

**DEMOCRACY CORPS  
GROUP 2  
LOUISVILLE, KY  
MEN, AGES 45-60, NON-COLLEGE, HOUSEHOLD INCOME UNDER \$50K,  
WEAK PARTISANS, VOTED FOR BUSH, NOW NOT APPROVE, RECRUITED  
FROM OUTSIDE LOUISVILLE  
JULY 6, 2005, 8:15 PM**

**PARTICIPANTS' INTRODUCTIONS:**

I'm Al, married, 2 daughters, 25 and 23. I'm not a grandpa. Play golf, like to fish, like to raise hell about the gas prices.

My name is Bruce, born and raised here in Louisville, married, two sons, 26 and 31. Retired, pharmacy. Play a little golf now and again.

I'm Charlie. I work for Jefferson County School Board as a bus driver. I pick up some of your kids. I live in St. Matthew's. Got two daughters, 21 and 19. No hobbies, just work all the time to get the kids through college.

I'm David, from Louisville, born and raised here, married 44 years. have 2 children, a boy and a girl, 40 and 35. and three grandchildren, 11, 13 and 15. Retired recently from the beer business and play golf. A lot of golf.

My name is Ed and I'm from Louisville, Ivantucky, I am married for about 4 months. Stepdaughter 15 and my wife is prematurely retired. I'm in the security business and now I work for private people.

My name is Frank and I live in Mendon all my life. I work for the county schools, I do maintenance. I do heating in there. I'm divorced. Have one son 10 who keeps me pretty busy and any time I get off, I fish.

My name is Gary and I've lived in Louisville, married, got one boy 8, I work for an engineering company. I play softball 4 or 5 nights a week plus weekends.

I'm Hank, live in Louisville, got 2 kids, like to hunt and garden. Be outside.

I'm Ivan, a postal worker so don't make me mad. I'm a member of an organization called the Internal Order of Eagles. It used to be pretty big out in St. Matthew's. I'm a past state president of that organization and I play golf, a lot of golf.

My name is James, originally from Houston, Texas. Live here in Louisville, married, two daughters, 16 and 18. I wholesale/retail automobiles here and in Sheldonville, and when I'm not here I'm on Cumberland Lake and I don't play golf.

MODERATOR – THINKING ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT’S GOING ON IN OUR COUNTRY THESE DAYS, DO YOU FEEL LIKE THE COUNTRY IS GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION OR WRONG DIRECTION RIGHT NOW?

Wrong direction.

Wrong.

Wrong.

Wrong.

Not even sure, but more of a misdirection.

Parts of it yes, parts of it no.

Yeah.

MODERATOR – I HEARD MORE WRONG’S THAN RIGHT’S, SO TELL ME WHAT THINGS ARE GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION.

Everybody just seems so negative. The politicians are just snipping. Four years ago, the Republicans were against this. You’ve got the same thing now, but it’s the Democrats against it. there is so much bitterness. I’ve been voting since the 60’s and then it wasn’t this bad. I’m getting sick and tired of listening to politicians, period.

I would say that our military issues are being handled correctly.

MODERATOR – WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

I mean that most of the time that we’re withdrawing from issues that we need to look into it more deeply.

MODERATOR – WHO ELSE SAYS THE WRONG DIRECTION?

Gasoline.

Since September 2001, we should have learned a lesson about allowing people just to come into our country, our open door policy. We should have closed the door. It seems like that it’s been kicked open even wider now. Plus back in the 60’s and 70’s, there were hijackings all the time. Why wasn’t the security that we have now put into effect back then? I just don’t understand it. If we had the same security now, 9-11 would never have happened.

Gas prices keep going up and nobody seems to be doing anything about that. They're all getting gas from the same people how can there all be different prices right on the same block?

(Many speaking at once).

Healthcare. Premiums. I didn't use a penny of healthcare last year, not one penny, and they jacked my premiums 20%. 20% last year, 20% this year. They don't take into account what you use. It's just that we got them. They got to have insurance. What are you going to do?

These illegals can go in, they get free healthcare. Free everything and yet our seniors can't go in and get free nothing. The people that's paid into the system all their lives, and worked all their lives. My mom is 86, when she goes into the hospital, she gets a \$250 deductible. She's on a fixed income. How can she pay that?

You pay taxes on whatever you buy.

(Many speaking at once).

You have a Mexican that comes in, the great Congress in Washington, gives them a 5-year exemption on income tax. I wish I'd get a 5-year exemption on not paying income tax. Of course, I was born here, so I have to pay it.

You used to go to a MD and it was \$20 or \$10, you paid cash for it. Now you go to a doctor, it might be \$1,000 and then the insurance company writes off \$900 of it. That doesn't make sense. Why can't it just be front up money this year as it was back in the 50's?

Well, they write it off and they save a lot of taxes.

The insurance industry is one of the few that Congress did pass that they can make a profit. It's mandated that they can make a profit.

Has anyone noticed that since 9/11, and you have a homeowner's policy, that your deductible used to be \$250. It is no longer true.

Did your premium go down, because you used to have the option? If you paid the \$250, you paid a little more. But if you paid for the \$500, you paid a little less.

**MODERATOR – TALK TO ME ABOUT THE ECONOMY HERE.**

It's not too bad here. But it's still (inaudible).

Unemployment rate is still a little high but the economy is fairly decent. The cost-of-living is a lot cheaper here.

MODERATOR – HOW ABOUT THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE?

I just got back from Florida and the unemployment rate there is 2.9%. Anybody wants work, you can walk out and get a job.

When you hear them say now, employment is high, people forget when it was 25%.

If you want to work, you can work.

If they're on welfare, they don't want to work any more. You've got generations after generations. . .

There's plenty of jobs out there.

(Many speaking at once).

Your good paying jobs are coming down. They don't pay that much because if they can get some Mexicans or some foreigners in there and pay them minimum wage for the same type of help. That's why you see more and more homebuilders out there using Mexican help.

I think you're seeing the younger people not going into that line of business.

You're not. But still they're only paying Mexicans \$6 an hour.

(Many speaking at once).

They'll work their butts off.

You see vocational schools closing up because nobody's going into the trades. You wait and see. It's going to be hard to find electricians and plumbers. Kids don't want to do that work.

You know what a plumber told me? He only works on new stuff, not old stuff. He don't want to get dirty.

(Many speaking at once).

Things might be good. But the dollar does not go as far today as it did back in the 60's.

MODERATOR – WE HAVEN'T REALLY GOTTEN INTO IRAQ. WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT THE SITUATION IN IRAQ?

I'd nuke them.

Group them together and boom.

I'd just changed my mind. I thought Bush was go get them and all that. But it's not getting any better. It's costing more lives, more money, and we're not doing it. And it's like Vietnam. We're just farting around and you can never stop suicide bombers.

They're not fighting it to win.

The military has been used as police and the military shouldn't be used as police.

The biggest problem is that we're too afraid to step on somebody's civil rights over there. You had a dictator that killed 300,000 people. and when one of our soldiers accidentally kills two people, that guy is put up with charges and automatically kicked out of the military.

We're treating our military like we do our policemen over here.

They're military. They're supposed to protect. They're not over there to protect and serve. They're over there to protect our interest.

Like that prison with all the pictures, but at the same time it was going on, the Iraqis were cutting people's heads off and dragging their bodies through the streets. And that's okay.

**MODERATOR – GIVEN WHERE WE ARE RIGHT NOW IN IRAQ, WHAT DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD DO NOW?**

We're making headway.

We're making headway, but you can't read it in the paper.

The news media builds it out of proportion and says the negative things that are going on instead of the positive things.

Most of them are better off now than they were 20 years ago.

We probably know 50% of what is actually going on. It probably doesn't get to us until it's all blown out of proportion or it's restated.

It's like Afghanistan now. They're under the radar now because they're really doing good and the press is really not saying anything about them because that country is actually starting to prosper.

That's right.

**MODERATOR – ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ON THE SITUATION IN IRAQ?**

Don't let it be another Vietnam.

(Many speaking at once).

It's gone too long as it is.

I agree that it's gone too long and I think that it's always going to be there, even when we pull out. It's not something that we can do right now. It has to be gradual.

We're still in Germany and the war's been over there 60 years. Why aren't we out of Germany? Why aren't we out of all these other places?

Yeah, but being in Germany is a good thing for us.

No, we're still an occupying force in Germany.

But being in Baghdad is probably not a bad thing.

We're also in South Korea. We should have been out of there too.

**MODERATOR – AS MOST OF YOU GUYS KNOW, PRESIDENT BUSH GAVE A PRIMETIME ANNOUNCEMENT TALKING ABOUT THE IRAQ WAR, MAKING A CASE FOR HIS POLICIES. DID ANYBODY WATCH THAT? WHAT WAS YOUR IMPRESSION OF THE SPEECH THAT HE GAVE?**

Same story, different day.

I agree.

He laid it out for us.

It's hard to sell it.

**MODERATOR – WHAT DO YOU MEAN?**

Like when he's just stating the same care different ways. Tried to make it favorable to him. I don't think the American people are buying it now. We're becoming more disillusioned about the war, the longer we're there and the more casualties we have and the less good things that come out of it.

He's not the greatest orator in the world. I was all for him when he was elected. I felt that what he was doing in Afghanistan and Iraq was correct. I don't want to diminish the fact that 2,000 people have been killed over there. That's not many in the realm of things as far as the war that they're fighting. But how do you fight a war against people who don't have, they don't care about themselves, so they're not going to care about the people that they're fighting against.

(Inaudible)

You can't fight that. we couldn't have stopped 9/11 even if we had everything in place. these people flew a plane into a building. I don't care what kind of security you had in effect, that plane was going into that building.

(Inaudible) in Florida.

I'm saying, you can't second guess people that have a total disregard for human life because we're not brought that way. I respect you, you respect me. I'd never hurt you. But you've got people here that would kill you just for the hell of it. So you can't continue to try, we're always one step behind people like that because we can't think that way.

After 9/11, everybody was all for bombing Iraq. The thing is, once we got in, you just can't pull out. It's going to take a long process and they told you it was going to be a long process. When we first went in, he said it's going to be a long process and it is.

Another thing is we don't need 24 hours a day news. We've got FOX, MSNBC. We don't need that much news crammed down our throats. I go home and my wife is glued to Channel 31. And it depresses her. Turn the son of a bitch off and watch something else.

(Many speaking at once).

I think they have to make up stuff to fill the time slots.

**MODERATOR – I DON'T WANT TO GET TOO FAR OFF. YOU GUYS RAISED 9/11 AND IN HIS SPEECH, BUSH REPEATEDLY MADE THE CASE, WE'RE IN IRAQ BECAUSE OF 9/11. OTHER PEOPLE SAY IT WAS OSAMA BIN LADEN, IT WAS AFGHANISTAN THAT FLEW THOSE PLANES IN. IT WASN'T IRAQ. THEY'RE NOT CONNECTED. WHAT DO YOU GUYS THINK? ARE 9/11 AND IRAQ CONNECTED?**

Oh, yeah.

They're training there.

Everybody knows that and Iran is the same way.

(Many speaking at once).

When we went to Iraq, it was supposedly because they had weapons of mass destruction. But yet none was found. So did they look in Palestine. And they knew we were coming. And they hit them.

As far as I'm concerned, it was long overdue.

MODERATOR – BUSH MADE THE CASE FOR STAYING THE COURSE. WE'VE GOT TO STAY WITH WHAT WE'RE DOING. DO YOU THINK HE MADE HIS CASE?

No.

We're doing the same thing. . .

He might not have public support, but we're going to do it.

MODERATOR – DID HE MAKE HIS CASE FOR PUBLIC SUPPORT?

At that time, I think everybody wanted to bomb somebody.

MODERATOR – I'M TALKING ABOUT THAT THE SPEECH HE JUST GAVE LAST WEEK.

It is the same song. People want to hear the same stuff.

I think that people just want to be reassured.

It was just a reminder, is what it was. We're here. We're going to have to stay here.

People (inaudible) ready for them to leave. Even then we're going to have troops there forever.

MODERATOR – OKAY, SO WHAT DOES HAVE TO HAPPEN? WHAT POINT DO WE HAVE TO REACH?

I think training them.

Show them how to protect their own people.

Right now, they're killing more of their own troops than they are ours.

They've probably killed as many policemen than we've trained in the past 6 to 8 months, and plenty of our soldiers have been killed.

They're taking the brunt of it over there.

(Many speaking at once).

MODERATOR – ONE AT A TIME.

When the killing starts slowing down on both sides, that's when they're going to start pulling them out.

But that will be the problem because it doesn't matter what time you've got the Sunnis in charge and they don't like the Shiites. It will never end. We'll always have it there.

I think it's when the Iraqi people decide to take it over and when they get tired of it. I think that they are getting tired of it.

**MODERATOR – ONE OTHER ISSUE, SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR, A PRETTY IMPORTANT JUSTICE, SHE'S RETIRED ON FRIDAY. SO YOU GOT THE FIRST VACANCY IN ALMOST A DECADE. WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT IT? WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN HERE?**

There's going to be a big fight. Nobody wants nobody so there's going to be a dead lock, like always.

The liberals don't want a conservative.

And the conservatives don't want a liberal. And the moderates don't want anybody. So basically we're probably going to be without a Supreme Court justice until the Republicans (many speaking at once).

What I'm waiting to see is if the person that does get appointed and if they have the balls to put their hand on the Bible when they take the oath of office. And then turn around and say, the Ten Commandments is illegal.

**MODERATOR – OKAY, PEOPLE WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YET. WHAT IS YOUR IMPRESSION OF THIS WHOLE SUPREME COURT THING?**

I think that they're going to have a hard time finding somebody. They're going to be dragged through the mud. No one's led the perfect life. I think that they're going to go conservative.

I believe that whoever is going to be put in there is going to making a lot of mistakes. I think that people are probably going to be sorry for what they saw that they would think, just like any other office seat, that they think this is a good candidate. Let's get them in there, but it's going really be bad, I think. I think that the person that they get in there, they're going to wish that they had put someone else in.

You can't get any god people anymore because they just don't want to go through all the bull shit.

**MODERATOR – WHAT KIND OF A NOMINEE DO YOU THINK THAT BUSH IS GOING TO OFFER?**

(Many speaking at once).

He's pushing for a Mexican to get in, the guy from Colorado.

(Many speaking at once).

I think he's going to surprise everybody and appoint a woman.

(Many speaking at once).

They're all harping on this Mexican guy. They're getting prepared to battle against this guy. I think that he's just going to throw them a curve and appoint a woman.

**MODERATOR – DO YOU THINK THAT THIS PERSON IS GOING TO HAVE CERTAIN VIEWS BEFORE BUSH NOMINATES HIM?**

Oh, yeah.

Probably conservative.

Conservative.

Anti-abortion.

**MODERATOR – HOW DO YOU THINK DEMOCRATS ARE GOING TO REACT TO BUSH'S NOMINEE?**

As usual, they'll bump heads like they do all the time.

They never get anything done up there.

Whoever it is, they're not going to want him or her.

**MODERATOR – DO YOU THINK WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A SITUATION WHERE EVERYTHING IS GOING TO SHUT DOWN OVER THIS? DO YOU THINK THEY'RE GOING TO SHUT DOWN THE GOVERNMENT, FILIBUSTER, THAT KIND OF STUFF?**

They won't shut down the government. They're going to be like the rest of the judicial nominees. They could probably pick an 8<sup>th</sup> grader and be at their law school and sitting on the bench by the time they get around to battering names around.

Each party will show their muscle. The Republicans want to get their person in. The Democrats want to get theirs in. Bush is going to get whoever he wants in there.

MODERATOR – HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS ISSUE RELATIVE TO ALL THE OTHER ISSUES WE TALKED ABOUT?

Very important because what's decided, who gets in there right now and makes any decisions and says what's going to happen and what's going to go on, is 5 to 10 years from now, you'll look back at this time and say, they put the wrong person in there for making those decisions.

(Many speaking at once).

