

**DEMOCRACY CORPS
GROUP 3
GOLDEN, CO**

**WOMEN, AGES 45-60, 4-YEAR COLLEGE, HOUSEHOLD INCOME OVER \$50K,
WEAK PARTISANS, VOTED FOR BUSH, NOW NOT APPROVE, RECRUITED FROM
OUTSIDE DENVER
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HOW MANY OF YOU GUYS HAVE DONE OF THESE BEFORE, DISCUSSION GROUP OR FOCUS GROUP? OKAY MOST OF YOU HAVE. IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE ONE BEFORE OR IT'S BEEN AWHILE, NOT A LOT OF MYSTERY TO WHAT WE'RE DOING HERE. WE'RE GOING TO TALK ABOUT A LOT OF DIFFERENT THINGS—YOU'VE PROBABLY GUESSED FROM THE THINGS YOU FILLED OUT, A LOT ABOUT CURRENT EVENTS, POLITICS, AND THAT KIND OF STUFF. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING THAT I WANT YOU TO KEEP IN MIND IS THAT I'M HERE FOR ONE REASON AND THAT'S TO HEAR YOUR OPINIONS ON THE STUFF WE'RE GOING TO TALK ABOUT. THERE ARE NO RIGHT ANSWERS, NO WRONG ANSWERS. THIS IS ENTIRELY ABOUT WHAT YOU THINK. I WANT TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO BE AS OPEN AND HONEST AND STRAIGHTFORWARD AS POSSIBLE BECAUSE THAT'S THE WHOLE REASON WE'RE HERE. WE'RE NOT GOING TO TALK ABOUT ANYTHING OVERLY PERSONAL OR CONTROVERSIAL BUT EVERYTHING WE TALK ABOUT IS COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL. NOTHING YOU SAY IS EVER GOING TO GO TO YOU, YOUR FAMILY, YOUR EMPLOYER, ANYTHING LIKE THAT AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, AFTER TONIGHT, YOU'LL NEVER SEE OR HEAR FROM ME AGAIN. NEITHER I NOR ANYONE I WORK WITH CALL YOU AT HOME AND ASK YOU TO DONATE MONEY OR SWITCH LONG-DISTANCE COMPANIES OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT, SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT. A COUPLE THINGS SO THAT YOU ARE COMFORTABLE. THERE IS A VERY WELL-HIDDEN MICROPHONE, THAT LITTLE BUTTON UP THERE. WE ARE AUDIO TAPING OUR CONVERSATION. WE'RE NOT VIDEOTAPING BUT WE ARE AUDIO TAPING, BASICALLY SO I DON'T HAVE TO SIT HERE AND SCRIBBLE NOTES THE WHOLE TIME, SO I CAN ACTUALLY TALK TO YOU GUYS, GO BACK AND LISTEN TO IT AGAIN LATER. AS MOST OF YOU PROBABLY KNOW THIS IS A ONE WAY MIRROR, NOT FOR US, IT'S FOR THE FOLKS BEHIND IT. THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON BACK THERE, MY COLLEAGUE WHO TRAVELS WITH ME, AND HE'S SITTING BACK THERE WITH BIG BOWLS OF M&MS. JUST SO YOU KNOW THAT. OTHER THAN THAT I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF RULES OR ANYTHING FOR OUR CONVERSATION. YOU WANT TO GET UP AND GO TO THE RESTROOM, GET ANOTHER DRINK, WHATEVER, PLEASE GO AHEAD. I WOULD JUST ASK THAT NO MORE THAN ONE PERSON BE UP AT A TIME, JUST SO THAT WE CAN KEEP THINGS MOVING. WE HAVE A LOT OF GROUND TO COVER IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF HOURS AND WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE ON TIME, SO IN ORDER TO DO THAT WE JUST GOT TO KEEP THINGS GOING. LAST THING I WOULD SAY IS I'VE GOT TEN LADIES AROUND THE TABLE. I'M SURE I'VE GOT TEN COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SETS OF OPINIONS AND EXPERIENCES AND AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE I'D LIKE TO HEAR ALL OF THEM, SO WHAT THAT MEANS IS IF YOU'RE NOT TALKING I WILL CALL ON YOU. I'M NOT TRYING TO PICK ON YOU

BUT I'M INTERESTED IN WHAT EVERYBODY THINKS. AS IS MUCH MORE OFTEN THE PROBLEM, IF SOME PEOPLE ARE TALKING TOO MUCH AND OTHER PEOPLE AREN'T GETTING THE CHANCE TO TALK, IT'S MY JOB IN THIS CHAIR TO CUT YOU OFF. IF THAT HAPPENS PLEASE DON'T THINK I'M BEING RUDE. I WANT TO HEAR FROM EVERYBODY. ANY QUESTIONS FOR ME BEFORE WE GET STARTED? OKAY, LET'S GO AROUND THE TABLE REAL QUICK AND INTRODUCE OURSELVES. TELL US YOUR FIRST NAME, WHERE YOU LIVE, WORK, FAMILY, PETS, HOBBIES, WHATEVER YOU WANT TO TELL US IN TWENTY SECONDS OR LESS. I'LL GET STARTED. MY NAME IS CARL. I LIVE IN WILMINGTON DE AND YOU SEE WHAT I DO FOR A LIVING SO I WON'T BORE WITH YOU THAT. I'M MARRIED. I HAVE THREE GIRLS, 5, 2, AND 5 MONTHS, SO I TRAVEL SO I CAN SLEEP. HOBBIES—I PLAY VOLLEYBALL AND I CHASE MY KIDS AROUND.

My name is Alice. I'm a Denver native. Four children. I'm in Human Resources and I like to travel.

GOOD. WHERE'S THE LAST PLACE YOU'VE BEEN?

Nothing interesting, local.

I'm Barbara. I was born in Colorado but lived many other places and I've been here now 15 years. I love being back. I'm married. One son who is off to college, first year of college, this summer. That's interesting. The refrigerator is empty again. I work in a nonprofit organization where I am an executive director.

I'm Claire. We came to Denver in 1965 from Chicago. I have two kids, three grandkids. I'm in real estate. Like to garden, do ceramics.

I'm Danielle. I'm a native of Colorado. Married. Two children. I like kickboxing and biking, hiking, anything outdoors. I work for an office firm.

I'm Eva. I have two children. Born in Colorado. I have a granddaughter on the way.

I'm Fran. I'm not a native of Denver but I've lived here for twenty years. I'm originally from New York. I'm an interior designer, which is my job and my hobby. I like to garden and I have four children and five grandchildren.

I'm Gail. I've lived here over thirty years. I've been in every state and this is my favorite. I'm single. I enjoy biking, charity bike tours, a lot of outdoor stuff.

I'm Heather. I'm from Boulder. Been in Colorado almost all my life but around different places. Almost 30 years in Boulder. I am married. I have two children that are grown. I'm going to be a first-time grandma in about two weeks, so that's the excitement around our house. I work for a property management company and hobbies—taking our lovely new puppy, 98 pound puppy, up in the mountains in our Jeep. We go four-wheeling for our hobby.

I'm Iris and I live in Parker and work for a large finance company. I don't have too much time for hobbies—spending time outdoors.

I'm Katherine. I have three boys and I like to hike and I live in the foothills.

THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING THIS EVENING. I WANT TO START OUT CONVERSATION WITH A REAL BROAD QUESTION AND WE'LL KIND OF NARROW IT DOWN, BUT THINKING ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING ON WITH OUR COUNTRY THESE DAYS, DO YOU FEEL LIKE THINGS IN THE COUNTRY ARE GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION OR THE WRONG DIRECTION RIGHT NOW?

Wrong.

I JUST WANT TO GET A SENSE OF RIGHT OR WRONG AND THEN WE'LL TALK ABOUT WHY.

Depends on what you mean.

Yeah.

Yeah.

LIKE I SAID, OVERALL, WE'LL GET INTO THE SPECIFICS, BUT JUST YOUR OVERALL GUT FEELING.

I'm hopeful it's going in the right direction. My heart believes that it will be.

I'd have to say I'm in that same category although I'm sort of leveling down thinking 'Whoa, it's a little worse than I thought.'

Well I'm an eternal optimist too but I see a lot of things that are wrong.

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE COUNTRY THESE DAYS? WHAT ARE THE ISSUES THAT ARE OUT THERE?

I think my biggest complaint about what's happening out there is attorneys and suing everyone and it's everybody else's fault and I'm not responsible. Let me sue somebody to make them be responsible, that whole attitude of 'Oh it's not my fault. Let me just get money from someone else.' I just don't like that.

I see a lot of greed. I think that we've come down to a situation where it's all about the money. I think there's a real problem with morality in this country. I think there's just too many gray areas.

I was just wondering if you wanted things in alphabetical order or...

(laughter)

ORDER OF IMPORTANCE.

Yeah I think when I think about the future of the country I'm saddened that I guess the structure of the family is so different, and I think when I look back at all the things that are happening with the moral fiber that I think it's the family that has to begin to build those issues, or those strengths, and now we're into a generation of poverty where the people don't even know how to begin or have a base of knowledge and the balance is shifting so that perhaps the voters might not be as educated as they should be, although that's always been an excuse. I see the moral fiber deteriorating, in terms of everything from our media to the way we look at politics. It's almost like 'I don't have time for that. Why should I get involved?' So even good people are beginning to turn inward and think 'Well I'm going to make my life good but I don't really care about what else is going on.'

When I think about moral fiber I thought of all the corporations, the Enron's and all these. I mean where is it all going?

I think our safety zone has changed so that there is no safety zone. Families are feeble because of everything that's going around, the security of the country and morality and things like that.

