

**DEMOCRACY CORPS
GROUP 3
LITTLE ROCK, AR
WOMEN, AGES 45-60, NON-COLLEGE,
HOUSEHOLD INCOME UNDER \$50K, WEAK PARTISANS
JUNE 30, 2005, 5:45 PM**

(MODERATOR OVERVIEW.)

PARTICIPANTS' INTRODUCTIONS:

My name is Alice, I live in [Ipoloma] and have one child.

I'm Barbara from [Ipoloma], have two children, they're grown, two grandchildren, 7 and 8. I work for (inaudible).

I'm Claire and I live in Great Briar, have a daughter that's 19 and a son that's 16. I like being outdoors, riding horses.

My name is Danielle, I'm married and I have two grown daughters and two grandsons and two granddaughters. I'm a stay-at-home grandma.

I'm Eva, I'm married and have a 13 year old son and I have two pets, two dogs.

I'm Fran, I'm from Sheriden. I have two grown sons, three granddaughters and grandsons, ranging in age from 9 months to 15. I love needlework and reading and spending time with grand kids.

I'm Fran, have a grown daughter and a son. Have two grandchildren and three step-granddaughters and all my free time is raising a four year old.

I'm Heather. I have three children, four grandchildren, one step grandchild, and I love dancing, fishing, hiking. I have two pet deer, 5 dogs, a goose and a guinea pig.

My name is Iris, I'm a landscape supervisor at UCA. Been there over 10 years. I have a son and a stepson and a stepdaughter who just graduated with her Masters from Florida State. And a husband and I live out in the country and I love in Bologna, born and raised there.

I'm Jane and I have a grown daughter. We live out in the country also. There's animals everywhere. I have 5 cats and a few squirrels and I do (inaudible).

MODERATOR – THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING. I WANT TO START OUR CONVERSATION REAL BROADLY ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING ON

WITH OUR COUNTRY THESE DAYS. IS THE COUNTRY GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION OR THE WRONG DIRECTION RIGHT NOW?

We're just going in all directions.

There's a war going on.

Gas is too high. And they always do this to us in the summertime.

Yeah, so we can't go anywhere.

We're going into a, there's no courtesy anymore for common strangers. And the people who wait on you in the store are rude. There's no common courtesy. People don't treat each other like humans anymore.

I think it comes back from the home, the parenting.

I still think that the economy is still shaky. Plant closures and companies going out of business. It's not secure anymore. I don't think so.

MODERATOR – WHAT ELSE DO THE REST OF YOU THINK ABOUT THE ECONOMY?

I think it's getting even more insecure for the people at retirement age. I have some older retired ladies in my neighborhood. And they bought this new card for prescription drugs and one of them was telling me, I pay \$200 for this card. And I get \$600 of drugs for this \$200 card. To boil the whole story down, this lady is living on \$530 a month. When her savings is gone, she can't buy her life sustaining drugs. To me, that is really something for us to think about because we'll all be there.

My mother is in the same boat. She get \$400 a month Social Security. She owes St. Vincent's \$1,000 and they want her to pay \$100 a month to them. We talked to the hospital and they wrote it off for her. The credit company wouldn't even take \$5 a month. They said that it wasn't enough. The elderly cannot survive on what they're making.

Well, the drugs are cheaper in Canada and they're putting a stop to people getting drugs in Canada.

The young people out there having babies, going on welfare, and having Medicare pay for their babies. If they're going to take care of the young people, they sure ought to take care of their elderly because they have worked all these years. they've gotten to a point in life where they can't work anymore. And these younger people coming up, they don't want to work. As long as they can get food stamps and income coming for every baby they have, that's not right. There's something wrong with that balance.

MODERATOR – WHAT ELSE?

I think people need to put more trust on what's going on with the war. I think a lot of people don't really see the big picture. It's a shame that we're over there. It may not be directly connected like we see it, to 9/11. Nothing has happened since then, not even like in Oklahoma. So I feel pretty secure, homeland security. And I think that's pretty important. If your homeland isn't secure, then everything is going to be last, just like they tried to do when they took the World Trade Center. They sent us into a tailspin, but it sure opened our eyes.