MODERATOR – I'M GOING TO SAY THE NAMES OF PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS AND I WANT YOUR FIRST REACTION TO IT. WHATEVER THE FIRST THING IS THAT POPS INTO YOUR HEAD. BILL CLINTON.

Slick Willy.

Crook.

Has been.

Had the potential to be a real good President. But it went to his head.

Can't keep his dick in his pants.

Beyond that, he lost credibility for so many things he did, for trying to cram his wife down our throats. He just lost a lot of credibility with the flip-flopers right at the beginning that could have helped him.

He set back the party.

A lot of people like him, but as far as politics go, he didn't really do anything.

MODERATOR – HOW ABOUT TOM DELAY?

Bill Clinton's brother, it sounds like?

Who? Never heard of him.

MODERATOR – HOW MANY KNOW THAT NAME? A FEW OF YOU. WHAT'S YOUR IMPRESSION?

I'm really not that close to what the discussion is about. I've heard the name but I don't know much about him.

I think he's a person that speaks his mind. You know where he stands. That's what I always like. I may not vote for him, but you know where he stands.

MODERATOR – HE’S THE REPUBLICAN LEADER IN THE HOUSE AND HE’S HAD A LOT OF ETHICS CONTROVERSY. HOW ABOUT BIG CORPORATION?

Crooks.

A lot of corruption.

They’ve ruined the environment and the ecology. I read a college book of my daughter’s and it’s amazing how much some of these countries around the world and how much they erode everything that they touch.

It’s all about money.

They hide it from the American public also. Like Teflon today, it causes cancer. They just came out with that. Well, the companies knew about that, Dupont knew about that years ago. But the government didn’t do anything about it. Same way with pharmaceuticals.

MODERATOR – HOW ABOUT THE MEDIA?

Too much power.

Too liberal.

Yeah, too liberal.

MODERATOR – WHAT MAKES IT TOO LIBERAL?

They’re slanted and they’re rushed a lot.

Like they called the last election. They didn’t check a lot of facts and they’re still being caught all the time.

The media thinks that the public needs to know everything. That’s like when we went to war, they wanted where everybody was at, what they were doing.

Very seldom do you see anything positive on the news. All negative.

If it’s positive, they don’t want to show. That’s not the ratings.

I know this from firsthand experience, they do not want to cover a good natured, good news.

Unless it’s dramatic, like the rescue of the miners. That was a feel good story.

MODERATOR – HOW ABOUT GEORGE W. BUSH?

I think he's done an admirable job for what he was put in to.

For the situation that he had, he had 9/11, he had to do what he though he could do. The same thing with Nixon, when he got elected, Vietnam was already started. He just got stuck with it. And so did Bush, 9/11 happened and he just got stuck with Iraq.

He got stuck with a lot of things.

He's credible.

If he says that he's going to do it, I wish. . .

I think he cares.

If he says that he's going to do it, he does it. That's it. That's the way it's going to be. it's like Harry Truman. [He thinks for you.]

I think he's doing what he thinks is right in Iraq, Afghanistan. I agree with that. But I don't think he's doing enough with the oil crisis and I don't like his policies on illegal aliens. He's giving in (inaudible). I totally disagree with that.

He's got large issues and small issues, but as far as his overall practability, it's pretty good but I think that he has a lot of people telling him which way to go on these issues. I believe he's not making the decisions on Iraq himself. Most Presidents don't. They have people, their associates just telling them this is what we should do. I believe that right now, he's getting more people talking to him than they've ever had before.

MODERATOR – OTHER PEOPLE?

I wish he would start some kind of withdrawal from Iraq. at least mention that. That it is two years from now. Start something. Some progress there.

MODERATOR – TAKE ONE OF THESE AND PASS THEM DOWN. WE'RE JUST GOING TO DO HANDOUTS #1 AND #2. ON HANDOUT #1, TELL ME ALL THE AREAS WHERE YOU APPROVE OF THE JOB THAT BUSH IS DOING. AND HANDOUT #2, TELL ME THE AREAS WHERE YOU DISAPPROVE OF THE JOB HE'S DOING. WHAT DO YOU APPROVE OF?

I think he's doing a better job on education.

He's made a lot of security better in the US.

Homeland security.

MODERATOR – ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR THAT YOU POINT TO?

Like airports. To a certain extent. I see a lot of areas where they could have an improvement.

Iraq and the economy.

MODERATOR – WHAT IS BUSH DOING ABOUT THE ECONOMY, IN PARTICULAR?

Tax cuts.

Tax cuts.

MODERATOR – DO THE REST OF YOU AGREE THAT THE TAX CUTS MADE A BOOST TO THE ECONOMY?

I disagree.

I don't think so.

MODERATOR – HOW COME?

I don't think it helped the middle income people as well as the higher income people. It probably did make the economy a little bit better because they made more money in the higher brackets. But I do agree the economy is better than what it was.

And the earned income credit is being abused. They've got to do something about that. They passing kids around on April 15<sup>th</sup> like they're sandwiches to take the earned income credit. People who don't work don't file taxes or get refunds.

A bunch of people got two jobs. They're getting stuck with higher taxes, but you don't hear the Democrats complaining about money being taken out.

MODERATOR – OTHER AREAS WHERE YOU APPROVE THE JOB THAT BUSH IS DOING?

I think he puts a strong front to the world. I think people look at him as a strong person in Russia and places like that and Europe. They may not always agree with him, but I think they look at him as a strong person.

I also think that he's on the right track with this Social Security. Something's got to be done. Maybe privatizing is not the, at least he's making some effort to correct the problem that we're all going to have to address here real soon. There's only so many middle income people out there paying taxes and the burden is getting a little tough for

all of us to handle. I don't think it's going to affect any of us, but the ones behind us will get a shock.

MODERATOR – WHAT ELSE? FLIP TO THE NEXT ONE. AREAS YOU DISAPPROVE OF THE JOB HE'S DOING.

Healthcare. The borders.

Dumping our senior citizens and doing something about the inflated drug prices.

Iraq issues.

I just don't think he's doing enough.

Gas prices.

Some of his foreign policy.

MODERATOR – WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Like China and we got a one-way track on China coming over here, but we're not getting anything in return. We got a lot of countries we're buying for, but they're not buying from us. Because we've got an open-door policy.

The tariff rates.

MODERATOR – THE TRADE DEFICIT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT ?

Yeah.

We're not on a level playing field. Everybody is afraid to tip toe around.

but some of those countries can't afford to buy our products.

We can't afford to buy our products.

I think the environment has really suffered a bit under him.

I think we need alternative energy sources, like solar.

Or better utilization of the energy sources we've got, if we've got oil in Alaska, take it.

We've got 300 years of coal.

I don't feel that the security is better. I think we need to up our security level a hell of a lot more than it is today.

Yeah, I don't understand why we can't close the borders. All we need is personnel.

This country is very open.

Close it, just close it. It's no big deal.

Also, I think that the US budget, we're spending too much.

**MODERATOR – HOW MANY OF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE DEFICITS?**

(Many speaking at once.)

Everytime they want to give something away, it comes out of my pocket. I'm paying for it in taxes.

I guess that's life. There are always going to be taxes.

Yet but you can cut some of the spending. It doesn't have to go up as much.

Their unions are gouging the government. When you pay \$25 for a toilet seat or \$20 for a boat, who are you going to blame? It ain't the government. They've got to have it. they've got to buy it from somebody. It's corrupt politicians. You've got your corrupt government. You've got the businesses that can gouge you. If I worked for the post office and out delivering the mail for \$20 an hour, you can get someone for \$10.50.

You can get those Mexicans for \$6.50.

You wouldn't get your mail.

**MODERATOR – ANY OTHER AREAS WHERE YOU DISAPPROVE OF THE JOB THAT BUSH IS DOING?**

I think he can do more about the drug crisis.

Legal or illegal?

Whatever. Legal ones. You've got people that had to choose between food or medicine that keeps them alive. That should not happen.

**MODERATOR – I WANT TO SHIFT GEARS TO TALKING ABOUT THE TWO PARTIES, DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS. THINKING ABOUT THE PARTY AS A WHOLE, AND NOT NECESSARILY INDIVIDUALS, I WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOUR ATTITUDES ARE TOWARDS DEMOCRATS. FLIP TO HANDOUT**

#3. WRITE DOWN THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS. WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT DEMOCRATS? WHAT DO THEY GET RIGHT? AND WHAT DO THEY GET WRONG, THAT HOLD YOU BACK FROM SUPPORTING DEMOCRATS? WHERE DO DEMOCRATS GET IT RIGHT?

They help the middle income person.

MODERATOR – ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR THAT YOU CAN POINT TO THAT THEY DO?

Taxes.

Social reforms and education.

MODERATOR – WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SOCIAL REFORMS?

Helping the elderly more, helping the poor.

I think they're better organized.

MODERATOR – HOW SO?

They seem to stay together, when they say something, they all say it. The Republicans, sometimes, this guy says something different. They seem like they're more in step with each other, right or wrong.

MODERATOR – OTHER POSITIVES ABOUT DEMOCRATS?

Their right to choose for a woman, her own destiny, whether it be right or wrong, it's still her right, for a long time.

MODERATOR – ANYTHING ELSE? OKAY. WHERE DO DEMOCRATS GET IT WRONG?

I think that they don't always get the funding right. They like to spend too much.

Tax and spend policies.

I think that there's only 6 or 7 people that you hear about in the Democratic party and there the ones to the left. And we don't hear about the ones to the right. I know Democrats got people on the center and to the right, but you never hear from them. I think they all have some of those people, they have to improve their image a hell of a lot.

You hear the word, Democrats, you automatically think liberal. But if they have someone that's conservative. . .

Joe Lieberman comes to mind. I think he's excellent.

Yeah, he was an excellent leader.

I dislike Howard Dean. What's he doing running the Democratic party? He's just bringing them down.

**MODERATOR – OTHER THINGS THAT YOU DON'T LIKE ABOUT DEMOCRATS?**

I think that they have a policy of caring too much about the rights of a few, instead of the rights of the many.

Sometimes they don't do what's good for the country. They do what's good for their party. . . **(END OF SIDE A/BEGINNING OF SIDE B)**. . .

. . . Republicans try to do that.

That's normal. Some things are still good for the country, no matter who puts them forward.

They don't think global.

They tell you what's wrong with the government, but they don't say how they're going to fix it.

They make you afraid of them, but they don't offer you a way to fix it. I think that they're in complete disarray and there's just no forward momentum to the Democratic party right now. There's a total lack of leadership. I'd hate for the elections for them to be tomorrow. I don't know who they'd put up short of Hillary Clinton to run. It's probably a good thing that George Bush can't serve a third term because I don't think that they could put anybody up against him, even with the disapproval rating that's going on in Iraq.

**MODERATOR – OTHER NEGATIVES ON DEMOCRATS? OKAY. FLIP TO HANDOUT #4 AND DO THE SAME THING ON REPUBLICANS.**

They've got a strong national defense plan.

**MODERATOR – EVERYBODY ALL AGREE THAT THEY'RE STRONG ON NATIONAL DEFENSE ISSUES?**

I think it's stronger than it ever has been.

**MODERATOR – DOES THAT MEAN THAT DEMOCRATS DON'T BELIEVE IN A STRONG NATION OR. . .?**

I think that they'd rather spend the money somewhere else.

I think you've got a strong man in office that makes it that way. Depends on who is in office.

I like to think that their polices have more morals.

**MODERATOR – ARE REPUBLICANS STRONGER ON MORALS?**

Yes.

I think so.

They're going to have the right-to-life and all that. They don't believe in abortion, so they're all for the family, education and things like that, "No Child Left Behind".

**MODERATOR – HUGH, WHY DO YOU SAY YES?**

Just the conservative values, family, like he said.

**MODERATOR – WHAT ELSE SHOWS THAT THE REPUBLICANS ARE STRONGER ON MORALS?**

They all seem to be on the same page. The unity which lends a comfort to people that was, in my opinion, missing during the Clinton years. Policies changed as the weather changed with the Clintons.

He, too, is kind of saying that the Social Security that was brought up earlier. We have to do something for our kids. Not us, for example, our kids. That's showing more concern about something that he won't probably live to see. I know I won't live to see with my kids, like Social Security. But at least to say that we're going to try and do something.

They're trying to save Social Security. I'm not sure that the way that they want to do it is clear. But they're trying to do something.

One of the problems that's going on right now is, these illegals and these nationals that come in to the country that are of age of Social Security, are being given Social Security without putting a dime into it. And that's was voted in by the Democrats. I'm not dissing Democrats here. that just happened to be the way it was. it's completely wrong. We've got enough problems feeding our own. I've worked my whole life and I'm not going to be able to retire on my Social Security, but I'd like to think that the \$1,200-1,400 a month that I'm going to get is going to be there because I put it in.

It should be.

MODERATOR – OTHER THOUGHTS? OTHER THINGS THAT THE REPUBLICANS GET RIGHT?

I think that they're doing a good job with the tax cuts.

I think that they're helping first time home buyers.

MODERATOR – HOW SO?

Well, they've made it more relaxed for people with lower incomes to purchase a house.

MODERATOR – WHAT DO REPUBLICANS GET WRONG?

The environment.

Some of them claim to be conservative Republicans, but they're really too liberal. And their healthcare policies suck.

Healthcare.

Healthcare, yeah.

Seem to be soft on big business. . .

Corporate greed.

. . . because I think so many of them are going to end up becoming political speakers for them when they're out of office. Some of them even leave office to go to work for them, or were in there and become politicians. It's a vicious circle that goes on.

They should close the borders.

I don't think that they put up too much of a fight sometimes when the Democrats, I think that they back down too easy.

That's what I put down. They don't get their programs passed.

Like this judge thing, they just made this deal with him and they had to fire him.

MODERATOR – WHAT ELSE?

It's like their problem. They were out of power for all these years. The Democrats ran the country for 4 years and the Democrats turn around and talk about the deficit now.

MODERATOR – ANYTHING ELSE? ALL RIGHT. AS YOU KNOW, REPUBLICANS NOW HAVE CONTROL IN WASHINGTON. THEY HAVE THE

WHITE HOUSE, THEY EXPANDED THEIR MARGINS IN THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE. THEY HAVE A LEVEL OF CONTROL THAT'S PRETTY MUCH UNPRECEDENTED IN MOST OF OUR LIFETIMES. WHAT HAVE THEY DONE WITH IT?

Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

MODERATOR – CAN YOU POINT TO ANYTHING THAT THEY ACCOMPLISHED?

Nope.

The tax cuts, but other than that, no.

I don't think that they've really had it long enough to do anything.

They have the power but they're afraid to use it.

They promised decent healthcare policies for our seniors. Our seniors are no better off than when, and this was like 90% of them ran on the slate that they were going to help the seniors. And yet here they are, and they've got control, and nothing's been done for seniors.

Social Security. We've got a lot of intelligent people in the government. They should be able to figure out a way to do it properly for all Americans to be able to retire with a good life.

MODERATOR – SO YOU'RE TELLING ME THAT THEY HAVEN'T ACCOMPLISHED MUCH WITH THIS POWER THAT THEY'VE GOTTEN AND THE CONTROL. IS IT A MATTER OF REPUBLICANS ARE FAILING TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES THAT YOU WANT THEM TO ADDRESS? OR ARE DEMOCRATS BLOCKING THEM, LIKE THEY'VE GOT IDEAS, THEY'VE GOT PLANS THAT THEY'RE PUTTING FORWARD AND DEMOCRATS ARE STOPPING THEM. WHAT'S GOING ON?

They haven't come up with the right plan.

They don't have a (inaudible) ideas.

They have not been in control that long. You know, 8 years or 10 years, is just a small amount of time. This is such a transition period that we're going through right now that I

feel like Republicans want to take government and maybe run it more like business. Let's face it. If the government was a business, it would have floundered years ago.

And they would all be in jail.

(Many speaking at once).

**MODERATOR – THE QUESTION IS, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? THEY'VE GOT CONTROL OF CONGRESS. THEY'RE UP THERE. ARE REPUBLICANS NOT PUTTING TOGETHER THE PLANS TO GET STUFF DONE?**

(Many speaking at once).

(Inaudible) to be approved by the American public and the Congress.

I think it gets back to what the gentleman said before, they've got the power. They're just afraid to use it.

They're afraid to go before the American people.

**MODERATOR – ARE YOU GUYS SATISFIED WITH THE JOB THAT CONGRESS IS DOING OVERALL?**

No.

No.

No.

No.

No.

**MODERATOR – WHY NOT?**

They have to be in session long enough for one thing.

They take more vacations than anybody.

They give themselves a pay raise.

They make too much money, right.

You can't expect a group of people to understand how Social Security affects them when they don't have to worry about Social Security.

Their retirement package is second to none.

If they do away with their healthcare coverage and they had to live on Social Security, the whole damned thing would be straightened out.

They don't have any worries, retirement worries, or anything. They don't have those worries that the typical everyday American has.

That's what gets my craw.

Before they became Congressmen, they had the same worries as we have. But once they became a congressman and served an X number of years, then they don't have that worry anymore. And I think that once that's over, they cannot really relate to the people that they're supposed to be representing.

I think that there should be term limits.

I think one term is all they should get.

It's got to be like 6 years and you're out. 2 years is too short.

(Inaudible), he gets retirement and healthcare. That's not right. We all work 40 years, and you get fired, you lose your healthcare. They still get it. If they want it straightened out, let them feel like the American people. 99.9% of us, let them live on Social Security when they retire from there. Let them go out and get their own health insurance. Not let the government pay for it.

**MODERATOR – OTHER REASONS THAT YOU'RE DISSATISFIED WITH THE JOB THAT THEY'RE DOING, ASIDE FROM THE PERKS?**

No other business in the world can give itself a raise with no reason whatsoever. No matter how poor our economy is or how bad things are, they still vote themselves a raise.

I think a basic flaw of Congress is that when they pass a bill, they have a right to tack on all these amendments which are really other smaller bills.

So many things get passed by them that way that we don't even know about. It's utterly ridiculous and not even related to the original bill.

They can't even understand the IRS words. There are 2 million words in the IRS code. Even the IRS doesn't understand it.

**MODERATOR – I WANT TO LOOK AT A COUPLE OF DIFFERENT WAYS OF LOOKING AT THE CURRENT SITUATION WHEN IT COMES TO THE PARTIES AND CONGRESS. FLIP TO HANDOUT #5.**

OUR COUNTRY IS MORE POLITICALLY DIVIDED THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME IN RECENT HISTORY. WHILE LIBERALS AND DEMOCRATS MAY BE WINNING IN SOME OF THE BIG CITIES AND THE STATES ON EITHER COAST, REPUBLICANS BETTER REPRESENT THE VALUES AND THE BELIEFS OF MIDDLE AMERICA AND THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?

I think it's true.

Definitely.

That would be great if it was true, but we no longer pay attention to the majority. All we pay attention to is the minority.

MODERATOR – A LOT OF YOU SAID THAT YOU THOUGHT IT WAS TRUE. WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S TRUE?

Because basically we were brought up in a different value system in the middle west. Our hard work and long hours, you had decent pay and you can retire when you got older.

Well, you're perimeter states are where your immigrants end up. And if I lived in New York or Florida and they were coming to shore, I'd want their dollars just like the next person. They're more accepted on your perimeter states than in middle America.

MODERATOR – OKAY. THIS SAYS, REPUBLICANS BETTER REPRESENT THE VALUES AND THE BELIEFS OF MIDDLE AMERICA AND THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS.

I think they're more (inaudible).

I think it would be better said that the Republican party better represent the values and the beliefs. But the Republicans in the Congress don't. I don't agree with that. but I think that the true Republican party represent the values of middle America.

Middle America doesn't change as much as the coasts do because there are more foreigners there. There's more values from these foreigners and their culture. So I think that's part of it, too.

MODERATOR – ASIDE FROM ATTITUDES TOWARD RELIGION, ARE THERE OTHER WAYS THAT REPUBLICANS BETTER REPRESENT THE VALUES OF MIDDLE AMERICA?

I don't think that they're for middle America.

It would probably be the work ethic then.

MODERATOR – YOU ALSO TOLD ME THAT THEY’RE FOR BIG BUSINESS. THEY’RE SOFT ON BIG BUSINESS.

They also are for the small mom-and-pop store where they’re not over-regulated. I owned a liquor store and it burned. I had 5 government agencies out there.

MODERATOR – SO WHAT DO YOU THINK? DO REPUBLICANS BETTER REPRESENT THE VALUES OF MIDDLE AMERICA?

Yup.

They are more for religion, the Ten Commandments.

MODERATOR – SO IT SOUNDS LIKE IT BASICALLY BOILS DOWN TO THESE MORAL VALUES. THE ISSUE OF RELIGION AND THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN PUBLIC LIFE AND STUFF LIKE THAT.

Correct.

MODERATOR – IS THAT WHAT IT REALLY BOILS DOWN TO MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE?

I think the work ethic and stand up for what you believe in. Stand up for America.

MODERATOR – DO DEMOCRATS NOT STAND UP FOR AMERICA? ARE THEY LESS PATRIOTIC THAN REPUBLICANS?

No.

Sometimes you get that idea but that goes back to the 3 or 4 people up there talking for them. that’s why I said that they need somebody from the moderates or somebody like that. They’re getting the wrong ideas when they’re talking. You’ve got Ted Ivannedy up there. Sometimes he’s lucky he can put two words together if he’s been drinking.

I still think that the Democrats are too politically correct. They don’t want to step on anybody’s toes. Whatever you’ve done, you had the right to do it.

I think the Democrats want to take care of you cradle to grave and the Republicans want you to become more independent. I think that’s what it all boils down to.

MODERATOR – LET’S FLIP TO HANDOUT #6.

THE REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS HAVE DONE NOTHING ABOUT HEALTHCARE AND GAS PRICES AND THEY’VE 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 TERRY SCHIAVO CASE, THEY'VE VOTED THEMSELVES A 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.

Gas prices, they're trying to drill in Alaska and bring down the gas prices.

I agree with this statement. I don't think that they should have had anything to do with that case in Florida. That's not a national issue. They had no damned business messing with those people. And only because of the media, did anybody know about it.

Yup.

Right.

MODERATOR – OTHER REACTIONS TO THIS STATEMENT?

I think some of these things could be Republican or Democratic. It would depend on who's in office. It's going to happen both ways.

Ted Ivannedy's wanted the minimum wage raised every year for as long as he's been alive.

They've always voted themselves pay raises. That's nothing different.

They are soft on protecting pensions, though. I hated it those people at United. They lost everything.

And the stem cell research goes back because they're against abortion. They think that in order to get the stem cells, you have to perform an abortion to get it. So that just goes to figure.

MODERATOR – WHAT STANDS OUT IN THIS LIST? DEMOCRATS SAY THAT THEY'VE DONE A LOT OF THINGS, JUST NOTHING TO BE PROUD OF. ANYTHING STAND OUT TO YOU?

Yeah, I circled three things. Protect the pensions, cut the veterans benefits and privatize Social Security.

I just don't like voting yourself pay raise. I wish I could vote myself a pay raise.

(Many speaking at once).

I agree that they haven't done anything about healthcare and gas prices. I think a lot of these things have gone on no matter who's in control.

As far as the minimum wage goes, I don't think that I can see them trying to stop that because you can raise minimum wage. That's going to shut some people down.

**MODERATOR – OTHER REACTIONS?**

I think that lobbyists do have too much influence.

Absolutely.

Absolutely, right there.

They have too much influence.

But that's both parties.

**MODERATOR – I KNOW SOME OF THE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN OFFERED ABOUT RESTRICTING THE INFLUENCE OF LOBBYISTS. ONCE SOMEBODY LEAVES CONGRESS, THEY CAN'T LOBBY FOR 5 OR 10 YEARS IS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT THEY SAID. OR IF SOMEONE WAS A LOBBYIST, THEY CAN'T GO DIRECTLY INTO CONGRESS OR WORK FOR CONGRESS STRAIGHT FROM THAT. THERE'S GOT TO BE A PERIOD OF TIME IN THERE SO THAT THEY'RE NOT SCRATCHING EACH OTHER'S BACKS, STUFF LIKE THAT. IS THAT SOMETHING THAT THEY SHOULD TRY TO DO?**

Yes.

Yeah.

Yes.

Absolutely.

Lobbying goes on both sides of the aisle, both parties.

**MODERATOR – OKAY, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS STEM CELL RESEARCH ISSUE?**

I think that's important. They should really encourage that.

**MODERATOR – HOW SO?**

Like they've tested it, you can use stem cells from different organs to fight diseases.

I'm still against it, but I don't know. Maybe I'll change in a few years.

They say that they have enough now to do the testing that they need.

MODERATOR – DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT?

I don't know. I'm not in the medical field, I don't know.

MODERATOR – ANY OTHER REACTIONS TO THIS STATEMENT?

This statement can go either way.

MODERATOR – BUT AS I SAID, REPUBLICANS ARE IN POWER NOW. DO THEY BEAR RESPONSIBILITY IF THIS IS WHAT THEY'RE DOING?

Eventually I think that some of this will get addressed. It's just too much, too quick. And in 8 years of Republican control, it's just not going to happen overnight.

MODERATOR – YOU'RE CLEARLY NOT SATISFIED WITH THE JOB THAT THEY'RE DOING. YOU'VE GOT THIS LIST OF THINGS, THEY'RE ALWAYS DO THIS AND THAT. AND YET, EVERY ELECTION 95-96% OF THESE GUYS GET RE-ELECTED.

(Many speaking at once).

It's the lesser of two evils.

MODERATOR – WHY IF THERE IS SO MUCH DISSATISFACTION DO THESE GUYS KEEP GETTING REELECTED?

It seems like a lot of times, these ones that have been in office forever, you never get anybody to run against them that knows anybody.

Their war chests are huge.

(Many speaking at once).

(Inaudible) here. She pumps more money into this economy. When Congress learned that you can buy votes by sending billions of dollars to your (inaudible), so what's a person going to do? Cut off the billion dollars coming in because Congress has learned that you can buy the votes of your people?

That's just not Republican or Democratic.

MODERATOR – I’M NOT SAYING REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRATIC. I’M SAYING 95-96% ACROSS THE BOARD. THERE JUST HAPPENS TO BE MORE REPUBLICAN RIGHT NOW THAN THERE ARE DEMOCRATS.

I think that the majority of Americans are resistant to change.

MODERATOR – HOW ABOUT YOU GUYS? WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO GET YOU TO VOTE AGAINST THE INCUMBENTS?

I already did. I voted against every single one of them.

It doesn’t change.

After (inaudible), I’ll vote against anybody that’s already in Congress. It’s my philosophy. I give them 6 years. And I vote against.

I think you should offer other options. As Americans, we should have more voting on more issues.

Local issues.

Yeah, local issues, we should be voting twice a year, three times a year maybe. Expect everybody to vote.

(Many speaking at once).

Here’s the problem. I worked in the polls. . .

Nobody votes.

. . .10-15% turn out.

If they change it to a weekend, too, that would help a lot of people.

Yeah.

Right.

MODERATOR – OKAY, ONE OF THE ISSUES THAT WE KEEP COMING BACK TO IS HEALTHCARE. WE’RE TALKED ABOUT IT A LOT. CAN YOU THINK OF EITHER PARTY OF IF ANY POLITICAL LEADER HAS DONE ANYTHING POSITIVE ABOUT HEALTHCARE IN THE LAST 20 YEARS OR IF THEY PUT FORWARD A PLAN THAT YOU THOUGHT WOULD WORK?

No.

No.

No.

Nope.

I like Congress's healthcare. I would like to have it.

Hillary's still studying it, I think.

**MODERATOR – SO YOU CAN'T POINT TO ANYTHING THAT ANYONE'S DONE OR PROPOSED?**

I can think of a lot of things that they've done to increase the price of it. but I haven't seen a thing yet to decrease the price of it.

**MODERATOR – OKAY. IF YOU'RE GOING TO PUT TOGETHER A SOLUTION, WHAT ARE THE NECESSARY PIECES?**

Stop the frivolous law suits.

That's a part of it, but it's a minor part of it.

Get the prices on some of the medicine.

But they spend millions of dollars advertising it.

(Many speaking at once).

**MODERATOR – OKAY. WHAT ARE THE PIECES OF A HEALTHCARE SOLUTION?**

I think that they should [learn to] shop more like Medicare, for the best doctors.

(Inaudible).

More insurance plans. More choices.

The CEO's make \$10 million a year.

Congress has to pass a law and put a cap on a ceiling on what can be charged for medicine.

If a person wants to shop next door, (inaudible).

we wouldn't have to do that if we had a program in effect in the United States that limited, let's get the profit out of insurance for healthcare. It's something that everybody has to have.

That's just like a hospital charges \$45 for an aspirin.

MODERATOR – LET ME ASK YOU ABOUT A FEW CRITICAL DIFFERENCES. SOME PEOPLE SAY THE KEY IS COVERING THE PEOPLE WHO ARE UNINSURED. THAT'S A BIG PART OF THE PROBLEM, BECAUSE WE HAVE SO MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE UNINSURED BECAUSE EMPLOYERS DON'T OFFER INSURANCE ANY MORE, KIDS WHO DON'T HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE. SO WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT? TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERYONE IS COVERED OR TO LOWER. . .

(Many speaking at once).

If they would lower the whole thing, then it would take the whole average. With a lot of insurance companies, they won't take the high risk, but they'll take the lower ones.

MODERATOR – SO THAT'S MY QUESTION.

What percent is uninsured?

MODERATOR – DOES ANYONE KNOW?

Last I heard in Ivantucky, it was about 30 million people uninsured.

It's almost reaching half in Ivantucky. And maybe it is nationwide. I have no idea.

A policy is about \$400 a month. For a young family, they can't afford it.

MODERATOR – AGAIN, WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT? TO LOWER HEALTHCARE PREMIUMS FOR THOSE PEOPLE THAT HAVE INSURANCE NOW TO GET PRICES DOWN SO THAT PEOPLE CAN AFFORD IT. SO EMPLOYERS CAN AFFORD IT BETTER. OR IS IT TO COVER EVERYONE?

I think you need both.

You can't just say is it A or B? You have to find a way to get C.

MODERATOR – WHICH IS WHAT, BOTH?

Which is somewhat of both. Yeah, you can't say we're going to leave people behind because these people end up getting something somewhere, maybe not enough that they need, and it still gets paid for. So you have to find a way to cover both options and come up with something different.

You've got to take the profit out of healthcare. Indigent care is going to be around forever. But if you take the profit out of healthcare to the point where the gouging profit, the \$40 million bonus for the CEO. . .

Yeah, right.

MODERATOR – BUT IF YOU TAKE THE PROFIT OUT OF HEALTHCARE OR IF WE COVER EVERYONE, THAT RAISES THE QUESTION. IS IT THEN ADMINISTERED BY THE GOVERNMENT OR DO WE MAINTAIN PRIVATE INSURANCE?

No. You can't take the profit out because that's what's. . .

(Many speaking at once).

I don't say that you can take the profit out, but I think we need to look at who's making the highest percentage profit and why they're making that. And try and get that on a more equal level. All the companies could make about the same profit where everybody is happy and then the healthcare would be more affordable for everybody.

MODERATOR – SO BACK TO MY QUESTION. RIGHT NOW, THERE'S HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE UNINSURED. WHO'S GOING TO COVER THEM? ARE WE GOING TO FORCE PRIVATE INSURANCE COMPANIES TO EXTEND COVERAGE TO THEM, OR IS THE GOVERNMENT GOING TO COVER THEM THE WAY THEY DO WITH MEDICARE. . .

We don't do that on car insurance.

MODERATOR – NO. THAT'S WHAT I'M ASKING.

Well, why should you do it on health insurance?

Because healthcare is \$6,000 a year.

I know it is.

They showed that the government ran the healthcare more efficiently and cheaper than private sector can do it. Now I don't know if the private sector can do healthcare, but I think that's something that needs to be looked into.

They could give tax credits for high risk people going into the insurance. The companies handling high risk, they could get tax credits which is a lot cheaper than the government.

MODERATOR – SO IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU WOULD PREFER TO KEEP THE PRIVATE COMPANIES INSTEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTERING IT THE WAY THAT THEY DO IN CANADA.

I [think people should be] accountable for their own healthcare.

You'd use an emergency room as your general practitioner, too.

When my mom was in the hospital and a doctor stuck his head in the room and said, how are you doing, we didn't even know this guy and we got a bill for \$100. Medicare paid for it, so we didn't even care.

(Many speaking at once).

Everybody here remembers that you used to go to the hospital. The same doctor would x-ray you, the same doctor would read the x-rays, the same doctor would treat you. Now you go to a hospital, you have someone that takes the x-ray, someone. . .

MODERATOR – I GOT YOU.

You've got to cut all that out.

MODERATOR – PAT MENTIONED THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO ARE UNINSURED NOW ARE HIGH RISK, WHICH MEANS HIGH COST. IF WE'RE GOING TO COVER MORE PEOPLE, IF YOU'RE GOING TO EXTEND COVERAGE, SOMEHOW THIS IS GOING TO COST MONEY. WOULD PEOPLE BE WILLING, WE WANT TO PAY LESS FOR OUR PREMIUMS, RIGHT? WOULD PEOPLE BE WILLING TO PAY MORE IN TAXES TO COVER THE TAX CREDITS THAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, OR TO COVER EXTENDING COVERAGE TO HIGH RISK?

I think so.

We spend more in some frivolous little thing saving tsetse flies out west.

MODERATOR – THE WASTEFUL STUDIES HAVE BEEN THERE FOREVER AND UNLESS YOU GOING TO SNAP YOUR FINGERS AND MAKE POLITICIANS STOP WASTING MONEY, ARE WE GOING TO RAISE TAXES TO PAY FOR THIS OR NOT?

You will have to raise taxes if you just (inaudible).

Can't the government regulate the healthcare industry?

Did the government ever regulate anything and it work right?

MODERATOR – JUST ANSWER THE QUESTION. ARE WE GOING TO RAISE TAXES TO PAY FOR THIS OR NOT?

I believe that the majority of Americans would.

I would pay higher taxes if my premiums were reduced.

That's like Peter paying Paul.

You're paying for it now.

I pay more taxes than the average person, because I make more money than the average person. I'd pay more taxes if my mother didn't have to pay a \$250 deductible. Because who ends up paying the deductible?

MODERATOR – OKAY. A COUPLE OTHER IDEAS THAT I WANT TO GET YOUR REACTION TO. ONE PRICE CAPS. THE GOVERNMENT STEPPING IN AND TELLING PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES AND INSURANCE COMPANIES THAT THEY CAN'T CHARGE MORE THAN THIS.

I have no problem with that.

I got no problem with that.

They can still make a profit.

MODERATOR – ANYBODY GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?

There's so much pilferage in the pharmaceutical industry that they need to regulate it and the healthcare.

MODERATOR – OKAY. ANOTHER ONE, THE GOVERNMENT SETTING A CAP ON THE PERCENTAGE OF INCOME THAT COULD BE SPENT ON HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS. THIS IS SAYING THAT IF YOU'RE AN EMPLOYEE, NO MORE THAN 10% CAN GO TO PAY FOR YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE.

That's assuming that they offer it, correct?

MODERATOR – YES. I'M THROWING OUT THE 10%, BUT SETTING A PERCENTAGE, BUT IF YOU MAKE A LOWER INCOME, YOU PAY LESS FOR YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE.

I wouldn't have any problem with that.

Me, neither.

I have no problem with that.

I'm not real crazy about that. I don't think that because my salary goes up, that my health insurance premiums go up. I pay \$689 a month now.

It's either that or it goes up as you get older.

**MODERATOR – MOST OF YOU GUYS FEEL POSITIVE ABOUT THAT ONE? SO AS YOU ADVANCE THROUGH THE COMPANY, YOU PAY A GREATER PERCENTAGE OF THE HEALTHCARE. PRESUMABLY THE COMPANY WOULD BE PAYING. . .**

That would also cover low income people that make \$20,000 a year.

**MODERATOR – RIGHT.**

It would help them get insurance.

Basically, if you've got a healthier country, basically you're going to work longer and pay more taxes.

So if I make more, then I pay more of a premium, than if this guy that makes less, then he is more likely to pay more of the part that the insurance doesn't pay. Instead of he don't have any insurance, he's not going to pay any of the bill. There's going to be a big, and where does that get passed on? It gets passed on to me. so I think by that percentage basis, that would eliminate a lot of that, so mine would be lower in the long run.

**MODERATOR – I KNOW IT'S A LONG WAY OFF BUT I WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE ELECTION OF 2006. THINK ABOUT WHERE THE COUNTRY IS NOW IN TERMS OF THE ECONOMY AND ALL THE ISSUES THAT WE TALKED ABOUT HERE TONIGHT, DO YOU THINK THAT THINGS ARE GOING TO CHANGE SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE NEXT 12-18 MONTHS? DO YOU THINK THAT WE'RE GOING TO BE BASICALLY IN THE SAME POSITION THAT WE'RE NOW IN?**

Probably will be better.

We'll probably be out of Iraq.

(Many speaking at once).

We'll be out slowly.

**MODERATOR – THE SAME, YOU THINK THERE WILL BE A LITTLE WITHDRAWAL.**

I think that there will be an announcement made before the elections. That the withdrawal will start. I don't think anybody is coming home soon.

It will boost the elections.

I think the problem will be better.

**MODERATOR – OKAY. SO GIVEN THAT, REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU FEEL RIGHT NOW, WHAT WOULD BE THE BEST REASON TO VOTE REPUBLICAN FOR CONGRESS IN 2006?**

That's tough to answer because I don't know who the candidates are.

**MODERATOR – WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT INDIVIDUALS, JUST REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC.**

What do they offer? What's their track record? What do you agree with?

**MODERATOR – AGAIN, IT'S REPUBLICANS, IN GENERAL, AND DEMOCRATIC, IN GENERAL.**

Right now, there's more Republicans, so they're going to have an upper hand.

The Democrats, what happened to their upper hand? I think it's more the individual and what they can do.

Because Jefferson County is democratic.

Right now, I don't think that some of the Republican congressmen would retain their seats.

**MODERATOR – FLIP TO HANDOUT #7. THIS IS A LIST THAT PEOPLE HAVE GIVEN TO VOTE FOR A REPUBLICAN FOR CONGRESS. CIRCLE THE TWO THAT YOU THINK ARE THE BEST REASONS TO VOTE FOR REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS. IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT, DON'T CIRCLE IT. OKAY, LET'S GET A SHOW OF HANDS AND GO STRAIGHT THROUGH THE LIST.**

- 1 – REPUBLICANS WILL SUPPORT PRESIDENT BUSH AND HIS POLICIES -- 0
- 2 – REPUBLICANS FIX FOR TAX CUTS AND DECREASE SPENDING – 6
- 3 – REPUBLICANS DEFEND THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN VALUES – 1
- 4 – REPUBLICANS SUPPORT DECREASED REGULATION FOR BUSINESSES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH – 1
- 5 – REPUBLICANS STAND FOR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY – 4
- 6 – REPUBLICANS STAY THE COURSE IN IRAQ – 0
- 7 – REPUBLICANS ARE STRONG IN SUPPORTING THE MILITARY – 6
- 8 – REPUBLICANS SUPPORT DECREASED REGULATION OF INDIVIDUALS – 2

OKAY, YOU'RE KIND OF SPREAD OUT HERE BUT THERE ARE TWO THAT STAND OUT. REPUBLICANS FIX FOR TAX CUTS AND DECREASE SPENDING. THAT WAS THE FIRST ONE. WHY DID SIX OF THE TEN OF YOU PICK THAT ONE? WHY IS THAT THE BEST REASON TO VOTE FOR A REPUBLICAN FOR CONGRESS?

(Inaudible).

I think that they're looking out for the middle income people.

(Inaudible) for the future and cutting taxes.

MODERATOR – DO YOU BELIEVE THAT REPUBLICANS WILL FIGHT FOR CUTTING TAXES AND DECREASED SPENDING?

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

MODERATOR – AGAIN, PLAYING DEVIL'S ADVOCATE. WE'VE GOT THE BIGGEST DEFICITS IN HISTORY. WHEN BUSH CAME INTO OFFICE, HE HAD A BALANCED BUDGET. THE REPUBLICAN WERE IN CONTROL OF CONGRESS AND THE WHITE HOUSE FOR 6 YEARS. WE'VE GONE FROM A BALANCED BUDGET TO RECORD DEFICITS.

Percent-wise, it's not.

MODERATOR – WHAT'S THAT?

Percentage wise of GNP is lower than what it was in the 80's.

MODERATOR – REGARDLESS. WE'VE GOT VERY LARGE DEFICITS IN HISTORY, AS OPPOSED TO THE BALANCED BUDGET WHEN THEY TOOK OFFICE 6 YEARS AGO. AND EVEN AS A PERCENTAGE, WE'VE HAD THE LARGEST SPENDING INCREASES. THE SIZE OF THE GOVERNMENT, ALL THAT STUFF UNDER REPUBLICAN CONTROL.

We're also fighting a war and I don't believe it's going to get any smaller with all that's going on.

There's always been a deficit when we're had wars.

In the WWII, we went from a surplus to a deficit of \$1 billion.

MODERATOR – SO THE RECORD OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, DOESN'T CHANGE YOUR THINKING THAT THE REPUBLICANS ARE STILL THE PARTY OF SMALLER SPENDING AND LARGE (INAUDIBLE). IS THAT FAIR? OKAY. AND SIX OF YOU CHOOSE, REPUBLICANS ARE STRONG IN SUPPORTING THE MILITARY.

When Clinton was in office. . .

He worked to dismantle the military really.

Yeah.

And had the Democratic house, they cut defense spending immensely. They dismantled the CIA, FBI. Maybe perhaps if they hadn't done some of those things, you know, maybe 9/11 wouldn't have happen. I can't say that for sure, but still. . .

MODERATOR – OTHER REACTIONS TO THAT ONE?

The Democrats have always been against war.

They never supported the military. Back in the 60's they didn't really support it that much.

MODERATOR – AND FOUR OF YOU SAID, REPUBLICANS STAND FOR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND DOESN'T EXPECT GOVERNMENT TO TAKE CARE OF PEOPLE. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THAT ONE?

If more people stand on their own two feet, we wouldn't have half the problems that we've got.

Those law suits increased the costs of the products. That's all responsibility.

MODERATOR – EVEN THOUGH WE'VE GOT ALL THE TAX GIVEAWAYS AND ALL THE OTHER KIND OF STUFF THAT WE TALKED ABOUT, IS THAT. . .?

Yeah, but if you take one person and put them to work, not only are they adding to the roll, but they're not taking away from the roll like they were before, the benefits from the government. So it's always a double positive when you put someone to work. It takes care of itself.

MODERATOR – THE POINT IS, DO REPUBLICANS LIVE UP TO THAT?

I think they do.

I think they try.

Not all the same, but I think they try.

MODERATOR – LET’S FLIP TO HANDOUT #8 AND DO THE SAME EXERCISE FOR DEMOCRATS. CIRCLE THE TWO THAT YOU THINK ARE THE BEST REASONS TO VOTE FOR DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS. IF YOU DON’T BELIEVE IT, DON’T CIRCLE IT. OKAY, LET’S GET A SHOW OF HANDS AND GO STRAIGHT THROUGH THE LIST.

- 1 – DEMOCRATS PROVIDE A CHECK TO PRESIDENT BUSH AND REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS-- 3
- 2 – DEMOCRATS PROTECT THE RETIREMENT OF WORKING AMERICANS – 6
- 3 – DEMOCRATS PROVIDE CHANGE IN A NEW DIRECTION – 1
- 4 – DEMOCRATS REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE – 1
- 5 – DEMOCRATS PROTECT AMERICAN JOBS AND (INAUDIBLE) CORPORATE ABUSE – 0
- 6 – DEMOCRATS KNOW IT’S TIME FOR NEW DIRECTION IN IRAQ – 0
- 7 – DEMOCRATS FIGHT FOR LOWER HEALTHCARE COST AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS – 6
- 8 – DEMOCRATS RESPECT THE RIGHT OF PRIVACY – 2

SIX OF YOU PICKED #2 – DEMOCRATS PROTECT THE RETIREMENT OF WORKING AMERICANS. HOW WILL THEY DO THAT?

I think that they’ll come up with solutions to the Social Security problem before the Republicans.

They have no choice but to come up with a solution.

Saying that might get them in.

I think if they come up with a viable solution, it might get them in.

SIX OF YOU PICKED #7 – DEMOCRATS FIGHT FOR LOWER HEALTHCARE COST AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS. OBVIOUSLY, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PROMISING THAT FOR A LONG TIME AND IT HASN’T HAPPENED. WHAT MAKE YOU THINK THAT THE DEMOCRATS WILL, IN FACT, DO THIS?

Because it’s one of their political issues that they can get elected on.

They’re going to have to have something to run for and that’s the easiest one.

They’ve been wanting to privatize the healthcare.

It already is.

Not privatize. . .

They want to nationalize it.

Socialize it.

MODERATOR – OTHER THOUGHTS ON DEMOCRATS FIGHTING FOR LOWER HEALTHCARE COST AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS? THREE OF YOU PICKED #1 – DEMOCRATS PROVIDE A CHECK TO PRESIDENT BUSH AND REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS. WHY IS THAT A CONVINCING REASON TO VOTE FOR THEM?

You need checks and balances. The one party system has shown that it doesn't work.

We went through 40 years of a one-party system, just about.

MODERATOR – WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Well, from the 60's to the 80's, the Democrats controlled the Senate and the Congress.

MODERATOR – THE REPUBLICANS HAD THE WHITE HOUSE.

You had Carter and you had a few Democrats in there that controlled both houses and the money. The money is controlled through Congress, not the President.

MODERATOR – ALL RIGHT. ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ON THIS? IMAGINE IT'S ELECTION DAY, YOU'VE JUST GOTTEN BACK AND YOU JUST CAST YOUR VOTE FOR CONGRESS AND YOU VOTED FOR A REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE. WHAT WAS IT THAT ULTIMATELY MADE YOU CAST THAT VOTE, THE FINAL DECIDING FACTOR?

Their explanations on how they're going to do things, how they're going to work it out and explain how they're going to do it the right way.

A direction.

Security.

Their track record that they've already established.

I think their moral values.

MODERATOR – HOW MANY SAY THAT THEIR MORAL VALUES WOULD BE THE DECIDING FACTOR? OKAY. ALL RIGHT. ON THE FLIP SIDE, YOU'VE JUST GOTTEN BACK AND YOU JUST CAST YOUR VOTE FOR CONGRESS AND YOU VOTED FOR A DEMOCRAT CANDIDATE. WHAT WAS IT THAT

ULTIMATELY MADE YOU CAST THAT VOTE, THE FINAL DECIDING FACTOR?

I think it's time for a change. We need a refreshing new outlook.

If he just seems honest. That's what a lot of us ask for is honesty.

MODERATOR – HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU?

Same as those people.

Solve a lot of problems that we're in.

MODERATOR – SO RETIREMENT, SOCIAL SECURITY, HEALTHCARE.

Show us Americans how you can do that.

MODERATOR – LAST THING THAT YOU NEED TO DO. FLIP TO HANDOUT #9 THERE. IT'S NOT BEING SENT, BUT GIVEN ALL THE STUFF THAT WE'VE TALKED ABOUT, IF YOU WERE GOING TO TAKE A MINUTE AND WRITE TO YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO HIM? WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED, PASS IN YOUR PAPERS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME. HAVE A GOOD NIGHT. THANK YOU.

(END OF DISCUSSION.)