The world is not the same as it was three-four years ago.

YOU THINK THAT'S LARGELY BECAUSE OF 9/11?

I think a lot of it is. I think it was kind of a downhill before that on a personal individual basis.

Can I add something? I also think people in this country are looking for an instant fix for everything, whether it's their health—they find fault with people—this is a process, and I think people forget about the process. You didn't get like this overnight and it's not going to get fixed overnight.

TALK TO ME ABOUT THE ECONOMY.

Terrible.

WHY DO YOU SAY TERRIBLE?

It's just bad.

I don't think there is much of any improvement.

I think it's terrible.

I think it's families needing two incomes—it's not an option anymore.

Cost of living is bad.

WHAT PIECES OF THE COST OF LIVING? ARE THERE THINGS THAT ARE GOING UP FASTER THAN OTHERS?

Housing, taxes, just the basics. I mean in Douglas County and it's crazy. It just keeps going up all the time.

For example our children can't even afford to get into a house at this point. I mean my daughter bought a house in Longmont and she paid more for her little thousand square foot house than we paid for our three thousand square foot house, because of how expensive it's gotten. Unless they've have family who can help them get started, there is no way for them to get even into that kind of situation.

I think it's true to a point when you look back at where started, and you know the dollar value—I'm not sure what the difference is right now but I know when we first started, we had a (indecipherable) for the house.

We did too. I'm not saying that. I'm just looking at the percentage that's risen and I'm in Boulder County which is—I don't know—Douglas County is probably the same thing, but Boulder County is just out of control. The house that she would buy in Longmont, you can buy in Windsor for half the price, that kind of thing.

Boulder has always been high.

WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK ABOUT THE ECONOMY?

Well there's a lot of companies and big corporations that are having huge layoffs here in Denver and then just even in regular businesses, it's all about upper management. They cover themselves but they're cutting the health insurance benefits. It's happening all over.

I just think it's everything in general. Even the price of food—every time I go to the grocery store I come home from the grocery store I've spent 200-300 dollars and I have nothing. Where did this--? And I go out to eat a lot, and that's getting ridiculous. The food, the gasoline, the clothing, again I have two kids. They're both older. My son no longer lives with us but a daughter who is headed off to college and tuition is raised 20%. It's like come on! My income hasn't come along 20%. My husband and me, it's just like you can't get further ahead. We're digging into that 401, that savings plan that we have, to try to keep our head above water.

A lot of people overextend on credit and so everybody is kind of so in debt that you look and go 'Oh no one will ever get out. We'll never get out of this.'

And part of that is that there's a lot of foreclosures taking place. People can't make their payments and are losing their homes.

I think a lot of this goes right back to what Fran said. People want instant gratification on everything. They want it now. I see, I don't have children, but friends with kids, they want to move in to a brand new house, all brand new furniture, they're into debt up to their ears before they even start and I come from a time where you worked, you paid cash for things—now you're not going to pay cash for a house, but it took time. Being single I've had to let a lot of things go by the wayside because it was a decision 'Do I want to be able to retire well?' so I have to plan for that eventuality or 'Do I just want to take everything now?' I chose to put things off but I do just about everything around my home myself because I refuse to pay someone else to do that work if there's anyway on this earth I can do it, and you wouldn't believe what I've done with my home. I work full-time—it's like you said with groceries—this is another area. If a person, I'm not saying you do this, but I'll tend to buy a lot of things that are prepared because I just

don't want to mess with things when it's just one person, but there's a big expense there. I will take the time to go out and shop Costco and use other places just to attempt to cut corners, but I don't think there are all that many people that tend to do that anymore.

OKAY. OTHER THOUGHTS ON THE ECONOMY? SOMEBODY MENTIONED HEALTHCARE. TALK TO ME ABOUT HEALTHCARE AND WHAT ROLE THAT PLAYS IN YOUR LIVES.

Well so many people have no insurance. It's ridiculous, and the cost of going to the doctor is ridiculous. My mother who is on a Medicare type of thing went in and had some tests and they gave her medication. Her portion of one month of these pills was \$118 for someone on a fixed income, so even with the health insurance, it's not even good for a lot of people. They're still winding up paying a ridiculous amount

And I think that definitely goes back to whoever brought up about the lawsuits. It just seems that so much of what the common person pays in medical care goes into offset all the high costs because of the lawsuits. It just has to be related.

Yeah, and all their—our friend who is a doctor says his malpractice insurance—he had a friend who retired from being a doctor because his malpractice insurance in Florida was more than he made in a year.

That's the truth.

But it is the suing—

And the quality of education for doctors is going way way down. It is scary what they're graduating people with, you know? Hardly any knowledge. Because my family is in the healthcare business and a lot of these guys who are very bright and they're in their 50s and 60s who had to when the Vietnam War was going on, there was only like 5,000 people—you got your brightest and smartest. Now they're taking immigrants, whatever, they're getting free rides. I mean the normal white male can't afford to pay to go to medical school. They're lowering the standards of what they have to know and learn to get them out and it's just that a lot of doctors are so fed up with insurance that...For instance a friend of mine is an EMT and they used to take out tonsils all the time. Well they stopped taking them out and the only reason is the insurance is only paying them \$200 to take out tonsils which is a huge bloody surgery and a mess so they won't, and we demanded that our friend take our kid's tonsils out. He said 'Well they don't really need them. They don't look that bad.' Totally infected. You know so I mean the healthcare and all that is just I mean...and the big problem is that you're looking at your movie stars and stuff making multimillions and it's like do you care about your health or do you care about watching a movie? I think the whole system is really wacked out.

Like people would rather go around and drive their BMW than go get their airway opened or something.

When we moved out here my husband worked for Western Electric and that's how we ended up in Denver and our medical was covered. Western Electric became AT&T and then it became

Lucent. He is now retired. We don't have insurance. We have to pay for it totally ourselves, so that has totally turned around.

I'm in HR and part of my job is dealing with our insurance. I've been in HR for about 25 years and the increases that we see, especially in the last maybe 10 years, every single year a percentage increase in the cost of premiums. A lot of companies have gone out of business. The insurance companies can't control costs and it now looks like they are actually doing more of the doctor and then the doctor's

Yeah, they're making the diagnosis.

They are. They are.

They don't know that you don't need that.

They have so much control.

What the doctors are allowed to do, some of the doctors are trying to get away from the HMOs but that's also a tough thing for them.

TALK TO ME ABOUT THE SITUATION IN IRAQ. WE HAVEN'T BROUGHT THAT UP YET. HOW ARE YOU FEELING ABOUT THAT?

Time to get out.

I don't think we can get out.

It's very complex.

Yeah.

I think it is so complex and such a different culture from our culture that it's really hard I think for the average American to get behind the war. I think that it was a good thing to get rid of a horrible despot who was a murderous individual leading the country for selfish purposes, but it was such an undertaking that without a whole world helping us it's so difficult. It's going to be a very long-term endeavor if we really end up defending what we started out to defend.

I agree with Barbara. I felt that way too. It didn't matter to me whether there were any WMD and all that because I agreed, I really thought that he was a horrible person and needed to go. This is like she said—it's very complicated and once again it's not instant, but I think—I'm a person who really believes you have to stand up for your values and you really have to stand up for what is right and what is true and to give in to the terrorists who are over there, those leftover people of Saddam Hussein's, who are doing all these car bombings almost on a daily basis—you can't give in to terror. I really do believe that. I'm not saying—I mean it definitely is a horrible thing that so many of our soldiers are dying and so many innocent civilians over there are too—I mean it's a horrible thing.

But you know what's horrible too? I agree that we should go there and I didn't care about the weapons or whatever but we don't understand that their thought process is totally different than ours. And I don't know that it will ever really be solved, but what I'm concerned about in this country is we hear everyday about all these car bombings and all these people dying in Iraq, well what about the gang and drive-by shootings and all the death that's going on in our own country? It's as bad—it's just a different kind of terrorism, but we don't address that, we don't address these poor families who their only way to get money is to rob a store or whatever. I mean we don't address the issues in our own country as well as we should.

I know I've already spoke on this but I thought of something else that to me really bothers me about the media coverage of this war. I guess it's because of my age. I'm 60 years old and I heard my parents talk about the wars and I believe that one of the things that America did right in past wars is that with all the soldiers on the ground, people in other countries sort of got to know the American and through that getting to know the American, I think there's a bit that—I know it was such a different war, but the concept of seeing us doing good things. Like right now today at this very moment I'm sure there are people out there, soldiers, men and women, building schools, carrying the mail, doing good things for the Iraqi people and I wish that we could hear more about that because I know what news is and I understand what sells and I understand also the need to record every single body—every single death that occurs. But I also think there have to be some good things happening and I'd like to hear more about those.

I was going to say that very same thing. We are so brought down by negative energy in this world and how we can turn things around individually, one by one, if everybody would focus a little more on the good.

OTHER THOUGHTS ON THE SITUATION IN IRAQ?

I think it was the right thing to do.

HOW ABOUT WHERE WE ARE NOW? WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? A LOT OF PEOPLE SAY WE NEED TO STAY THE COURSE. WE NEED TO CONTINUE DOING WHAT WE'RE DOING. BUT WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? WHEN DO YOU KNOW THAT IT'S BEEN ENOUGH? WHAT BENCHMARKS DO WE NEED TO ACHIEVE BEFORE WE CAN BRING THE TROOPS HOME?

I don't think we can walk away like we did in Vietnam. You can't bring the soldiers home—my husband was in that war and America wasn't behind them. People saw them and they just weren't behind it. Everything negative was showing, and I don't think there can be another ending like Vietnam was. I think we do have to have a victory over there. Things do have to improve.

WHAT DOES A VICTORY LOOK LIKE?

I think things have to improve to where they were before. I think things have to—I don't know how you do victory but we have to back our men and women over there.

It could be a matter of teaching them, trying to set up a government that they're running, and I think we did do that right and try to get their government running. Their country is also so

diverse. What you see in Baghdad is what we have here. What you see out in the country is not anything that we're even aware of in their thinking. I think that they just have to learn and it's going to take a generation of people who don't constantly see death and shooting and the whole way Saddam ran things. It's going to take that young generation of kids to grow up in a way that's a little more democratic or whatever before they'll even get going. Now how long we stay there I don't know, but we have to teach them enough..

I was just going to say that I think they need to show a little more appreciation for what we're doing. I mean we're over there fighting and from the reports that are on the news it seems like they don't even want to fight for their own country. It seems like we're carrying the load over there and if they want to change things and have things change over there, they need to take some responsibility.

Yeah.

We're certainly carrying the financial benefit over there. It is frustrating to me to see that. It seems like we're over there, things are getting blown up and we're building them back up. It's like 'Come on. Enough.' You just can't keep spending and giving and giving and giving.

ONE OTHER ISSUE I WANT TO TALK ABOUT IS A LOT OF YOU GUYS PROBABLY HEARD LAST WEEK SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR RETIRED FROM THE SUPREME COURT, CREATING THE FIRST VACANCY THERE IN PRETTY MUCH A DECADE. WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT IT? WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT THAT SITUATION, WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN THERE?

I think it's appalling that the Democrats and Republicans are lining up against one another. Bush hasn't even picked somebody and it's like the battlegrounds are set. I think no matter who he picks it's going to be grilled to the nth degree but there are really important issues coming up that will need to be resolved by somebody else sitting on that Supreme Court. Rehnquist will probably be leaving pretty quick too.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES THAT ARE AT STAKE?

Roe v. Wade.

The Terri Shiavo thing.

Stem cells.

Stem cells is a biggie. Abortion is looking to come back on the table again.

WHAT KIND OF A NOMINEE DO YOU THINK BUSH WILL PICK?

Right-wing. A conservative.

WHAT DOES CONSERVATIVE MEAN? ARE THERE CERTAIN ISSUES WHERE THAT NOMINEE HAS TO PASS A LITMUS TEST OR...?

I think he's going to choose somebody that is pretty far to the right. Not someone I'd like to see but it's just my opinion. I don't know. He may not just because if he does then it will be harder for them to get in.

It will be interesting to see who he picks because I think it might be very tempting to choose a conservative but on the other hand he must know the battle that will take place if does that, so it will be interesting. Looking at the past, some of the candidates that have been selected were selected as conservatives and then got voting by their conscience or by some indicator that you can't always predict, so that's my hope is that we'll get someone who really has a good sense of the Constitution and the country.

IF BUSH DOES PICK SOMEONE WHO IS CONSIDERED TO BE VERY CONSERVATIVE, PRETTY FAR TO THE RIGHT, HOW DO YOU THINK DEMOCRATS WILL REACT?

(laughter)

Filibuster.

Probably the political cartoonists out there are already drawing it.

It's sad that our Senators, our Congressmen, they're so tuned in to this party line thing that they don't vote what they feel and what they think and I know that the thing we had to fill out was 'How did you think Bush was doing and did you vote for Bush?' The one thing I do like about Bush is I feel like he says what he says. What he says is straight from his heart or straight from his mind or wherever it's from, but it's him speaking, even though speechwriters do it. I think that he comes across as 'This is how I am. Take me or leave me.' I hope we could get our Congressmen and our Senators to be the same way, saying 'You know what? You Democrats are being stupid right now. You need to do this.' Or 'You Republicans...' I think they need to quit thinking the party line and start thinking for themselves.

Listen to the people that they represent. I think they've lost that because of the party line.

None of them represent me.

We're so split.

IF IT DOES PLAY OUT THAT WAY, BUSH PICKS A NOMINEE WHO IS PRETTY FAR TO THE RIGHT, WHO SAYS THAT THEY'LL VOTE TO OVERTURN ROE V. WADE AND SOME OF THE OTHER ISSUES THAT WE'VE TALKED ABOUT, DEMOCRATS FILIBUSTER AND BASICALLY BRING THE SENATE TO A HALT OVER THIS BATTLE, WHAT'S GOING TO BE YOUR REACTION IF THAT'S HOW IT PLAYS OUT?

I'll be disgusted.

DISGUSTED OVER WHAT?

The politics. I get disgusted with both parties.

I think that goes along with what we've talked about, that people just turn inward, after awhile none of it is good news and so I think in the long run it does a great disservice to the American electorate because we are all getting disgusted to it and the way we deal with that is 'Okay. I'm fed up. I'm still going to vote but it's only because I'm an optimist.' I'm still going to vote.

HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU? WHAT WOULD BE YOUR REACTION IF THAT'S HOW IT PLAYS OUT?

Well it just seems like it's not about the issues so much anymore as about who did this when they were 18—digging dirty laundry out of the closet. It's just so childish and stupid to me. I just don't get it. I don't get why it has to get so ugly. When I was watching the debates, I just said 'I can't believe this.' It was just appalling to me that these leaders, our future leaders, would act like this. It's just disgusting to me.

And isn't it embarrassing for our children to see this? I think this is supposed to be America where people do have a voice and care about the country and involvement in the country. To have a son who is voting for the first time and to see all that going on, I just thought—I know historically there have always been splits and there have always been mudslinging. It's gone on forever but with the media coverage being what it is, I think we get way too many details. It's like more information than we need.

We don't even know if those details are true, if they are facts or not.

It's a headline.

It's all about ratings. Who's making the most money or winning?

I wish people would cross and start voting their conscience and not just doing the path. Maybe if people start voting for the person and not the party. I think we have to start really thinking about the person and the nomination as a whole and not which party is going to be there. Maybe that could change something to if we start doing that.

ALRIGHT. I WANT TO DO SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT NOW. I WANT TO THROW OUT THE NAMES OF SOME PEOPLE, ORGANIZATIONS, STUFF LIKE THAT. KIND OF LIKE WORD ASSOCIATION—WHAT'S THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO YOUR MIND? I DON'T CARE IF IT'S SILLY, VULGAR, I DON'T CARE, WHATEVER THAT FIRST INITIAL REACTION IS. WE'LL START WITH ONE THAT EVERYBODY KNOWS: BILL CLINTON.

Sleaze ball.

Jerk.

I liked Bill. He had his little things—that we didn't need to know about by the way. I don't want to know about everybody's private life like that, but he's the ultimate politician. He knows how to schmooze and this kind of thing but I also thought he was a smart man and if he wasn't so political he might have been able to do some certain things.

OTHER REACTIONS ON BILL CLINTON?

Slick.

SOME OF YOU HAVE TALKED ABOUT IT A LITTLE BIT ALREADY BUT JUST GIVE ME ONE WORD: THE MEDIA.

Out of control.

Liars

Yeah. Not to be trusted.

Sensationalism.

Privacy invasion.

How much can you believe?

It's too competitive. Way too much competition for stories.

HOW ABOUT BIG CORPORATIONS?

(All talking at once)

They have their place.

Big men. Big me, little you.

They just pay their CEOs way too much.

But they're doing a lot. Some of them, like EBay. I think that there are good examples and I think there are bad examples obviously.

HOW ABOUT TOM DELAY?

(No response)

DO PEOPLE KNOW WHO HE IS?

I don't know.

Some type of scandal.

DOES ANYBODY KNOW WHAT HIS POSITION IS?

He's the chairman?

HE'S ONE OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADERS IN THE HOUSE.

I was going to say he's a representative from the West?

TEXAS.

Oh that's right. Texas.

And even though he chose to have someone removed from life support in his family he doesn't believe that they should have been able to do that to Terri. That's him.

ANYBODY KNOW ANY OF THE CONTROVERSIES AROUND HIM?

Did he take some trips or something?

YEAH. HE TOOK TRIPS PAID FOR BY LOBBYISTS.

I think the ultimate politician in all the worst ways.

HOW ABOUT GEORGE W. BUSH? WHAT DO YOU THINK OF PRESIDENT BUSH?

I still think he's my man.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Well he's who I voted for and I still have conviction that he's going to do what we need him to do. I think that he needed to be in there for a second term. I think starting a new president after four years—they just get started and then they got to restart—he needs to be stable in there. I do believe that he will turn things around. I guess I'm that optimistic. It's like 'Come on. Keep going. Keep going.'

OTHER THOUGHTS ON PRESIDENT BUSH?

I think in my mind he's kind of a mediocre president but he was—because of 9/11 he had to do more than he might have been prepared to do, but considering everything I think that in the worst of times he's led us in a way that has made me feel that perhaps I was wrong in thinking he was mediocre and I certainly want to see him continue and not give up because I just think he's on the right path. We just need a lot more world support.

OKAY. HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU?

I think part of the problem is he's not charismatic but I would love to meet him. I would love to have him be my next door neighbor or something like that because I think he's just a real down to earth person and I do think he bases his opinions on his life experiences and on what he wants instead of listening to a bunch of goobly-gop from people saying 'If you don't do this, we won't...' I think he's his own man.

I'd agree with that.

I think so too.

And I think he should keep going and doing—he may not finish what he’s trying to do but he’s not going to go backwards I don’t think. I don’t feel like he’s a person who’s going backwards.

OTHER THINGS YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU THINK OF PRESIDENT BUSH?

I think he has better morals and values than the last one.

I think he has a wife who’s very—personally as a woman—I really can relate to her. There’s something about her that seems very real.

Well now that she’s speaking out a little more—at first I thought she was like a 1950s wife and I didn’t like that. ‘Whatever George says, that’s what I...’ and now she at least has an opinion so I think that helps.

OKAY. WHAT I WANT TO DO NOW IS HAVE YOU GUYS WRITE A FEW THINGS DOWN BEFORE WE TALK A LITTLE MORE IN DEPTH ABOUT PRESIDENT BUSH. FIRST YOU’LL SEE THERE’S A PLACE IN THE UPPER RIGHT HAND CORNER FOR YOUR FIRST NAME. WHAT I WANT TO DO IS JUST RIGHT NOW DO HANDOUTS 1 AND 2. ON HANDOUT 1 WRITE DOWN ALL THE AREAS WHERE YOU APPROVE OF THE JOB PRESIDENT BUSH IS DOING. HANDOUT 2 WRITE DOWN ALL THE AREAS WHERE YOU DISAPPROVE OF THE JOB HE’S DOING. ONCE YOU FILL OUT BOTH OF THOSE WE’LL GO BACK AND TALK ABOUT THEM. IF YOU’RE STILL WRITING TAKE YOUR TIME, BUT IF YOU’RE DONE, FLIP BACK TO HANDOUT ONE AND TELL ME WHAT ARE THE AREAS WHERE YOU APPROVE OF THE JOB PRESIDENT BUSH IS DOING.

With Iraq and the War on Terror.

That’s what I put.

Education.

Leading the nation during a difficult time.

WHAT ELSE?

I put standing behind his word. Be there until the end.

He’s his own man.

Continued diplomacy.

OTHER AREAS WHERE YOU APPROVE OF THE JOB HE’S DOING?

Not putting back in the draft.

**HOW MANY PEOPLE SAY THEY APPROVE OF THE JOB HE’S DOING IN IRAQ?
WHAT SPECIFICALLY IS HE DOING THAT YOU APPROVE OF?**

Well I just think he's not backing down, under a lot of pressure.

It would be easy to withdraw. That would be the easiest thing to do.

I think he's keeping enough troops there to do what he needs to do but he's not trying to do like what we did in Vietnam and inundate. I do think he's trying to let Iraq have their own government. I think that he's trying to get them to think about what they need to do. I don't know if he personally—but I think that's his philosophy.

I think the tricky thing over there is there's so many factions. They don't necessarily get along, so part of the trick is to have those people start trusting each other.

WHAT ABOUT HANDOUT 2? WHAT ARE THE AREAS WHERE YOU DISAPPROVE OF THE JOB HE'S DOING?

I'd like to see them strengthen the borders between Mexico and the U.S.

Stem cell research.

Well I would just like him to keep his own personal religious beliefs out of his speaking. I just don't like to see that. I'm not one of the ones who says 'Take one nation under God out' but I am one that says 'You're the President of the US and I don't think it's necessary for you to bring your religious beliefs into a discussion or a speech.' That's part of the huge problem in Iraq anyway is all the religion and conflict. I think that turns people off when he does that. So I'd like to see him leave that out.

I think I'm the only one here that doesn't agree with the way he's handled the war in Iraq. I feel that he went in there maybe with some pressure from his father who had problems with Saddam, but I think we rushed into this, that their clearly wasn't an exit strategy. We've been doing things but it's like 'Okay now we're in the middle of a (indecipherable). What the heck do we do now?' I don't think that this thing was thought through anywhere near as clearly as it should have been.

WHAT ELSE?

I would also like to see him take a stand against some of these Enron's and some of these big business CEOs who have broken the law. I think if he came out and said 'Why are these guys still out on the street?' I just think he needs to take a little bit of a stand about that, especially since many of them—their names are associated with him and other people in the Cabinet. I think he needs to say 'This is wrong' and he hasn't.

I put immigration border control, stem cell research and scientific progress, including space exploration. I just think that we need to move forward. We need something to get people fired up.

I also put more domestic spending and less spending on AIDS in Africa. We need to take of things here.

I had some that weren't mentioned: Abortion, Roe v. Wade and then seeking more global support.

GETTING MORE HELP FROM OTHER COUNTRIES?

Mmm-hmm.

Well the only thing I had was Social Security. I'm not sold on the Social Security.

OTHER THINGS WE HAVEN'T MENTIONED YET?

Importing and exporting food and other things.

ANYTHING ELSE?

I don't know if this falls under that category but the FDA, all these incredible drugs that cure everything instantly and give you horrible side effects which are going to cause a myriad of problems down the road—I don't know if he has so much to do with that, but I just think that's a problem.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Imposing some kind of a security system on certain aliens that come in. Fake IDs and God knows what they're doing. It just needs to be a better system.

I WANT TO KIND OF SHIFT GEARS NOW FROM TALKING ABOUT INDIVIDUALS TO TALKING ABOUT PARTIES—DEMOCRATS, REPUBLICANS, AND YOU'VE GUYS HAVE ALREADY EXPRESSED THE FACT THAT YOU'RE UNHAPPY WITH A LOT OF THE PARTISANSHIP IN WASHINGTON AND WHEN YOU VOTE, YOU LOOK AT THE INDIVIDUAL RATHER THAN THE PARTY, AND I HEAR THAT BUT AT THE SAME TIME THE REALITY OF HOW THINGS WORK IN WASHINGTON IS THAT DEMOCRATS DO A LOT OF THINGS TOGETHER. REPUBLICANS DO A LOT OF THINGS TOGETHER AND THERE ARE CERTAIN WAYS TO COMPARE AND CONTRAST THEM. CERTAIN THINGS THEY HAVE IN COMMON AND WHERE THEY DIFFER, SO I WANT TO KIND OF FOCUS ON THAT, ON THE PARTIES, AND HOW THEY OPERATE RATHER THAN INDIVIDUALS RIGHT NOW. FLIPPING TO HANDOUT 3, SIMILAR TO WHAT WE DID WITH BUSH, WE'LL START WITH DEMOCRATS THIS TIME. TRY TO COME UP WITH AT LEAST A COUPLE ANSWERS TO EACH OF THE QUESTIONS. ON THE TOP HALF, WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT DEMOCRATS? WHAT DO THEY GET RIGHT? ON THE BOTTOM HALF, WHERE DO DEMOCRATS GET IT WRONG? WHAT KIND OF HOLDS YOU BACK FROM SUPPORTING THEM AS A PARTY? AGAIN IF YOU'RE STILL WRITING, TAKE YOUR TIME, BUT IF YOU'RE DONE, TELL ME WHERE DEMOCRATS GET IT RIGHT. WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THEM?

They seem to care about human rights. That's the first thing that came into mind.

DO YOU SPECIFIC EXAMPLES?

Minorities.

I agree with that. I said civil rights and social reform. I think they're thinking more about it.

(Indecipherable—audio is too faint)

I think they sure because they have more money allowed and the high-profile supporters.

OTHER THINGS YOU LIKE ABOUT DEMOCRATS? OTHER THINGS THEY GET RIGHT?

They have the appearance of having more concern about the environment, environmental issues.

Concern for individual rights and privacy.

Probably attract more younger voters.

WHAT ELSE? ANYTHING THAT HASN'T BEEN MENTIONED?

It goes along with what you mentioned but women's rights—I think they've always been leaders in that field.

ALRIGHT. WHERE DO DEMOCRATS GET IT WRONG?

They seem to be for big government, too much control at the top, too much power which I worry would lead to weakening the Constitution.

I think they pick the wrong candidates.

It sounds trite but I think that's really true. There have to be good people out there. You know our local—people will all have different opinions—but our Democratic mayor of Denver seems to be such a bright fellow. Lots of good ideas. There have to be other grassroots people like that out there.

OTHER THINGS DEMOCRATS GET WRONG?

They seem kind of weak to me. Weaker on terrorism.

WHY?

They seem like they would be more eager to hold out the olive branch instead of recognizing the fact that this is my enemy. We need to defend ourselves.

I put economic policies, which kind of goes along with the social programs and all the different things in the big government. We'll take care of you. We'll take care of you, instead of creating a situation where people earn money on merit and that kind of thing. Too much welfare keeps people down instead of helping them improve and I'm not real bright on the difference in the parties but I just—this is just a thought.

My whole thing too with all the social services and that stuff is for them to gain votes probably. That's about it.

OTHER THINGS DEMOCRATS GET WRONG? ALRIGHT. MOVE TO HANDOUT FOUR AND DO THE SAME THING FOR REPUBLICANS. OKAY, SO WHERE DO REPUBLICANS GET IT RIGHT?

I like their attitude of not on my watch type of thing. They are more hawkish. They want to protect their country. They seem to be more into the military thing and all of that. Also I put typically Republicans try to develop some kinds of businesses or some kind of incentive to create more jobs so that we can put more people to work.

I agree. Stronger in general policies and I think that they're stronger on foreign policies, just looking historically.

WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL THAT WAY?

I think just it seems typically when you're looking back historically being able to have...I'm trying to think how I want to put this...maybe because it seems like... all the other foreign leaders...on the same kinds of things that we believe.

OKAY. OTHER THINGS THAT REPUBLICANS GET RIGHT?

This is a little complicated because one of the things that I thought of was that they represent a moral face of the country and yet I get irked too when they pull religion into it more than they should. But I think overall I have to say that they do sort of stand out for what's right and what's wrong.

HOW SO?

Sort of—you should never generalize, but in everything from just admitting going to church and things like that—in a way it seemed like Kerry was like hiding his faith in many ways and it just didn't hit me right. But I think there's something about, when I think about Republicans, even though it's often in a negative way, they're still aware of that under God and I don't want them to impose it but there's another part of me that does want to stand up and put my hand on my heart and say 'Yes, there is something about representing whatever you believe in as a deity.'

WHO ELSE?

I think they tend to be a little more conservative on financial issues even though I don't support what Bush is doing with Social Security, at least he's trying to do something and you're able to perceive there's a big problem.

OTHER THINGS REPUBLICANS GET RIGHT?

I kind of agree with her. They'll stand behind their plan right or wrong. They won't back down.

I think they're trying to increase the education qualities and values.

I also think that they believe in the value of individual potential I guess I should say rather than that kind of welfare state that we have to take care of everybody. I think they really value in general the American spirit.

And individualism.

If you look at with Republicans as a party, I think a couple things stand out. That they're able to get financial support and they get the votes in.

AND WHAT DO THEY GET WRONG?

The only thing I think they get wrong is what you like. I just don't like that preachy-ness, that holier than thou type of attitude. Because I have faith, you got to listen to me and you should do it this way because this is right. Of course I have a real stance on abortion that I don't think that I agree with them and so that's...and so they're preachy about that being the right thing, the same with stem cells, that whole thing that could be really productive.

As far as the issues I personally don't believe in abortion but I disagree that it should be a central issue of the Republicans and so many times I've seen good grassroots people who might make otherwise good candidates in the Republican Party, that are pro-choice and therefore they'd never make it. That seems to be so important to so many other Republicans that are there in the caucuses.

AND WHAT ELSE?

I like the fact that this country was founded on a higher power. I believe that personally so I like that about the Republican party, that they do seem to have stronger moral values, but I contradicted myself down here in the disagree because when I think of the Republican party I don't think they're very humble, and I think that it's okay to believe in a higher power but I think you need to also be (indecipherable) and that is having humility and I don't think we as a nation—Republicans come across that way. I think other countries think we're the greatest power, or the greatest nation on the Earth, but we're certainly not very humble about it.

WHAT ELSE? OTHER AREAS WHERE YOU DISAPPROVE OF THE JOB REPUBLICANS DO?

It seems like when you hear the word big business you hear Republicans also. They're a great influence there. Even when companies are wrong and I couldn't remember the name of this company that's got this big contract over in Iraq—

Halliburton—

Yeah. It looked scandalous at one point that they can't account for millions of dollars of funds and yet they're just awarded another contract. If something looks shady at least look into it a little more. Saying 'Well we're supposed to have a close alliance with the VP.' Is that all it takes?

I actually put that too—too tolerant of big business miscues—things that they do wrong that we just kind of let it go by.

WHAT ELSE?

I think that lack of human rights, sensitivity if nothing else, everything from abortion to stem cell, it doesn't seem to be reacting to the will of the people. It seems to be reacting to some rule that exists rather than what is should be I think.

I think that they're narrow minded on certain social issues. They favor certain groups such as born-again Christians, families, and they exclude other groups.

ANYTHING ELSE? AS YOU GUYS KNOW, REPUBLICANS HAVE A LEVEL OF CONTROL THAT'S UNPRECEDENTED PRETTY MUCH IN OUR LIFETIMES. THEY'VE GOT THE WHITE HOUSE, THEY HAVE EXPANDED MARGINS IN THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE NOW, SO THEY HAVE A LEVEL OF CONTROL THAT THEY HAVEN'T HAD BEFORE. WHAT DO YOU FEEL THEY'VE ACCOMPLISHED WITH THAT CONTROL? THEY'VE BEEN IN CHARGE OF ALL THIS FOR SIX MONTHS NOW. THEY BASICALLY HAVE FOR THE FOUR YEARS PREVIOUS, BUT THEY'VE HAD THESE LARGER MARGINS AND THE ABILITY TO DO PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING THEY WANTED FOR SIX MONTHS. WHAT HAVE THEY ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR?

I think holding things together because that was a huge difficult situation after 9/11. Our economy was already in trouble before that. That gave it such a huge blow that just trying to get faith back in our system I guess, so much of our economy and the stock market is just based on peoples' faith.

HOW DO THE REST OF YOU FEEL? CAN YOU POINT TO ANY SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS THE REPUBLICANS HAVE HAD?

I think the nation recuperating from an election that was close again is one thing that we could cite as holding it together. I think it was very Irisp division. I know even with friends, people, bumper stickers, everything you saw, I think it did take our country awhile and I wish they'd accomplished more, and perhaps they have and we don't know about it because again the media, I believe, seems to be slanted from a liberal perspective, so while much of the news carries what's going on in Iraq, all the negative things, I'm not sure we're hearing all the good things, and I don't want to listen to it on talk radio.

DO YOU GUYS APPROVE OF THE JOB THAT THEY'RE DOING? DO YOU THINK THEY'RE DOING A GOOD JOB?

I don't think they're doing anything and I don't think the Democrats were doing anything before that. I mean it's not like, you know, nothing was being done before. Nothing is really being done now and I attribute that not to the fault of the Republicans or the Democrats, just to the fact that they just clash so much. It's like on the judge thing, no matter what judge they pick, even though like 50 judges have in lower courts been approved and whatever, so maybe that's an accomplishment, I don't know, but I don't think we as a country really know what we want to accomplish. What do we want them to do?

It's like I was saying before we need something to motivate us. To me it seems like we're stagnant. We used to have the space program and that was moving along and then all of a sudden, what happened? It stopped. I thought at this point in time we'd have something on Mars, little station on the moon, something.

WHAT SHOULD THEY BE DOING? WHAT DO YOU FEEL THEY SHOULD BE DOING IN CONGRESS RIGHT NOW? WHAT SHOULD THEY FOCUS ON?

I just wanted to back up just a second. I agree with Alice. I think we're just sort of in survival mode and I find it very interesting that—I was thinking just the other day, right after 9/11, how united we were. There were no parties that few weeks after. We were very connected. As a country we were very united and I find it very interesting that now—I think we all experienced it, we saw it. We can't sustain that. Why can't we sustain this? I can't figure out why we can't sustain that. I think we have to figure out—we're just sort of in survival mode—we accept these \$2.50-\$3.00 at the gas pump. Well it's just the way it is. It's like we're getting sort of like we accept whatever.

SO IS THAT SOMETHING THAT THEY SHOULD BE DOING SOMETHING ABOUT? I WANT TO KNOW, DO YOU THINK THEY SHOULD BE DOING ANYTHING TO EARN THEIR MONEY OR SHOULD THEY JUST BE UP THERE DOING NOTHING AND THE STATUS QUO IS OKAY?

I guess it depends what you think the role of Congress, which is our legislative branch, is supposed to be and basically it's to pass laws. So okay they're supposed to go there and pass laws just to seem they're doing something. No, I don't think they should do that and I don't believe that our federal government should take the role of fixing everything for us. I guess when you ask what do I think they should be doing, I guess they should be making sure that I guess the laws that we do have, and that comes from our judges, and enforcing that.

OKAY. HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU? DO YOU THINK THERE IS ANYTHING THAT CONGRESS SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON? ISSUES THEY SHOULD BE DEALING WITH?

Education.

Very important. I came from the old school—I can't remember what hours we went to school—but every hour of our day was accounted for and by the time we got to college I had a better sense of myself but even there it was an easy tendency to screw up and I'm looking at teenagers, high school kids with these real flexible times and I think they need more of a structured environment. Our policy is always just keep throwing money at it. That's going to fix it and that isn't the answer. I don't know what needs to be done. I don't have a clue but whatever is being done now certainly doesn't seem to be the answer because we keep falling further and further behind.

I would like to see the government ask for—it's complicated—but ask for experts in whatever field it is, healthcare, education, business, to get some ideas going. I think this country has a lot of thinking people and I think if we go to the top of those fields, or perhaps not the top but one step down, go to the people who are really engaged in whatever business it is, not necessarily the

CEOs, but to go to those people and somehow within each state maybe come up with some ideas. I'm sure that this country could solve a lot of problems if they asked the right questions to the right people. That would be a beginning. Research.

I do think we have people like that out there with special interests that say 'This is what we want.' Unfortunately it's not on the up and up. That's the problem. This is something that my state needs and we need to try to get some jobs down here in this certain area. Look at our own state, how much diversity there is throughout the state, in education, in economic levels, I mean it's true. The more affluent school districts have typically put out more educated people, a higher percentage of people who have at least a basic education. There's just too many people.

I WANT TO TALK A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT THE DYNAMICS OF THE COUNTRY IN TERMS OF THE PARTIES AND CONGRESS AND SOME OF THAT STUFF AND GET YOUR REACTIONS TO A COUPLE DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS. FLIP TO HANDOUT #5. AGAIN THIS IS JUST A CERTAIN POINT OF VIEW AND I WANT TO GET YOUR REACTION TO IT. I'LL READ IT OUT LOUD. TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK OF IT. 'OUR COUNTRY IS MORE POLITICALLY DIVIDED THAN AT ANY TIME IN RECENT HISTORY. WHILE LIBERALS AND DEMOCRATS MAY BE WINNING IN SOME OF THE BIG CITIES IN THE STATES ON EITHER COAST, REPUBLICANS BETTER REPRESENT THE VALUES AND THE BELIEFS OF MIDDLE AMERICA AND THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS.'

I agree.

I agree.

That's true.

WHY?

Because I think that just in the voting areas, I mean you get these big liberals running and they don't get elected. People are going more back I think to the morals and values.

Some of our big population centers are on either coast so a lot of times the people who end up running come from cities in those states but they are people who the vast majority of the middle don't feel they're being represented by--either party.

THIS ONE SAYS REPUBLICANS BETTER REPRESENT.

Yeah...

Well this one sounds so stereotypical but I think in the heart of America there is the family businesses, the families helping each other, and it goes back to family. Strengthen the family in the heart of America. Well that's a real general statement but you know I kind of think that.

AND DO YOU THINK REPUBLICANS BETTER REPRESENT THAT?

I do.

I think I'd like to believe that that's how people are only I don't see as much—I mean even in the Midwest and in the South, their teenagers are just as—they're not family oriented as much anymore. I think that we're losing that. We talked about that earlier, that we're losing that family so values and beliefs in middle America I'm going, 'What is that?' I mean are we middle America here? I don't know. I agree that we're politically divided but I'm not sure that that other is true to me.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS POLITICAL DIVISION?

Nothing gets done.

ARE WE IN A SITUATION WHERE BASICALLY REPUBLICANS ARE GOING TO WIN THE SAME STATES IN THE MIDDLE EVERY TIME AND DEMOCRATS ARE GOING TO WIN THE STATES ON THE COAST EVERY TIME AND NOTHING IS GOING TO CHANGE? IS THIS JUST A PERMANENT DIVISION IN THIS COUNTRY OR WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO BRIDGE THAT GAP?

I think we have to concentrate on character and not about parties. I was all for not having any parties this last election. I was sick of it. I was done with it. I though 'Why do we even have these parties?' That's just—I don't understand it. The division is toxic I think.

I would like to think it's possible for a leader to rise from either party who really captured the heart and spirit of the nation and that both of those groups could seek that type of person to lead them. I think it's possible.

WHY ARE WE IN THIS POSITION? IS IT JUST BECAUSE OF THE CANDIDATES THAT HAVE RUN?

I think it's partially that. I do think there are very different elements in society. The coasts are very different. They are truly different than the middle of the country and I don't think that's going to change and I think both groups are a little bit arrogant in thinking that their way is the only way.

Mmm-hmm.

I think the best thing would be to have a candidate that could bridge that gap.

WELL SURE.

We might get back to thinking about individuals rather than parties.

THIS IS MY POINT. ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE DIFFERENT PARTS OF AMERICA SO GREAT NOW THAT THERE IS NO WAY YOU CAN APPEAL TO BOTH?

I hope not.

Yeah.

I don't think that we're going to be able to solve some of this unless we have some election reform. I think it's difficult for people to run for office, to even run for an office within their own state—takes so much money that you have to have backing from all kinds of PACs and so forth and then you owe them and so that's why we end up with the kind of corrupt government that we have.

Then you're getting presidents elected from Harvard or Yale on the East Coast. I mean what's that? There's other people in this country that...

And then you even wonder can they even relate to real people?

They've never had a job. That's the other thing. All of these politicians—most of them have never even started a job. Never ran a business and then they're trying to tell everybody else how to do it without ever having any knowledge of it.

I think they have to stop focusing on the differences. We need to focus on what we have in common. What do we have that's the same? What's our purpose? There's no purpose when you're focusing on the differences.

OKAY. FLIP TO HANDOUT 6. WE'VE GOT ANOTHER QUOTATION HERE. 'REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS HAVE DONE NOTHING ABOUT HEALTHCARE AND GAS PRICES AND HAVE BLOCKED DEMOCRATIC EFFORTS TO RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE, PROTECT PENSIONS, AND RESTRICT THE INFLUENCE OF LOBBYISTS. YET THEY TOOK EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES TO INTERFERE IN THE TERRI SHIAVO CASE, THEY VOTED THEMSELVES PAY RAISES, CHANGED CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS RULES TO PROTECT TOM DELAY, OPPOSED STEM CELL RESEARCH, CUT VETERANS BENEFITS, AND ARE STILL TRYING TO PRIVATIZE SOCIAL SECURITY DESPITE OVERWHELMING PUBLIC OPPOSITION. THESE ARE NOT THE PRIORITIES THAT CONGRESS SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON.' WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO THAT ONE?

I agree with some of it.

THERE'S A LOT IN THERE. WHAT STANDS OUT?

I mean my big thing is the healthcare. The Democrats try to change that too without having any information or medical background. Nothing happened with that either.

ALRIGHT. OTHER REACTIONS TO THIS ONE? WHAT STANDS OUT?

Voting their selves pay raises.

Yeah.

ALRIGHT. WHAT ELSE?

I think it's an absolute travesty that they've cut veterans' benefits. That's beyond all my comprehension.

WHAT ELSE STANDS OUT IN THAT ONE?

I think it was written by a Democratic.

YES, THIS IS OBVIOUSLY COMING FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW. LIKE I SAID DO YOU AGREE WITH IT?

I think that raising minimum wage, if you own a company and you're not making it, I mean it's hard to make minimum wage and give everybody all these great benefits that you know the Democrats say everybody has to have health insurance and this and that. Well when you own your own company, somebody's got to pay for that. If you're not making the money, a lot of people who own their own businesses are going out of business because...

The only way you could do that is you'd have to raise the cost of whatever service.

Right. Then people don't want to pay that either.

It's just a vicious circle.

You know Fran brought up the point of working together toward what we see a need for and just reading the first thing—Republicans in healthcare have done nothing about healthcare and gas prices—well the Democrats didn't do anything about healthcare either. That's something they could work together on. They should be able to come to some sort of compromise on it. The political machine has made it so that they can't even do that. I think we should have their retirement benefits.

What stood out for me was 'overwhelming public opposition' and isn't this a government of the people? Or it should be. It's supposed to be. But then that causes problems too, because then we have the people who just kind of accept mediocrity. It's a really tough call.

I think the pension plan thing, the teachers' union is like the hugest union in the country, and they're retiring at the age of 54-55 and they're having these great pensions and everybody else is paying for it. I mean there's going to be huge problems because there's not enough money for everybody to have all these pensions and everybody else to be paying for it, especially when you're 50, 54.

Also this interference in the Terri Shiavo case, how did they even think that they should be involved in that?

Mmm-hmm.

That was just insane to me.

I agree. Along the lines she was saying, when Social Security was started or whatever, of course the people who worked for the government, the people who were in the military, don't pay into Social Security so they have a double dipping situation.

They get great pension plans.

ALRIGHT. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF, BEFORE WE TALKED ABOUT WHAT HAS CONGRESS ACCOMPLISHED, AND WE COULDN'T REALLY POINT TO ANYTHING, THIS IS BASICALLY SAYING THEY'VE BEEN DOING A LOT. IT GIVES YOU THIS WHOLE LIST OF THINGS THAT THEY'VE DONE JUST IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS. IT SAYS THEY'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING GOOD, THEY'RE DOING A LOT OF STUFF THAT'S BAD. DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT BASIC POINT OF VIEW OR?

No I think this just points out the things that they've done that aren't necessarily favorable.

HAVE THEY DONE ANYTHING THAT'S FAVORABLE?

What have they done? Do you know?

Well even if they had done something, the way our media is, they would not have reported it. Of course we as citizens could have probably looked it up or been a little more aware of what's going on. I know my awareness level is very low of what's really going on.

I think part of that is that we're so sick of it that personally I used to read so much more and now I can get through like one editorial and it's just too much, so I think part of it is a reaction, and that's why I said I agree with you when you said everybody is sort of recuperating. I think we're still recuperating from 9/11. We're still recuperating from the election and I think we'll get to a point, I hope, someday when we're not so partisan again, but right now it's all about blaming rather than taking responsibility.

HEATHER SAID SHE THINKS SOMEBODY OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING ON HEALTHCARE. THEY OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER. CAN YOU, IN YOUR MEMORY, THINK OF ANY POLITICAL LEADER OF EITHER PARTY OR ANYONE WHO'S DONE ANYTHING TO IMPROVE THE HEALTHCARE SITUATION OR HAS PUT FORWARD A PLAN THAT YOU REALLY THOUGHT WOULD WORK?

No.

If Hillary hadn't had that strange plan, but that wasn't good.

WHAT WAS BAD ABOUT IT?

I don't remember the details of it. I don't remember. Does anyone remember that?

Again I think they need to—I think there are people who could design a good healthcare plan that would not be biased and spend money on this drug or do this. I think there is a way somehow to sort out where we can find our experts without having them be selling a product. I just think we need to investigate ways of finding out what should be done, whether it's research or what else.

I'm thinking there is something that has to be done with the insurance companies. I mean they should be getting sued, I think, left and right for what they're doing with the healthcare system. They're trying to run it, they're trying to decide what kind of tests you should have and 'No we

can't do that because that will cost too much.' There's so many doctors just quitting and leaving, I mean they're great, but they're making the decisions. 'You'll get paid \$500 if you see this patient. If they need tests or anything, that comes out of that \$500.' 'Oh no, you don't need any tests. See you later.'

OKAY. SO WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL PIECES OF A SOLUTION TO THE HEALTHCARE ISSUE?

Asking the right questions about what's wrong with the system.

THAT'S WHAT I'M ASKING YOU. WHAT ARE THE QUESTIONS?

Making it affordable for the average citizen and contain costs. Our health insurance, I work for a really large corporation and you'd think they'd have really the best benefits. It's just getting worse. It's getting more expensive every year with worse benefits and higher deductibles.

A limit on the amount a person can be awarded for a lawsuit. In a way I think why would we do that because if there is really a malpractice issue then the person should be able to get whatever they would need to live on, but what's happened is we're awarding more money than is reasonable because you have to divide it up between all the lawyers, and then you have to worry about taking care of the poor person who is paralyzed.

There's really a fine line between socialized medicine, which I don't think people in this country really want—the doctors wouldn't want it, people here would think they were not getting good enough care—so there's the fine line between that and how much can you afford. At what point? Well if you work in ACRID or something as a doctor you make so much and they get this level of care...you don't want that. You want everybody to have equal opportunity. Well—

LET ME ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS THEN. IS IT MORE IMPORTANT, WE'VE GOT 100,000,000 PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY UNINSURED RIGHT NOW. IS IT MORE IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE TO MAKE SURE THAT WE GET EVERYONE INSURED OR IS IT MORE IMPORTANT TO BRING DOWN THE COSTS FOR THOSE WHO ARE INSURED?

I think you need to educate people. We need to get our food system back up and healthier with vitamins and all that kind of stuff and farming. Not everybody is going to live forever and taking all these great pills when you're 60 or 80—

ALRIGHT BUT THE QUESTION I'M ASKING IS IT MORE IMPORTANT TO COVER EVERYONE OR IS IT MORE IMPORTANT TO BRING DOWN THE COSTS FOR THE PEOPLE WHO ARE COVERED NOW?

I think they need to bring down the cost period because even if you're not covered—

You got to do both things because those uninsured people are clogging the ERs.

Well those that have insurance are paying for those that don't.

We are.

Oh yeah.

The whole thing with the insurance companies is they made it like you can go in and get great medical care for \$10. I mean you're going to have to start paying out--if you want good, decent medical care, you're going to have to pay for it. Not everybody is going to be able to afford it unless you want to go to socialism or whatever like that, but then you're going to be waiting. If you get cancer like in Canada it takes 3-5 years to have your surgery.

OKAY SO NOBODY HERE THINKS THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE IN CHARGE OF HEALTHCARE? YOU ALL AGREE THAT PRIVATE INSURANCE COMPANIES SHOULD STILL BE IN CHARGE OF HEALTHCARE?

I think it's going to take some legislation.

GOVERNMENT OR PRIVATE INSURANCE COMPANIES?

Private.

Private.

Private.

LET ME BOUNCE A FEW IDEAS THAT ARE OUT THERE AND SEE WHAT YOU THINK OF THEM. ONE WOULD BE GOVERNMENT STEPPING IN AND PLACING CAPS ON HOW MUCH INSURANCE COMPANIES CAN CHARGE OR HOW MUCH PRESCRIPTION DRUG COMPANIES CAN CHARGE FOR CERTAIN DRUGS AS A WAY TO CONTROL COSTS. IS THAT?

It depends on how they do a cap because if you just say there's X amount that you can pay for a drug, if that's going to preclude the research being done to have the best drugs then I don't think that's going to be helpful. Maybe a percentage type of a cap where once your R&D is paid for you're not going to be making all these huge margins.

WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK?

My understanding of the drug companies is, like you said, once this R&D is paid for then the price of the drug should come down, but I also thought that's used in the cost of developing all kinds of new drugs. If you're the person with X disease that's one of these orphan diseases it's very important to you that something come about. I really think what we need to do is start studying some of these other countries. I don't know if government should run it or not but my neighbor is from Japan. They have socialized medicine over there and she said it's just phenomenal. Everyone is taken care of. I'm not saying that it's right for us but maybe we can learn something from what they're doing because nobody is in danger, and I think Britain has something that's probably along socialized lines too. Check into some of these countries where we rank I think 16th in the world as far as our health is concerned even though we pay more than anyone else. So there's something wrong with that system.

ANOTHER IDEA I WANT TO GET YOUR REACTION TO IS PUTTING CAPS ON THE PERCENTAGE OF INCOME THAT EMPLOYEES CAN PAY TOWARD THEIR INSURANCE. SO IN OTHER WORDS YOU COULDN'T PAY MORE THAN, I'LL JUST GRAB A NUMBER OUT OF THE AIR, TEN PERCENT, OF YOUR MONTHLY PAY TOWARD HEALTH INSURANCE. THOSE WHO MAKE MORE COULD PAY MORE TO ALLEVIATE THE BURDEN ON THE COMPANY BUT THOSE IN THE LOWER INCOME BRACKETS—EVERYBODY WOULD PAY A CERTAIN PERCENTAGE.

That's an interesting thought.

That's interesting.

OKAY.

It sounds equitable.

That would be a bargain.

LIKE I SAID I GRABBED THAT NUMBER OUT OF THE AIR. I DON'T KNOW WHAT A REALISTIC NUMBER ULTIMATELY WOULD BE, BUT WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT AS AN IDEA, AS A WAY OF CONTROLLING THE COSTS? IF PEOPLE MADE MORE THEY WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE PUTTING MORE TOWARD THEIR HEALTH INSURANCE.

For the company that has health insurance that's good—what if you work for a company that doesn't have insurance? We're looking—I would love to know what the percentage of places that people work have health insurance. I don't think as many people have that opportunity through their company or where they work as you think.

NEXT YEAR THERE WILL BE ANOTHER ELECTION FOR CONGRESS. OBVIOUSLY IT'S A LONG WAY OFF NOW BUT WHAT DO YOU THINK IS GOING TO BE THE STATE OF AFFAIRS AT THAT POINT? DO YOU THINK THE COUNTRY IS LARGELY GOING TO BE IN THE SAME POSITION WE ARE NOW, IN TERMS OF THE ECONOMY, IN TERMS OF THE SITUATION IN IRAQ, ALL THE OTHER ISSUES THAT WE'VE TALKED ABOUT—OR DO YOU THINK THINGS ARE GOING TO CHANGE A LOT IN THE NEXT 12 TO 16 MONTHS?

I think immigration is going to become a major issue in this country. I really do.

I think it will be the same more or less. I don't see anything changing really. I mean when it does change it's not going to happen in 12 months, it's going to take several years, but I don't see a lot of changes going on now. I don't even see a direction that we're going. Until we find a direction..

THINGS ARE JUST KIND OF STAGNANT RIGHT NOW?

Yeah I think we do a lot of talk.

I think the economy is getting better when you're looking at job openings and that kind of situation I think is slow but I think it's improving.

I do taxes. I work for H&R Block and the percentage of people that are not making it just is overwhelming. Our elderly—talk about fixed income—we don't support, we don't care of our elderly. We don't take care of our children. I don't see where we're really going...The rich are getting richer and the poor are not making it. I don't see where it's changed. Congress hasn't changed it. You can't give a family a little bit of money and say okay. That little bit of income is not going to help right now. It's too late. Twelve months too late. They've already lost everything.

We jumped to another topic before you threw out Option #3. I thought you were going to throw out Option #3.

NO. I ONLY HAD TWO.

You only had two? Oh sorry. I thought you were going to throw out that we are the most overfed, undernourished nation in the world and I can't believe that we can't put some focus on preventive, holistic—none of that was talked about here so I just was waiting..

I thought that too.

That's an option. Why can't insurance companies pay for the supplements and things that the U.S. Surgeon General says we should be taking that 75% of Americans aren't taking?

Because then they would have to have all kinds of money going to R&D to make sure that all the right ingredients are in your St. John's Wart or whatever it is you're taking. That would just..

But see nobody is talking about nutrition here. Nobody is talking about prevention.

Well it's somebody else's fault that we gained 50 pounds.

(laughter)

My huge other thing because I'm getting into nutrition and stuff like that a lot and they're plowing over the vegetable fields to plant corn. You look at every ingredient you buy is high fructose, corn syrup, blah blah blah, just even the health insurance cost and things like that, I mean the quality of care is getting so bad from these doctors. They hardly have any education.

OKAY. I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING. BACK TO WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT WITH THE ELECTIONS FOR CONGRESS NEXT YEAR. GIVEN THE WAY WE'VE TALKED ABOUT THINGS, MAYBE YOU'D CHANGE A LITTLE BIT, PROBABLY NOT CHANGE A LOT BETWEEN NOW AND THEN. THE WAY WE TALKED ABOUT THE PARTIES, DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS, RATHER THAN THINKING ABOUT INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATES, WHAT WOULD BE THE BEST REASON TO VOTE FOR REPUBLICANS FOR CONGRESS? TO MAINTAIN THAT REPUBLICAN CONTROL OF CONGRESS? I WANT TO SEE IF WE HAVE ANY CREATIVE IDEAS FIRST BEFORE WE

GO TO THE CHEAT SHEET. WHAT'S THE BEST REASON TO VOTE FOR REPUBLICANS FOR CONGRESS?

This is kind of sarcastic but that way George Bush would have more support so maybe some of his ideas that he puts forth will have more of a possibility to come to fruition. Maybe certain judges—the filibuster can't work because once they're 63 or something—I mean I don't know that that's why I would vote Republican but I mean that's the only thing positive I can see to do it.

I would say the stronger support for our military.

ALRIGHT. FLIP TO HANDOUT SEVEN. WHAT WE HAVE HERE IS A LIST OF THINGS THAT SOME PEOPLE MIGHT OFFER. READ THROUGH THE LIST AND PICK THE TWO THAT FOR YOU PERSONALLY WOULD BE THE BEST REASONS TO VOTE FOR A REPUBLICAN FOR CONGRESS. IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT DON'T PICK IT, BUT IF YOU DO, PICK THE TWO THAT ARE THE BEST REASONS FOR YOU TO VOTE FOR A REPUBLICAN FOR CONGRESS. ALRIGHT, I'M GOING TO READ STRAIGHT DOWN THE LIST AND IF I COULD JUST GET A SHOW OF HANDS ON WHO PICKED EACH ONE. 'REPUBLICANS SUPPORT PRESIDENT BUSH AND HIS POLICIES.' HOW MANY PICKED THAT ONE?

NOBODY. 'REPUBLICANS FIGHT FOR TAX CUTS.'

4 OF YOU. 'REPUBLICANS DEFEND THE ROLE OF RELIGION.'

1 OF YOU. 'REPUBLICANS SUPPORT DECREASED REGULATION OF BUSINESSES.'

1 OF YOU. 'REPUBLICANS STAND FOR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.'

4 (unclear whether 4 or more)

'REPUBLICANS WILL STAY THE COURSE IN IRAQ.'

3 OF YOU. 'REPUBLICANS ARE STRONGER IN SUPPORTING THE MILITARY.'

6 OF YOU. 'REPUBLICANS SUPPORT DECREASED REGULATION OF INDIVIDUALS.'

(unclear)

OKAY SIX OF THE TEN OF YOU PICKED 'REPUBLICANS ARE STRONGER IN SUPPORTING OUR MILITARY AND DEFENDING OUR COUNTRY.' WHY IS THAT THE BEST REASON TO VOTE REPUBLICAN?

I have family in NYC who live near 9/11—they're still living there—that's the major reason I voted for Bush.

AND YOU AGREE THAT REPUBLICANS ARE STRONGER?

Yes.

I just think keeping our home front here secure is important to me and my family.

AND DO YOU FEEL REPUBLICANS ARE—

I do.

Isn't that the major role? Isn't that supposed to be their major role?

SO ON THE ONE HAND YOU GUYS ARE SAYING THEY'RE STRONGER ON MILITARY, STRONGER ON DEFENDING OUR COUNTRY. ON THE OTHER HAND YOU ARE COMPLAINING ABOUT THE IMMIGRATION SITUATION AND THE OPEN BORDERS. IS THAT LINKED TO OUR SECURITY OR IS IT JUST ABOUT IMMIGRATION?

No it's definitely security.

Sure.

And I think they're going to have to take it a stand. I think we can see that something is going to have to happen and it may be something ugly.

ALRIGHT. HALF OF YOU SAID 'REPUBLICANS STAND FOR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THEY DON'T EXPECT GOVERNMENT TO TAKE CARE OF PEOPLE.' WHY DID YOU PICK THAT ONE?

I think to me that's one of the big differences between the parties. It's my belief that taking accountability is important and the lack of it is one of the big problems that we have.

Well put. I agree with that.

AND AGAIN YOU BELIEVE THAT REPUBLICANS DO STAND FOR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY?

Mmm-hmm.

ALRIGHT. FLIP TO HANDOUT 8 AND DO THE SAME EXERCISE FOR DEMOCRATS. AGAIN YOUR OWN PERSONAL OPINION OF THE BEST REASONS TO VOTE FOR A DEMOCRAT FOR CONGRESS. ALRIGHT, LET'S START AT THE TOP. HOW MANY SAID 'DEMOCRATS PROVIDE A BALANCE TO PRESIDENT BUSH AND THE REPUBLICANS.'

1 OF YOU. 'DEMOCRATS PROTECT RETIREMENT SECURITY.'

ZERO.

I finally circled that but I don't know if I really believe it so maybe I shouldn't.

You'd like to believe it.

WE'LL PUT YOU DOWN AS A CONDITIONAL.

'DEMOCRATS WILL PROVIDE CHANGE AND A NEW DIRECTION.'

ZERO. 'DEMOCRATS REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE AND THE MIDDLE CLASS.'

ZERO. 'DEMOCRATS PROTECT AMERICAN JOBS.'

1 OF YOU. 'DEMOCRATS KNOW IT'S TIME FOR A NEW DIRECTION IN IRAQ.'

ZERO. 'DEMOCRATS FIGHT FOR LOWER HEALTHCARE COSTS.'

4 OF YOU. 'DEMOCRATS RESPECT THE RIGHT OF PRIVACY.'

4 OF YOU.

SO A LITTLE BIT MORE AT THE END. WHY DO YOU GUYS, MOST OF YOU CHOSE NOT TO CIRCLE TWO, WHY DON'T YOU BELIEVE ANY OF THESE ABOUT DEMOCRATS? EVERYONE CIRCLED TWO ON THE REPUBLICAN SIDE. WHY DON'T YOU BELIEVE THESE THINGS ABOUT DEMOCRATS?

Because I think they're just as sleazy as...What did I pick on the Republican side...because I do think that the two things I picked on that, I do believe the Republicans do do that, but I don't think the Democrats—I would like to believe that they represent the interests of working people and the middle class but they don't. Not anymore. I don't think they do. They're just out for their own personal gain themselves, the ones that are there.

If you had had these on the other page I don't think I could have circled them either.

Exactly. I don't think any of this is happening.

It says the best reasons to vote for Democrats so not only would you have to believe the statement but then you would also want that to happen. In other words I might think that's true but I wouldn't want it to happen.

I think it's just a lot of words. I just don't believe it.

So the person who wrote these—are they a Republican or a Democrat? There's a slant. I'm wondering if it's purposeful or if it's just reality.

THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT—REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS AND DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS—THIS IS WHAT DEMOCRATS ARE SAYING AND THE PREVIOUS PAGE IS WHAT REPUBLICANS ARE SAYING. FOUR OF YOU SAID THAT DEMOCRATS WILL FIGHT FOR LOWER HEALTHCARE COSTS AND LOWER DRUG PRICES.' WHY DID YOU PICK THAT ONE?

I'm hopeful.

Yeah. I think that that's why I picked it too. I couldn't really think of anything to pick but I was hopeful that they would do that. Philosophically some of these things you know...

It's an issue that needs to be addressed. That's the best I could come up with.

OKAY. ONLY ONE OF YOU SAID THAT DEMOCRATS WILL PROTECT THE RETIREMENT SECURITY OF WORKING AMERICANS. AND THAT WAS A CONDITIONAL. GIVEN THE WHOLE DEBATE OVER SOCIAL SECURITY, A LOT OF YOU GUYS SAID YOU WEREN'T REAL CONFIDENT WITH BUSH'S PLAN. DEMOCRATS HAVE OPPOSED THAT.

Well they've opposed it but have they come up with anything?

Yeah.

If they come up with a plan maybe I'd like it but I haven't seen any alternative, and that's the way it is in Congress. 'Well I proposed this.' 'Well I don't like it.' 'Well what do you propose?' 'Well I don't know but I don't like what you said.'

Right.

OTHER THOUGHTS ON THAT? THE ONE BELOW IT SAYS DEMOCRATS WILL PROVIDE CHANGE AND A NEW DIRECTION IN WASHINGTON. DO YOU NOT BELIEVE THAT OR DO YOU NOT WANT IT?

(All talking at once)

It's probably not a good direction to go.

I don't know that it would be any better than—and I don't know that they would change.

WELL THAT'S WHAT I'M ASKING. DO YOU BELIEVE IT OR DO YOU NOT?

I don't believe that they would.

I said I believe there will be change. I don't know that I agree that it's going to be better.

WHAT KIND OF A CHANGE DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE IF DEMOCRATS WON?

I'm afraid they might pull out of Iraq.

HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU? WHAT KIND OF CHANGE DO YOU THINK WOULD HAPPEN IF DEMOCRATS WON?

I think it would go too much away from people taking personal responsibility.

And trying to support themselves.

Lack of accountability. Back to that again. Just so detrimental.

I think the values, it's interesting because we all cited the value of the Democratic Party as being the human rights and thinking about social issues but some of the things that they implemented to solve problems have not been the best things overall. For instance welfare, so it's that fear that they'll put something else in that will backfire on our whole family value system. I hate to say family values nowadays but truly, that's been one of the most detrimental things that's ever happened to this country.

ALRIGHT. LAST THING I'M GOING TO ASK YOU TO DO IS FLIP TO HANDOUT 9. I PROMISE THIS IS NOT GOING TO THEM. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO THEY ARE, BUT ONE OF THE GREAT EXERCISES IN DEMOCRACY IS WRITING TO YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS SO GIVEN ALL THE DIFFERENT ISSUES AND ALL THE DIFFERENT THINGS GOING ON IN THE COUNTRY THAT WE'VE TALKED ABOUT, IF YOU WERE GOING TO WRITE TO YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THEM?

Get in touch with us.

WE'RE NOT GOING TO TALK ABOUT IT. JUST WRITE IT DOWN. AND TAKE YOUR TIME BUT A FEW THINGS BEFORE I LET YOU GO. FIRST OF ALL, LEAVE YOUR PAPERS. I DO WANT TO SEE WHAT YOU'VE WRITTEN DOWN. ALSO LEAVE YOUR TRASH, LEAVE YOUR NAMETAGS, LEAVE ALL OF THAT. WE'LL TAKE CARE OF IT. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT. SECOND OF ALL AS YOU PROBABLY GUESSED, I HAVE A GROUP OF GUYS WAITING OUT THERE TO TALK ABOUT ALL THE SAME THINGS THAT WE JUST TALKED ABOUT, SO I'D APPRECIATE IF YOU DON'T SAY ANYTHING TO TIP THEM OFF OR SCARE THEM OFF AS THE CASE MAY BE, AND LASTLY I APPRECIATE YOUR TIME AND INPUT. MAKE SURE YOU STOP AT THE DESK ON THE WAY OUT.

Who's paying for this research?

I CAN'T SAY WHO'S PAYING FOR IT. I CAN SAY IT'S NOT ANY POLITICAL CANDIDATES OR POLITICAL PARTIES OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT. IT'S NOT LINKED TO ANY ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER.

Somebody who really cares about all of this I hope. Wouldn't that be...

Yeah.

THANKS.