MODERATOR – WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN IRAQ RIGHT NOW?

I think the government needs to stand up behind their own. I think Bush is doing good as far as doing what he has to do over there. But we need to stand behind our soldiers, too.

My nephew is going there Monday.

First trip out?

Yeah. He's just a baby.

It makes you wonder how long it's going to go on.

It's a war. It seems like we should have been finished by now.

Yeah, right.

It's not realistic to expect a time. War finishes when it finishes. I think that after with Desert Storm, we went in there and did what we did so quickly, it was a lot smaller area. But it was amazing how quickly and the press was all in there. I think the press puts out too much information because everybody else can see what's on TV, too, all over the world. Why are they telling this?

Yeah, you got to keep some of it quiet.

Right.

We're there and we're going to have to stay there now. I had an issue with the way we got there. A big issue. I have an issue with the way we're treating the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. That is just inhumane. I just can't believe that our country is getting away with what they're doing.

MODERATOR – OTHER THINGS THAT YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT? OTHER THINGS THAT ARE GOING ON?

I kind of wonder what's going to happen with our Social Security. Anybody got any thoughts on that?

There ain't none.

There isn't going to be any.

That's what I told my son yesterday. I told him to make sure that he starts his own retirement plan. You may not have your Social Security. I want you to plan ahead.

We didn't plan for this when we got married 30 years ago.

And Social Security and most of our retirement plans, the way the economy is going right now, that will not be enough to live on, even if we have it.

I see a lot more older people ending up living with their children. I just see more families having to pull together. Because unless you're totally wealthy, it ain't going to be there.

We're taxed to death on everything. Even used cars.

That's ridiculous. You have to pay taxes twice.

And your laundry.

MODERATOR – ANYTHING GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION?

We wake up every morning.

We're a free country and that's very important. We walk around and we're oblivious.

What about being afraid to worship?

I'm very grateful that I'm in America.

There's more tolerance than there used to be to other races and lifestyles. I think that's good.

MODERATOR – GOING BACK TO HOW THE WAR IS DRAGGING ON OVER THERE, WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN? A LOT OF PEOPLE SAY THAT WE NEED TO STAY THE COURSE. WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN BEFORE WE CAN START TO BRING OUR TROOPS HOME? WHAT DOES STAYING THE COURSE MEAN?

We're taking care of the situation. We can't just turn around and leave. We said that we're going to do this, this and this. You've got to follow through on what you planned as far as the people. People are people. there are people over there that are bad and they suffer over there, too. We're going to have to help build back what's been taken down.

But Rumsfeld said that they could be over there 12 years.

(Many speaking at once).

I have a feeling that we're going to be in Iraq always.

I think we need to let them run their government at some point. Instead of having American-appointed whatever over there, we should say, okay, now this is yours and now you can do it.

But they did elect officials.

But our government is still involved.

What they have there is a baby government. They've never had a democratic society there. And those people there. . .

You have to show them what to do.

Every war, they're dealing with different circumstances and different people.

Right. These guys are a barbarian civilization. They don't care what they do to anybody else. They've got suicide bombers and all that. They've got their mind on one thing. Target zero. They don't care.

MODERATOR – SO MY QUESTION REMAINS. WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO? THEY'VE ELECTED THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT. THEY'VE GOT THEIR OWN ARMY, WHICH WE'RE TRAINING. AT WHAT POINT DO WE SAY, OKAY, NOW YOU CAN STAND ON YOUR OWN?

I don't think that we should have to babysit them.

I don't think so either.

At one point, we have to say, okay, this is it. And now it's yours.

What they should do maybe is once we give them their basic training on what they can do, maybe have so many of our people be there for a certain length of time to sit back and watch how they have taken what they have been taught. If they do a little guidance along the way, show them and say, okay. This is our deadline. And then we're out of here. They've got to be given time to show that they can do what they were taught and be supervised as they're doing it.

MODERATOR – OTHER THOUGHTS? OKAY. I'M GOING TO THROW OUT SOME NAMES AND TELL ME WHAT'S THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND. FIRST ONE, BILL CLINTON.

Morals of an alley cat.

I liked the job that he did for our country.

Yes, he did a good job.

He was a good President.

The man's private life, from his job. . .

He was his own [rebel].

Most people do have a private life, but I guess he's pushing us. He was sort of ignorant for doing that.

And he was under a microscope and he didn't realize it.

Yeah, he was still a good President and a very good diplomat and knew his way, he was a good negotiator and all that stuff.

He was a very smart man. And he did a lot for Arkansas.

Yes, he did.

Our economy was great under Bill Clinton, but his morals were bad.

Yeah, I think that he should have shown a better example to other people because he was a leader and he did not do that.

MODERATOR – HOW ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS?

That's a joke.

I don't hear too much about them.

It's a joke.

I'm like her. I don't hear much about the United Nations really.

MODERATOR – DO YOU HAVE ANY OPINION OF THEM, GOOD OR BAD?

Good, I guess.

They didn't support us. They didn't support our country in what we needed to do to try rectify what happened in 9/11. And whatever ever happened to all the fuel-for-food? And that was one of the head people in the United Nations. The son, that's kind of interesting.

MODERATOR – ANYONE ELSE? ALL RIGHT. HOW ABOUT THE NRA? THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION?

I am a proud member. Proud to bear my arms.

Yes.

Yes.

I agree with that.

I don't think you should take them away.

MODERATOR – HOW ABOUT THOUGHTS ABOUT THEM AS A GROUP?

That's kind of hard.

I think it's a good group that helps protect the individual's right to bear arms.

And that goes back to what she said about, it's how you raise your family. It's not the guns that kill the people.

Our guns are out of sight. That way that no children that come over can hold of any guns. There's no guns out.

(Many speaking at once).

When we were kids, we could be trusted to go out in the woods and go bear hunting. But now kids can't. You have to have them locked up. but again, it's the parents of the kids that's causing this.

It's not just the parents. It's the TV programs.

And the video games.

Oh, yeah.

Lots of video games.

MODERATOR – HOW ABOUT TOM DELAY?

I heard his name before, but I can't remember who he is. Who is he?

Who is he?

Well, I heard something on him that he's always (inaudible) or, I don't know if it's him. .

Is he one of those crooked CEO's?

MODERATOR – NO. ANYBODY KNOW WHO TOM DELAY IS? HE'S THE REPUBLICAN LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. HE'S HAD LOTS AND LOTS OF ETHICS CHANGES AND LOTS OF INVESTIGATIONS.

I head it on Face the Nation. I listen to Face the Nation every Sunday.

MODERATOR – ALL RIGHT. HOW ABOUT LABOR UNIONS?

I think that they're a good thing.

They're needed.

There's not as many as there was years ago, it seems.

The bigger ones, you know.

Sometimes they sort of screw them around.

MODERATOR – SO THEY'RE WEAKER TODAY MAYBE THAN IN THE PAST?

Yeah, they're probably are.

MODERATOR – HOW ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS?

We need them.

Yeah.

(Inaudible) idea of what's out there. We have no idea what toxins are out there in our environment. We don't know.

They protect our water sources and stuff like that.

That's a real good point. Water's very important.

I think we really need to think about things like that for our children's children and on down the road. I think it's time that we quit putting our head in the sand over issues that could be important 2 to 3 generations down the road.

Recycling especially because we're using up the earth. We're not giving anything back.

You can't rebuild a 60 year old tree.

If everyone just recycled just half of their stuff, it's unbelievable what we throw away. You think, how can I throw this all away?

MODERATOR – OKAY. HOW ABOUT RUDY GUILIANA?

Oh, he's a good one.

I like the way he handled 9/11.

I think so, too. He handled himself really proficiently during that whole thing.

MODERATOR – ANY SENSE OF HIM BEYOND 9/11?

He retired.

Did he retire?

Or he ran for the governor of New York.

Well, his term ended. And they have a new governor.

And there was a big issue about his divorce on TV. But he still went through 9/11 without dragging that into it. you didn't know anything about that until afterwards.

Can you imagine being tossed into that all of a sudden?

I figure that we'll hear from him again.

I think so, too.

MODERATOR – HOW ABOUT MAJOR CORPORATIONS?

Ford and GMC, and stuff like that?

They're all for money. The big execs are all for money and they don't give a crap about the workers or what they do as long as they get their money. It's (inaudible) the way it goes.

MODERATOR – DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT?

Yes.

Like Ford with the tires that came apart and killed all those people. and they knew about that long ago. And WorldCom and that other one that took all their employees' money. They didn't give a crap and so now none of their employees have any retirement or anything. They took everything that they had in retirement. It's pretty crappy. I wouldn't trust them.

They think that they're above the law.

Yeah.

Well, they pretty much have been. Not many held accountable for things. It's kind of brushed under the rug.

Just recently, one CEO got acquitted of all these charges.

MODERATOR – JOHN KERRY.

Thank goodness we got Bush still.

MODERATOR – REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU VOTED, WHAT'S YOUR IMPRESSION OF KERRY?

He didn't take the initiative. He didn't come across or whatever. He might have been able to but his little old running partner, he was a little doll, boy. He was sort of Kennedyesque. I'll bet if he was to run. . .

He's got the magnetism and he was a cute little thing.

He's got charisma.

I think people were ready for a change, but he just didn't pull it off.

I think that the man was there. I think his projection of himself was not as personable as it should have been.

Right.

That's right.

That's my thoughts on him.

(Many speaking at once).

I think he tried to run the race in a negative way with Bush. That's not how you run, in my opinion. And that was something about him that I couldn't trust. His image. . .

He should have (inaudible) one (inaudible). What he could help them to do rather than what Bush couldn't help them to do.

That's a good point.

MODERATOR – LAST ONE IS GEORGE W. BUSH. BUT I WANT YOU TO WRITE SOME STUFF DOWN BEFORE WE TALK ABOUT IT. ON HANDOUT #1, WRITE DOWN ALL THE GOOD THINGS THAT COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT PRESIDENT BUSH. ON HANDOUT #2, WRITE DOWN THE DOUBTS AND WORRIES THAT YOU HAVE ABOUT HIM. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE GOOD THINGS THAT YOU WROTE DOWN?

He's not afraid to deal with negatives that come his way, whether from other countries or leaders or whatever. He's pretty strong in what he believes and he's not afraid to address it.

The way he acted on 9/11.

That's mine also. I think he handled the aftermath of 9/11 very well. He encouraged everyone.

He didn't take the blame for sometimes his daughters' choices or bad behaviors. He didn't say anything about that and he shouldn't have to because that was his daughters, it wasn't him.

That's what I put. He seems to keep his family life out of politics.

I put that he's family-oriented and he's very pleasurable. I think he wants the best for the country.

(Many speaking at once).

Yeah, I think his heart is in the right place.

I don't think that a lot of people take him seriously. But he didn't get there because he was stupid. He has a stupid grin, but he's not stupid.

He's God-fearing and I think that he cares about the country.

I like the fact that he will stand up and say that he's Christian and that he prays. A lot of people don't do that.

Yeah, they try to skew what he said about that. I asked God. I ask God a lot, too.

MODERATOR – WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT HE TALKS ABOUT HIS FAITH? WHAT DOES THAT SAY TO YOU?

That he's a strong individual.

He's a Christian.

And as a Christian, we're supposed to pray for our leaders. We do pray for our leaders.

He's a moral man. I do think that's important.

He didn't have a problem with them talking about his drinking problem. He didn't try to hide it.

And in a time when you can't talk about religion, he does and I like that. Because a lot of places just like that guy for [Allstate] got fired for talking about the Bible at his work. He got fired.

I thought we had freedom of speech.

I know. But they didn't fire other people for talking about their lifestyles or what they do or how they live, but he got fired.

MODERATOR – OKAY. OTHER POSITIVES ON BUSH?

I think he really understands the Arab nations and those people over there a lot better than a lot of folks realize. