WE'RE NOT GOING TO WITHDRAW PRECIPITOUSLY, WE'RE NOT GOING TO ALLOW TERRORIST ELEMENTS TO TAKE CONTROL? THAT'S NOT ENOUGH?

I want them right there on top of them seeing everything how things are going.

MODERATOR—BUT THEN . . .

(End of Side)

. . . one military thing on top of, a big military base on top of what everything that's going on. I just don't want the World Trade Center thing to happen again and I see it happening again if they don't either take 'em out or stay with them and baby them, make sure they're not playing with guns and bombs.

How can they not allow terrorist elements to seize control if they're not there to stop it? There still has to be some, maybe not as much military presence as there is now, but there has to be some there for a while because the government can't, isn't running yet and can't run. It's not able to.

MODERATOR—OKAY, LET'S LOOK AT THIS BASIC DEBATE IN A DIFFERENT CONTEXT. FLIP TO HANDOUT 4 TO KIND OF PUT IT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ELECTION AND WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE HEARING FROM CANDIDATES WHO ARE RUNNING FOR OFFICE ON THIS ISSUE. SO, OBVIOUSLY IT'S GOING TO BE A BIG ISSUE. SO YOU'VE GOT TWO MESSAGE HERE, ONE FROM A DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR CONGRESS,

ONE FROM A REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR CONGRESS. I'LL READ THEM BOTH AND THEN, SAME THING, YOU PICK THE ONE THAT COMES CLOSEST TO YOUR OWN OPINION. DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE GOING TO VOTE THAT WAY, BUT WHICHEVER ONE COMES CLOSER TO YOUR OPINION ON THIS ISSUE. THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE SAYS OUR MILITARY HAS DONE WHAT IT CAN IN IRAQ AND WE NEED TO BEGIN BRINGING OUR TROOPS HOME. THE TOP U.S. GENERAL IN IRAQ HAS PROPOSED A PHASED TIME WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS. THE ELECTED IRAQI GOVERNMENT IS ALSO CALLING FOR A PHASED TIME WITHDRAWAL. OUR COALITION ALLIES CONTINUE TO WITHDRAW THEIR TROOPS, BUT THE REPUBLICANS CALL THIS CUT AND RUN AND SAY WE SHOULD CONTINUE OUR CURRENT COURSE IN IRAQ WITH NO ACCOUNTABILITY AND NO END IN SIGHT. ONLY PRESIDENT BUSH AND THE REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS BELIEVE THE STATUS QUO IS ACCEPTABLE. THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE SAYS WE'RE MAKING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN IRAQ. AFTER HOLDING THREE SUCCESSFUL ELECTIONS, THERE IS NOW AN IRAQI GOVERNMENT WITH A NEW CONSTITUTION AND A QUARTER OF A MILLION IRAQI TROOPS ARE TRAINED AND EQUIPPED. BUT THERE'S STILL MORE TO DO AND THE UNITED STATES CAN'T AFFORD TO BAIL OUT ON IRAQ BEFORE WE COMPLETE THE MISSION. IF WE FOLLOW THE DEMOCRATS' ADVICE TO CUT AND RUN, AL QAIDA WILL HAVE A NEW TERRORISTS' HAVEN IN IRAQ AND THE WHOLE WORLD WILL SEE THAT AMERICA DOESN'T HAVE THE STOMACH TO FIGHT THE WAR ON TERROR.

Bingo. You just said it there.

MODERATOR—EVERYBODY PICK WHICH ONE COMES CLOSER TO YOUR OWN OPINION AND THEN WE'LL SEE WHERE PEOPLE FALL.

Number two.

MODERATOR—EVERYBODY MAKE A CHOICE? HOW MANY GO WITH THE TOP ONE?

I'm just really . . .

MODERATOR—OKAY AND THE BOTTOM ONE? ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR AND A COUPLE IN BETWEEN?

Yeah, I'm in between because there's some things in the top one that . . .

MODERATOR—IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE ONE, WE'LL TALK ABOUT BOTH OF THEM, BUT IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE ONE OR THE OTHER, WHICH WOULD IT BE?

I choose the top.

MODERATOR—YOU GO WITH THE TOP ONE? OKAY. COME ON, GAIL. I'M NOT GOING TO LET ANYBODY OUT OF HERE UNTIL YOU CHOOSE.

Maybe the bottom. I'll go with 2, but I don't like that top sentence.

MODERATOR—OKAY, WELL LET'S START WITH THE BOTTOM ONE, SIX OF YOU WENT THERE. SO, THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE SAYS WE'RE MAKING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN IRAQ, ALL THIS. WHAT'S YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THIS ONE?

I'm going to put a question too, maybe.

I really agree with the statement that says the United States can't afford to bail out of Iraq, bail out on Iraq, before we complete the mission because I think if we do, we're just setting ourselves up for more problems in the future.

It's just, how long is the mission? That's the, you know, I mean if it's going to take . . .

MODERATOR—WHAT IS OUR MISSION? THEY SAY CAN'T BAIL OUT UNTIL WE COMPLETE THE MISSION, STAY THE COURSE . . .

The mission is to protect the United States against terrorists, I think. I think that's what the whole part of it, the whole thing is to do and if we just cut and run now, then what it says.

MODERATOR—IS WHAT WE'RE DOING IN IRAQ MAKING US SAFER? I GUESS THAT'S MAYBE THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION.

I don't think so.

But I don't think if we just leave it's going to make us any safer. It may not be, but if we just leave there, I think (inaudible)

Also look at the ones they had on the news, I can't remember, it was down south, they were home grown terrorists and there were like eight or 10 of them. So you don't know who really who's the trouble to us then really.

MODERATOR—OTHER THINGS ABOUT THE BOTTOM ONE THAT STOOD OUT TO YOU? GAIL, WHY'D YOU GO WITH THE BOTTOM ONE?

I'm sorry?

MODERATOR—WHY'D YOU GO WITH THE BOTTOM ONE?

Do you need my coffee?

The terrorists would have a new haven.

MODERATOR—FRAN, ARE YOU THE SAME WAY?

Yes.

Yeah, that bothered me when I read that.

That's true though.

MODERATOR—OKAY, SO YOU THINK THAT IF WE, EVEN IF THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE ISN'T SAYING WE PULL EVERYONE OUT IMMEDIATELY, SAYING WE'VE JUST GOT TO START THE PROCESS SO THE IRAQIS KIND OF STEP UP. DO YOU THINK THAT JUST STARTING THE PROCESS OF BRINGING THEM HOME IN TIME IS GOING TO .

..

I don't think they're ready for it.

MODERATOR—. . . IS GOING TO LEAD TO TERRORISTS TAKING OVER?

I think it'll give them new ideas.

Oh, look, there's less to watch us.

Exactly.

Let's start our bombing thing again for which state we want now.

I think slowly over the years, people will start letting their guard down. I think after what happened on 9/11, that can never happen again.

I think it will if we let our guard down and pull them out. I do. I believe it will.

Well, I think that there should be continued to be a military presence in Iraq, but I think that it should be an Iraqi military presence in Iraq. And I don't think that we need to commit to them for the next 15, 20 years. I mean, that's kind of what the, one of the purposes is for us to go over there, they went over there, they ousted Saddam Hussein, they've organized, helped them organize their own new government and now they're training Iraqis to police for themselves. So that should, I mean, I think that's . . .

(Inaudible) actually will, if we was to pull out?

Well, who knows?

I know, but I don't want to chance it.

Well, we'll just keep sending all of our . . .

(Many talking at once.)

There are terrorist groups all over the world. I mean, look at Afghanistan, look at Yemen, look at Iran. I mean, we can find a number of people . . .

(Many talking at once.)

MODERATOR—HOLD ON, HOLD ON, ONE AT A TIME.

The one that's done something to us dramatically, not the rest.

Well, that was Osama bin Laden.

Why don't we let President Bush go over there and fight in the war?

(Many talking at once.)

MODERATOR—WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO THE TOP ONE HERE? A FEW OF YOU PICKED IT, BUT OVERALL WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO IT?

I think that there is a pipe dream, but I picked the top one because I think that our mission or the crux issues that we have over there is to raise and build an Iraqi government who can police Iraq for itself. That's not, it's not our job to be over there forever. I agree with that.

Especially when we've got our own problems and basically a work war in own our country with us, you know what I mean?

Against each other.

Look at how many people killing people, everything.

MODERATOR—DANIELLE, WHY'D YOU PICK THIS ONE?

Beth?

MODERATOR—BETH, SORRY.

That's okay, I just wasn't sure you were talking to me. Well, several reasons and I didn't underline this one but it just jumped out at me. The elected Iraqi government is also calling for a phased time withdrawal. I mean, because the people there want and they should want to be in charge of themselves. I mean, it's like I said before, we can't be everywhere in the world. And, as for the idea of anything happening anywhere without knowledge, it's called espionage. There are people all over the world who know what's going on everywhere and they're in every country, so I mean there's not a whole lot anybody can do anywhere that's not going to, at some point, leak out.

Or send up a flag at least.

Yeah. To me, you know, worrying about what they're doing when they're left to their own devices, there's always going to be somebody there who's watching for, you know, the interest of other countries in the world. And the idea of cut and run, that just, you know, it's kind of like the second statement says, the whole world will see that America doesn't have the stomach to fight the war. You know, so what? Are we supposed to fight the war on terror everywhere across the globe? I don't think it's our place to, we don't rule the world. And the current course in Iraq with no accountability and no end in sight, I mean that stood out to me too. I have children whose friends are in the service. I don't want to hear that any of them have died doing this and I've known people who we say, you know, you get letters from kids that are like, what the hell are we doing here. You know, my best buddy just got killed. War doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me to begin with, but like I said before, the whole oil idea, you know, let's look at

alternative energy a little bit (inaudible) what's happening but so much of this seems to be about keeping, keeping that.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT. ANYTHING ELSE ON THESE TWO STATEMENTS? ALL RIGHT, LET'S MOVE ON AND AGAIN THINK ABOUT THE ELECTION THAT'S COMING UP IN A LITTLE BIT, ABOUT FOUR MONTHS FROM NOW. WE TALKED A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHAT IT'S GOING TO BE ABOUT FOR YOU GUYS, BUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE A REAL CLEAR SENSE OF WHAT WAS GOING TO BE DRIVING IT AND WHAT WAS REALLY GOING TO HELP YOU MAKE YOUR DECISION. SO LET ME READ HERE A FEW DIFFERENT STATEMENTS. FLIP TO HANDOUT 5. WE'LL START WITH ONE. DIFFERENT WAYS THAT THE DEMOCRATS AND THE REPUBLICANS ARE KIND OF TRYING TO DEFINE THIS ELECTION AND WHAT'S AT STAKE AND WHAT THE CHOICE IS THAT YOU'RE GOING TO FACE. WE'LL HEAR A COUPLE OF TIMES FROM THE DEMOCRATS AND A COUPLE OF TIMES FROM THE REPUBLICANS. WE'LL READ EACH ONE AND THEN JUST TELL ME WHAT YOUR REACTION TO IT IS, DO YOU AGREE, DO YOU NOT AGREE, WHATEVER IT MIGHT BE. DEMOCRATS SAY THIS ELECTION IS ABOUT MOVING OUR COUNTRY IN A NEW DIRECTION. FROM HEALTH CARE AND ENERGY TO CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND LOBBYISTS' INFLUENCE, REPUBLICANS DEFEND THE STATUS QUO BECAUSE IT BENEFITS THEM AND THEIR SPECIAL INTEREST ALLIES AT THE EXPENSE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. DEMOCRATS WILL IMMEDIATELY START TO DELIVER CHANGE THAT VOTERS CAN SEE: NO CONGRESSIONAL PAY RAISES WITHOUT AN INCREASE IN THE MINIMUM WAGE, INVEST IN EXPANDED STEM CELL RESEARCH, REPEAL TAX CUTS FOR COMPANIES THAT SHIFT JOBS OVERSEAS, MAKE COLLEGE TUITION TAX DEDUCTIBLE AND RESTORE THE RULES REQUIRING THAT ANY SPENDING OR TAX CUTS BE OFFSET BY ACCOMPANYING SPENDING DECREASES. WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO THAT ONE?

Are they in yet?

Yeah, sounds . . .

Sounds good. But does it ever get done? And by the time they start to do it, everything changes again. So, yeah, it all sounds good but it always all sounds good.

I'd love to see some changes.

They always say there's going to be changes, you know.

MODERATOR—DO THESE SOUND LIKE CHANGES THAT THEY COULD ACTUALLY DO? I MEAN, IF THEY GO THERE AND SAY WE'RE GOING TO HAVE WORLD PEACE BY NEXT MONTH, YOU KNOW YOU CAN CALL BS ON THEM BUT DO THESE SOUND LIKE THINGS THAT THEY COULD ACTUALLY DO AND IF THEY DIDN'T DO YOU COULD HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE FOR?

Well, especially health care. I know they can do it. We all know they can do it.

No Congressional pay raises without an increase in the minimum wage? That would be great, but can we see that happen? They say that but is it going to happen?

It's going to depend on who's going to control. You know, if so many Democrats get elected but they don't have a majority or regain a majority and that's their platform, they can have the best intentions in the world. But if they don't have the majority vote, then hey, tough.

How many years has it been since minimum wage has gone up?

MODERATOR—ANYBODY KNOW?

I think seven, I want to say seven.

How much is it?

I just heard it.

Somebody just said the other day, I heard 5-something. But I think it's higher than that.

I thought it was more like \$6.

MODERATOR—THE FEDERAL MINIMUM WAGE IS \$5.15, BUT SOME STATES HAVE IT HIGHER. THEY'VE INCREASED IT ON THEIR OWN WITHOUT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DOING IT.

I think ours is 5-something because when I went downtown Cincinnati today, someone asked me to sign a petition to raise, increase the minimum wage and then like about the cost . . .

But that many years without raising it is crazy.

. . . of children that graduate from high school, if they have like good grades then they can get like funding if they want to continue for education, college. I signed the petition because I agree minimum wage should increase because, like you said, everything else goes up but we don't get nothing.

Salaries don't, they don't.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT, SO YOU LIKE THE IDEA OF NO CONGRESSIONAL PAY RAISES UNLESS THEY INCREASE THE MINIMUM WAGE. WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THESE OTHER PROPOSALS? I MEAN, ARE THEY BELIEVABLE?

I don't think there should be Congressional pay raises period. I think they make more than enough money. None of them are not living comfortably. To hell with that.

There we go.

I'm sorry.

It must be past my nap time.

They don't get any raise. They get enough raises.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE OTHER IDEAS HERE?

Or if they want to see about a raise, then we should be the ones that would give them a raise based on their . . .

Pay for performance.

Exactly.

You know, I mean everybody else in this country works on a pay for performance basis. If you go to work every day and you do a crappy job, you do not get your performance raise.

You get fired.

Right, so why are these people, and they have been for decades or as long as I've been alive, completely unaccountable? They can just vote themselves raises, vote themselves vacations.

MODERATOR—HOLD ON, BECAUSE THEY ARE ACCOUNTABLE. WE HAVE SOMETHING CALLED ELECTIONS AND YET, AS PISSED OFF AS YOU GUYS ARE, EVERY SINGLE ELECTION, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 95 AND 98 PERCENT OF THEM GET RE-ELECTED. SO, IF PEOPLE ARE SO PISSED OFF AND YOU DON'T LIKE THEM VOTING THEMSELVES PAY RAISES AND ALL THIS KIND OF STUFF, WHY DO YOU KEEP ELECTING THE SAME ONES?

But they all do it. It's not one or the other. It's not Republicans or Democrats or Independents. Once they get in there and they see the gravy train (inaudible)

(Many talking at once.)

Somebody has to represent us.

I think there should be pay decreases based on performance.

That's what I'm saying. Why aren't they held to the same standards and why don't we have that voice? That's always been one of my things, ever since I was a kid, that I think that we should be the ones that have that voice and that say so. And if you get in there and you say this is my platform and you cannot see that any of these things got accomplished or this is the main Democratic platform or Republican or whoever it is, I don't care, and these items did not get accomplished, you are not getting a raise and that's the end of it. My bosses in my life have never had a problem telling me that.

Actually, I think the man working in the factory works a hell of a lot harder than any of them up there in Congress or presidential or whatever. We're the hard-working labor people. We put our bodies into it, then your emotions from all the crazy people you have to work with.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT, A FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION HERE. EVA SAID SOUNDS GREAT, DON'T BELIEVE IT. ARE THESE, WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK, BECAUSE THEY'RE CLEARLY SAYING HERE WE'RE GOING TO IMMEDIATELY DELIVER CHANGE THAT YOU CAN SEE. THIS ISN'T, YOU KNOW, WE'RE GOING TO FIX THE SCHOOLS, THIS ISN'T WE'RE GOING TO SAVE THE WORLD.

To me, immediately is right now.

MODERATOR—THIS IS STUFF YOU CAN SEE.

It's not going to happen. It's not feasible.

MODERATOR—YOU DON'T THINK IT'S BELIEVABLE?

No, I don't.

It's a nice dream.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK?

It sounds good.

Yeah, it sounds good.

It could be done. I mean, it can be but you just need, you know . . .

How do you assure people that that's going to be done? I don't know.

I think it's possible. Whether we (inaudible) what's going on right now.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE BASIC WAY THAT THEY FRAMED THIS? THIS ELECTION'S ABOUT MOVING OUR COUNTRY IN A NEW DIRECTION. REPUBLICANS AREN'T GOING TO CHANGE BECAUSE THEY'RE GOING TO DEFEND THE STATUS QUO BECAUSE IT'S BENEFITTING THEM AND THEIR BUDDIES. DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT BASIC SET-UP?

Yes.

MODERATOR—BUT YOU'RE NOT SURE THAT THEY CAN DELIVER ANYTHING DIFFERENT?

Exactly.

Well, again, I think it goes back to who's going to have the majority in the House and in the Senate. I mean . . .

MODERATOR—THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE ARGUING HERE THAT THEY DESERVE THE CHANCE. LET'S LOOK AT HANDOUT 6 AND SEE WHAT THE REPUBLICANS HAVE TO SAY. REPUBLICANS SAY THIS ELECTION IS A CHOICE BETWEEN TWO PARTIES WITH FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT VIEWS OF OUR NATIONAL SECURITY. DEMOCRATS MAINTAIN A PRE-9/11 MENTALITY AS THEY CONTINUE TO UNDERMINE THE PATRIOT ACT AND OTHER SECURITY EFFORTS, DENY OUR TROOPS THE RESOURCES THEY NEED AND ADVANCE A "CUT AND RUN" STRATEGY IN IRAQ. REPUBLICANS UNDERSTAND THAT IF WE GIVE UP NOW, WE WOULD HAND IRAQ OVER TO ENEMIES WHO HAVE PLEDGED TO ATTACK US AGAIN AND AGAIN AS THEY DID ON 9/11. REPUBLICANS HAVE THE STRENGTH AND THE RESOLVE TO WIN THE WAR ON

TERRORISM AND TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO DEFEND OUR COUNTRY. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT ONE?

I think we should do whatever it takes to defend our country as long as we're not killing defenseless people.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE?

I think it's more of a scare tactic. It sounds like a lot of us a scare tactic, like they're trying to hit you where everybody's vulnerable about 9/11 and that kind of stuff. So it's kind of hitting you in that soft spot by bringing that up.

Right, and that is all they're talking about. They're not talking about anything else that they can do or would want to do. And that necessarily isn't good that they're not offering any other kinds of solutions for anything but that.

It's just all on the war. Like the health care, minimum wage and cut and run, they keep mentioning that, but I don't see it as cut and run. I mean, they're slowly trying to make them independent. They keep acting like they just want to . . .

Leave tomorrow or something.

Yeah, I mean, I don't see it that way. I think it's a slow, a slow . . .

I don't know. I kind of look back on this one. It says everything that we're going to do for you and we're doing it immediately. All right? Okay, everybody vote for us. But this one says, all right, I'm just telling you we ain't doing nothing for you except for going to get the war under control. Bottom line.

And I agree with that and then everything that I keep, when I see, hear, keeps taking me back to when I thought, okay, let's go for a change and I voted for Bill Clinton and I don't think that was the right thing to do.

MODERATOR—OKAY, GO TO HANDOUT 7 AND GET A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON THIS. DEMOCRATS SAY THIS ELECTION IS ABOUT FINDING NEW SOLUTIONS TO THE GROWING CHALLENGES FACING OUR COUNTRY: GAS PRICES, A BROKEN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM, AMERICAN JOBS GOING OVERSEAS, RECORD DEFICITS. REPUBLICANS HAVE DONE NOTHING AND THE PROBLEMS HAVE GROWN DEEPER. DEMOCRATS WILL OFFER REAL LEADERSHIP, MAKING SECURITY OF OUR PORTS AND OUR BORDERS A TOP PRIORITY, EXPANDING OUR CURRENT SYSTEM TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE TO ALL AMERICANS AND INVESTING IN RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGIES TO MAKE OUR COUNTRY ENERGY-INDEPENDENT BY 2020 WHILE CREATING MILLIONS OF NEW AMERICAN JOBS.

That would be awesome to have new American jobs. Oh my god.

That would be good, but that would take more money to make those jobs. You're going to be spending more money to make those jobs and then everyone's going to turn around and take it away.

MODERATOR—OVERALL IMPRESSIONS OF THIS ONE?

Oh yeah, true, because energy-independent by 2020 means that the high class people are going to be getting the jobs for that one. We ain't getting those jobs.

Exactly.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK?

It sounds great, but is it . . .

It sounds great. Sounds great.

They're talking about what's, I mean, what the problems are that are going on, like the gas prices, broken health care system, all of our jobs going overseas. It's true what they're saying, but you know my question is are they going to help us do something about it. That's the main thing, but at least they're not just focusing on the war. Like we have deeper problems over here that have grown deeper and I agree with that.

And they do, at least this time, make mention of more security to the ports and borders.

That's what I was going to say. That pleases me a lot. Because I really am worried about the 9/11 happening again. It really does freak me out.

It's like they're worrying about the Mexicans coming over here, but where's the security when they were all coming over here if they didn't want all of them over here?

What happens if another country pulls something somewhere like a 9/11, like in our country? I mean, how many countries can we sit on to make sure that they don't up the ante or further their efforts? I mean, it's just not possible to be the world police.

But, all right, if we secure our ports and borders . . .

Well that helps us.

Yes, because you're right, we can't be everywhere.

We can focus more on that.

Right, because every one of those people that hijacked those planes, they were here, walking around this country. They learned how to fly planes here.

And that is a shame.

Yeah. Because we said sure, come on in. Be here, live here. Without watching people. And I do think that will change and it has, that has changed.

The only thing I don't agree with about that issue about the Mexican coming over is like they should've had more security at the border if they didn't want them over here. How come they let

some of them come over here and live for eight or 10 years and secure jobs and families? At least they work every day, you know, some of the, I know black people, some don't even want to hold jobs, to be honest with you. And I mean, I just don't understand how come they let them stay as long as they did and all of a sudden, they're going to make them leave but let their kids stay.

That don't make no sense.

I don't agree with that. I'm not saying like let every Mexican, let everybody come over here. I'm not saying that either. But I'm saying if they were so concerned with it, why weren't they already doing something before these people come over here and started families or married an American, made lives for their self and they just up and all of a sudden they're wanting to do something about it. They should've been doing something about it.

MODERATOR—OKAY, FLIP TO HANDOUT 8. REPUBLICANS SAY THIS ELECTION IS A CHOICE BETWEEN TWO VERY DIFFERENT IDEAS ABOUT ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY. DEMOCRATS ARE TRYING TO RAISE TAXES BECAUSE THEIR SOLUTION TO EVERY CHALLENGE IS INCREASED SPENDING AND MORE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS. REPUBLICANS BELIEVE THE KEY TO ECONOMIC GROWTH IS ALLOWING TAXPAYERS TO KEEP MORE OF THE MONEY THEY EARN TO SPEND AND INVEST IN THE WAY THAT IS BEST FOR THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES. REPUBLICANS WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR LOWER TAXES AND NEW IDEAS ON HEALTH CARE AND RETIREMENT THAT LOWER COSTS AND GIVE INDIVIDUALS MORE CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN MONEY.

That sounds awesome there.

That does sound good.

But that's just words. Actions. That's what I want to see.

MODERATOR—DO REPUBLICANS HAVE CREDIBILITY ON THIS? I MEAN, DO YOU THINK THAT THEY DO FIGHT FOR LOWER TAXES AND THEY DO FIGHT FOR LESS SPENDING?

I think they believe they do.

I think they say they do.

Yeah, that's their opinion but I honestly just don't see it.

MODERATOR—IF THIS IS THE CASE THAT THEY'RE MAKING TO YOU AS TO WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE FOR THEM, IS IT BELIEVABLE OR NOT?

It's not working. It's not working, no.

Do you want us to underline anything or just . . .

MODERATOR—WELL, JUST TELL ME WHAT YOUR REACTION IS.

I think one thing that comes to mind for me of what the Republicans talked about in lowering taxes and helping families keep more money and I personally can say that I did see changes in that with the child tax credits that you give and that does make a big difference for my family.

Yeah, but the money you save, you really don't save because they upped the gas and electric. The prices of gas, the water bills are going up. I mean, everything has gone up.

They want you to believe they're giving you something and they're taking away from you all year long.

Right. And I don't even have an Uncle Sam, you know.

MODERATOR--THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT HERE AT THE END ABOUT NEW IDEAS ON HEALTH CARE AND RETIREMENT THAT WOULD LOWER COSTS AND GIVE INDIVIDUALS MORE CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN MONEY. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU?

It means a lot to people who are self-employed, like my boyfriend, we live together and he's self-employed and it's, I have health insurance and he doesn't and it's a little bit of a scare.

That's what we have too. My husband's self-employed.

MODERATOR--DID ANYBODY HEAR ABOUT THE SOCIAL SECURITY PROPOSALS THAT PRESIDENT BUSH IS MAKING? THEY'RE GOING TO SHIFT TO PRIVATE ACCOUNTS AND LET PEOPLE INVEST SOME OF THEIR OWN MONEY.

Yes, I did hear that.

MODERATOR--REDUCE GUARANTEED PAYMENTS AND . . .

Which presupposes you've got money to invest.

Yeah, that's good for the rich. That doesn't go for us.

Exactly.

We're back to where we were.

I think though it also makes you responsible for, to hold yourself more accountable. I think a lot of us rely too much on the government to do things for us.

Wouldn't it still be compensatory for the deduction? I think that that would, you would still have that amount, the SSI amount deducted from your check, it just would be your own . . .

MODERATOR--A PORTION OF IT WOULD GO INTO AN ACCOUNT THAT YOU CONTROL.

A private account that you manage.

MODERATOR--RIGHT.

Okay, okay.

MODERATOR—BUT THEN WHAT HAPPENED TO IT FROM THERE WOULD BE UP TO YOU. IF YOU INVEST IT . . .

I don't have any problem with that because I don't see that they manage the Social Security funds any, that well in the first place.

MODERATOR—OTHER REACTIONS?

(Inaudible) control.

I would like the idea of controlling that, but you would also have to do it.

MODERATOR—ALL RIGHT, FLIP TO HANDOUT 9. LAST ONE OF THESE. DEMOCRATS SAY THIS ELECTION IS ABOUT RESTORING ACCOUNTABILITY TO OUR GOVERNMENT. REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS HAVE GIVEN THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION A BLANK CHECK LEADING TO UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS OF CORRUPTION AND WASTE. DEMOCRATS WILL USE CONGRESS'S SUBPOENA POWERS TO RESTORE OUR GOVERNMENT SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES AND DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE ABUSE OF TAXPAYERS' MONEY, INCLUDING HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN FRAUD AFTER KATRINA, PRICE GOUGING BY OIL COMPANIES, \$50 BILLION IN NO-BID CONTRACTS FOR HALLIBURTON IN IRAQ, FORCING TAXPAYERS TO PAY THE CLEAN-UP COSTS OF TOXIC POLLUTERS AND \$9 BILLION IN MISSING CASH GIVEN TO GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS IN IRAQ.

Guess they got a raise that year, huh?

MODERATOR—WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO THAT ONE?

That it's scary that all of this stuff can slip by and there definitely should be some kind of check and balance.

And accountability. There's no accountability.

I agree with the comment about Katrina because what have they really done for them people down there.

MODERATOR—DID ANYBODY SEE ANY OF THE STORIES ABOUT THE FRAUD AND THE ABUSE OF THE KATRINA MONEY?

Hm-hmm.

I watched it on CNN, yeah. And then just here a couple of weeks ago they had where, I can't think of the guy's name, the newscaster guy, he went back down there again and they were still finding bodies and stuff and that was the month my son was born and he's 10 months old. So it's like, you know, there's still a lot of devastation and stuff down there. Yeah, they're still finding bodies down there, 10 months later. So it's like what are they really doing to help them people down there? What if it was us here and we got flooded or got wiped out by it, whatever,

you think more if it happened to us. I mean, I feel for them people down there. And what have they done to really help them people and them children and stuff? And the price gouging by oil companies, that's obvious. I mean, every time it's a holiday weekend, look at the price jump. What was it, two, jumped up 20 cents or 30 cents every time it's a holiday or something rolls around.

MODERATOR—OKAY. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS IDEA THAT DEMOCRATS SAY IF THEY GET IN POWER IN CONGRESS, THEY'LL USE SUBPOENA POWERS AND GO LAUNCH THESE INVESTIGATIONS INTO ALL THESE DIFFERENT EXAMPLES OF ABUSE?

They should, but can they do it?

(Inaudible)

MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK THAT'S SOMETHING THEY SHOULD BE DOING? HAVING THESE ALL INVESTIGATIONS AND DOING ALL THIS KIND OF STUFF OR DO YOU THINK THAT'S JUST A WASTE OF TIME?

I think they should investigate it and make them be accountable for the money that they took that wasn't theirs. And give it to us. In this particular room.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK ABOUT IT?

I think they should. But I think a lot of times those investigations go on too long and then they end up costing quite a bit of money also.

MODERATOR—OKAY. SO, HANDOUTS 5 THROUGH 9, WE'VE BASICALLY HAD FIVE DIFFERENT OPINIONS ON WHAT THIS ELECTION'S REALLY ABOUT. HANDOUT 9 SAYS IT'S ABOUT RESTORING ACCOUNTABILITY TO OUR GOVERNMENT. HANDOUT 8 SAYS IT'S ABOUT TWO DIFFERENT IDEAS ABOUT ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY, TAXES AND SPENDING. HANDOUT 7 SAYS IT'S ABOUT FINDING NEW SOLUTIONS TO THESE GROWING CHALLENGES THAT ARE FACING OUR COUNTRY. HANDOUT 6 SAYS IT'S A CHOICE BETWEEN TWO PARTIES WITH DIFFERENT VIEWS ON NATIONAL SECURITY. AND HANDOUT 5 SAID IT'S ABOUT MOVING OUR COUNTRY IN A NEW DIRECTION. OUT OF THOSE FIVE, WHICH ONE BEST CAPTURES FOR YOU WHAT THIS ELECTION IS REALLY ABOUT? THINKING ABOUT WHEN YOU GO IN AND YOU CAST YOUR VOTE, WHAT'S IT REALLY GOING TO BE ABOUT?

I'm sorry, you said from 4 to 9?

MODERATOR—5 TO 9. LOOK BACK AT THEM AGAIN AND TELL ME WHICH ONE CAPTURES IT BEST FOR YOU.

You can only pick one?

MODERATOR—YEAH.

I like number 7.

I say 7.

What do you want us to do about the one we like the best?
MODERATOR—JUST TELL ME WHAT IT IS.

Oh, 7 too.

7.

MODERATOR—ANYBODY ELSE GOING IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION?

I'm leaning toward 7, yeah.

I'll go with 7, just to be nice.

MODERATOR—THAT'S NOT A REASON.

There might be a little thing here and there in some of the other ones, like a sentence or so, but . . .

MODERATOR—OKAY, WE'LL TALK ABOUT WHY YOU MADE THE CHOICE IN A SECOND. I JUST WANT TO GET EVERYBODY. BETH?

7.

MODERATOR—OKAY, EVERYBODY GOING WITH 7? TELL ME WHY EVERYBODY PICKED THAT ONE.

The ports and the borders.

That's what we want to hear.

That's just what it should, this is overall what it should be about. Whether it, it's what it should be about.

MODERATOR—OKAY, SO THEY'RE SAYING THESE ARE THE BIG CHALLENGES FACING OUR COUNTRY. SECURITY, HEALTH CARE, ENERGY, THESE ARE THE BIG CHALLENGES. WE'RE GOING TO TACKLE THESE BIG CHALLENGES. THAT'S BELIEVABLE?

No, it's not.

MODERATOR—SO YOU'RE JUST GOING TO . . .

Nothing that either of them says anyway is that believable. It's always just all a lot of talk and then not a whole lot of change. It'll never happen. I mean, sometimes it does but these are things that it should be.

I believe gas prices aren't going to change. The health thing, I think it will start to change once we all really start complaining about how much it's hurting us. I believe the ports and borders

are top priority and I believe they will put an improvement into them for us. And the energy thing, I don't believe in that at all. It just keeps going up and up and up.

MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK THAT MAKING A BIG INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY IS THE WAY TO TACKLE THE OIL PROBLEM AT THE SAME TIME OF MAKING THE U.S. THE LEADER ON THIS IDEA OF ALTERNATIVE FUELS AND KEEP THE JOBS HERE RATHER THAN . . .

The technology's already there. Look at Brazil. What are they running on down there? Corn oil? Something. Technology's already in place. We just have to implement it.

We probably have it. It's probably sitting, tons of cars that can run by all that and it's just sitting there until they pick the right time to bring it out for us or make money off of us.

You can go on the Internet and get a kit to convert a diesel engine to using oil and it can be used oil.

Right, and they're like \$700, \$800, the kits are.

I would find it worth it if I could afford it.

I know.

MODERATOR—THE BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HANDOUT 7 AND HANDOUT 5 IS KIND OF HANDOUT 5 WAS THE SMALLER THINGS, NO CONGRESSIONAL PAY RAISE WITHOUT AN INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE, INVEST IN STEM CELL RESEARCH, REPEAL TAX CUTS FOR COMPANIES WHO SHIFT JOBS OVERSEAS WHEREAS HANDOUT 7 IS KIND OF THE BIG CHALLENGES. HANDOUT 5 WAS KIND OF THESE ARE THINGS WE KNOW WE CAN DO AND HANDOUT 7 IS LIKE BIG, BIG CHALLENGES. DO YOU THINK IT'S MORE IMPORTANT FOR THEM TO BE OR FOR THIS ELECTION TO BE ABOUT THE BIG CHALLENGES RATHER THAN THE CHANGE THEY THINK THEY CAN DELIVER?

I think if they want us to fight for them, they should be willing to fight for us as well.

I think that's what I'm leaning to.

MODERATOR—I GUESS WHAT I'M REALLY TRYING TO GET AT IS, YOU KNOW, FOR ALL OF THESE YOU SAID, YEAH, SOUNDS GOOD BUT AND WHAT I'M TRYING TO FIGURE OUT IS HOW DO THEY GET CREDIBILITY. IS IT BY TALKING ABOUT THE BIG CHALLENGES OR IS IT BY TRYING TO DELIVER A FEW PROMISES THAT THEY ESTABLISH A BASE OF . . .

Talking about it, because you can promise me all day long.

Delivering even the smaller things I think makes you have more respect and so I guess, yeah looking back, some of those small things would be nice. I mean, as long as they do some things that they say, you know, because they're all important. So, I mean it might not, it might be better for some people than others, like make college tuition, well a lot of people that

wouldn't effect. A lot of us it would, if we have kids or whatever in college, but the bigger things effects I think all of us more.

MODERATOR—OKAY. OTHER THOUGHTS ON THAT?

I don't think that affordable care isn't a possibility and investing in research and technology causes discovery and brings about new technology that can be used and if it does help our country not rely on foreign countries, that's great. I don't see these ideas in handout 7 as that far-fetched.

I do remember at one point when gas prices went up again, Bush said they're going to look into this and if they find any of the oil companies that had an extremely large profit, then things were going to happen. And then all of a sudden, gas prices dropped down to like \$2.50 but it didn't last long and then it went back up. And I think some of that is because they backed off on it and I think the government can control more of that if they wanted to. They just choose not to.

They promised in the summer it would go down. But it hasn't anywhere.

It's not, it's not within reach to be able to do some of these things. If they make that their priority, but it just always seems like, to me anyway, that it's the ones with all the money that can do all the talking and can control everything and people like us, you know, we listen to it and we look at it for a while but then we have to get back to our busy lives of busting our butts to earn a living so we can pay for our high-priced gas and we can pay for our high-priced health care and we can pay for our high energy costs and we just don't have the time to worry about it or be concerned about it.

MODERATOR—I WANT TO BRING THIS KIND OF TO A MORE NARROW FOCUS FOR THE LAST THING WE DO AND TALK ABOUT THE ACTUAL CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION YOU GUYS ARE GOING TO FACE. YOU ALL LIVE IN THE FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT IN OHIO. STEVE CABOT, THE GUY WHOSE NAME I SAID EARLIER, IS THE CONGRESSMAN FROM THERE, BEEN THERE FOR I GUESS LIKE 12 YEARS. THEN JOHN CRANLEY IS THE GUY WHO'S RUNNING AGAINST HIM. SO TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE BIT OF INFORMATION, THERE'S TWO ARTICLES HERE FROM THE CINCINNATI POST THAT WERE BOTH IN THE PAPER A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO ABOUT EACH OF THEM. ONE OF THEM ABOUT THE GUY WHO'S IN OFFICE, ONE ABOUT THE GUY WHO'S RUNNING AGAINST HIM. PASS THOSE DOWN AND I WANT YOU TO TAKE A LITTLE BIT OF TIME AND READ THEM. PRESUMABLY THIS IS KIND OF HOW YOU WOULD GET THE INFORMATION EVENTUALLY. YOU KNOW, YOU READ ABOUT IT IN THE NEWSPAPER OR YOU GET SOME STUFF LIKE THAT, SO PASS DOWN BOTH SHEETS TOGETHER. ONE SAYS CHALLENGER HOPES TO LINK INCUMBENT AND THE OTHER ONE SAYS CONGRESSMAN CONTINUES TO STRESS, SO PASS THEM DOWN IN PAIRS. SO, JUST TAKE SOME TIME, READ THEM BOTH. IT GIVES YOU A LITTLE BIT OF INFORMATION ABOUT EACH OF THESE GUYS AND THEN WE'LL TALK ABOUT WHAT YOUR IMPRESSIONS ARE.

MODERATOR—IF YOU'RE STILL READING, TAKE YOUR TIME. BUT IF YOU'RE DONE, TELL ME WHAT ARE YOUR IMPRESSIONS HERE OF THESE TWO DIFFERENT CANDIDATES AND WHY THEY'RE RUNNING AND WHY YOU SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT VOTE FOR THEM. ANYONE?

First of all, I didn't know when either one says the other one did, how do you, is there any way that people like us could find these things out or is it all out there that at some point we should've seen that or heard that or know about that?

MODERATOR—LIKE YOU SAID, I MEAN, YOU'VE GOT A LIFE TO LIVE AND YOU CAN'T BE SITTING THERE TRACKING THIS STUFF DOWN OR READING THE BACK PAGE OF THE PAPER EVERY DAY. SO, DOES IT SOUND BELIEVABLE? HOW DO YOU MAKE THOSE DECISIONS IN ANY OTHER ELECTION? OBVIOUSLY, THEY ALL GET ON TV AND THEY ALL SAY THINGS ABOUT EACH OTHER AND YOU GET STUFF IN THE MAIL. HOW DO YOU DETERMINE WHAT'S REAL AND WHAT'S NOT?

My opinion of this is Cranley, Cranley sounds convincing enough to be trying to do the right thing. Chabot sounds more of like a just a yes man, but I think they all probably have good intentions when they start out and they end up getting swallowed up by things.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK? WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON THESE GUYS?

I think that Cranley kind of tells you what you want to hear and says more of what you want to hear. I don't know that either one of these articles really give you enough to go either way.

There's a lot of talk in there but it's not . . .

MODERATOR—THERE HASN'T BEEN A LOT OUT THERE. THESE ARE PRETTY RECENT. THEY APPEARED ON THE SAME DAY FROM THE SAME REPORTER.

I mean, there's more black and white things like where it says he's pro-life and dah, dah, dah, that kind of stuff.

I think Cranley mentions more about things he, I liked reading the one about him better.

MODERATOR—WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT IT THOUGH?

It just said more. I mean, I just felt reading Chabot's was, he didn't really say a lot of what, oh I don't know. I just feel like I got more out of the Cranley one than what I, a better idea of him, you know, what he wanted, what . . .

They said he ran against Chabot in 2000, I'm trying to remember.

Well, one thing that stood out to me is that even though he's a Democrat, he doesn't believe in necessarily all of the Democratic things. And that he would vote that way. So that's kind of nice to hear.

And then how long has he, Chabot, you said he's been in for 12 years?

MODERATOR—YEAH, SAID HE WAS SIX TERMS, SO YEAH THEY'RE TWO-YEAR TERMS.

God. How long is the term for them?

MODERATOR—TWO YEARS.

No, I mean like how long can he actually keep on going?

MODERATOR—SOME OF THEM HAVE BEEN THERE FOR 50 YEARS.

Really? Oh gosh.

MODERATOR—PRESIDENT'S ARE LIMITED.

(Many talking at once.)

I'm like, my gosh, how long has he been.

MODERATOR—OTHER IMPRESSIONS? OTHER PEOPLE? WHAT'S YOUR SENSE OF CHABOT FROM READING THIS? HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE HIM?

He's been there too long.

Yeah, what kind of changes is he doing for Ohio?

MODERATOR—THAT SEEMS TO BE THE CASE THAT CRANLEY'S MAKING. CRANLEY IS BASICALLY MAKING THE CASE, YOU KNOW, THIS GUY'S UP THERE JUST AN EXTENSION OF THE WHITE HOUSE AND BUSH ADMINISTRATION. IF YOU WANT CHANGE, YOU'VE GOT TO VOTE FOR ME. THIS GUY'S NOT GOING TO DELIVER CHANGE. HE'S GOING TO DELIVER MORE OF THE SAME. THAT SEEMS TO BE HIS BASIC ARGUMENT. IS THAT A LEGIT ARGUMENT? BECAUSE CHABOT SAYS NO, YOU KNOW, I DISAGREE WITH THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION ON THESE THINGS. I DO WHAT'S BEST FOR PEOPLE HERE. I GET THE PROJECTS THAT I THINK WE NEED. I DISAGREE WITH THE PRESIDENT WHEN I THINK HE'S WRONG. I HOLD THE LINE ON SPENDING. I REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF PEOPLE HERE. CRANLEY SAYS, EH, NOT REALLY. YOU'RE REALLY JUST KIND OF TOEING THE LINE AND IF PEOPLE WANT CHANGE . . .

I mean, you think about it, he's been up there 12 years. Really, what has, you know? That's a long time if the other guy's saying he's not going to make no changes. I mean, I don't really see nothing either, so there again you're back to what's it really going to hurt. If nothing else is looking no better right now, you know what I mean?

It can't get any worse.

Yeah.

MODERATOR—OTHER FOLKS?

I might want to learn a little bit more about him though by the time elections, you know, like follow it a little closer. Now, like you said, it's early.

MODERATOR—YEAH, NOBODY'S GOING TO VOTE BASED ON ONE ARTICLE.

It's a start.

MODERATOR—CLAIRE, WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON THAT?

Well, I think there was a lot more rhetoric in the Chabot article it appeared to me. He does come off as somebody who's been on the Hill for a while, perhaps too long. And is more or less maybe saying things that are going to placate the people rather than saying how it really is and what his goals and objectives are. Cranley came across more of as a newcomer and a go-getter which I think everybody, Chabot I think came across like that a few years back.

MODERATOR—12 YEARS AGO?

Yeah, yeah, so I mean, I see the similarity in that.

I was just focusing on, it says Congress has abandoned their principles when it comes to spending and that they haven't shown financial discipline at all in recent years and then it says the Republican majority should show.

MODERATOR—ANYONE ELSE? ALL RIGHT, LAST THING I'M GOING TO ASK YOU GUYS TO DO. FLIP TO HANDOUT 10 IN THOSE PACKETS. THINKING ABOUT, I GAVE YOU A LITTLE BIT OF INFORMATION JUST TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE BIT OF A FOUNDATION ON THESE TWO PEOPLE WHO ARE RUNNING FOR CONGRESS THAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE DEALING WITH. THINKING ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT WE'VE TALKED ABOUT, ALL THE ISSUES THAT MATTER TO YOU, EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING ON IN THE COUNTRY THESE DAYS, WHATEVER IT IS, IF YOU WERE GOING TO SEND A MESSAGE TO THESE GUYS WHO ARE RUNNING FOR CONGRESS, WHAT WOULD YOU WANT TO TELL THEM? YOU DON'T HAVE TO ADDRESS IT TO ONE PERSON OR ANOTHER.

Start it how?

MODERATOR—WHATEVER YOU WANT. JUST WRITE IT DOWN. WE'RE NOT GOING TO READ IT OUT LOUD. JUST WRITE DOWN WHATEVER MESSAGE YOU'D WANT TO SEND TO THEM, WHATEVER QUESTIONS YOU WANT ANSWERED, WHATEVER IT MIGHT BE. IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY TO THEM, WHAT IS IT?

I don't have to put no particular person, just put . . .

MODERATOR—YEAH, YEAH, JUST, YOU KNOW, IN GENERAL TO THE PEOPLE WHO ARE RUNNING FOR CONGRESS.

To whom it may concern.

MODERATOR—IF THEY WANT YOUR VOTE, WHAT HAVE THEY GOT TO DO?

Are you really giving them these?

MODERATOR—NO.

Oh, I thought . . .

(Many talking at once.)

MODERATOR—A FEW THINGS WHILE YOU GUYS ARE FINISHING UP. FIRST OF ALL, PLEASE LEAVE ALL YOUR PAPERS HERE BECAUSE I DO WANT TO READ WHAT YOU WROTE THERE. ALSO, ALL YOUR TRASH, NAME TAGS, ALL THAT KIND OF STUFF, YOU CAN LEAVE THAT HERE AND WE’LL CLEAN UP AFTER YOU. FOR ONCE, SOMEBODY WILL CLEAN UP AFTER YOU. SO YOU DON’T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT. AND THE LAST THING IS WE STAYED A COUPLE OF MINUTES OVER AND I APOLOGIZE FOR THAT, BUT WE COVERED A WHOLE OF GROUND.

This was a good discussion considering it’s coming from people that actually live every day and the hardships.

MODERATOR—WELL, THAT’S THE GOAL, YEAH. SO I APPRECIATE EVERYTHING THAT YOU GUYS HAD TO SAY AND YOUR TIME AND YOUR INPUT AND I ALSO KNOW YOU DIDN’T SIT HERE FOR TWO HOURS JUST FOR MY APPRECIATION, SO . . .

It didn’t feel like we were actually here for two hours.

It really didn’t seem like that long.

MODERATOR—GOOD. SO, ANYWAY, MAKE SURE YOU STOP AT THE DESK WHERE YOU FIRST SIGNED IN AND THEY WILL HAVE YOUR OTHER FORM OF APPRECIATION.

Ooh, extra.

MODERATOR—AND IF YOU’RE DONE, YOU’RE DONE. THANK YOU VERY MUCH GUYS.

Good luck with your girls.

MODERATOR—THANK YOU, I NEED IT.

(End of Session)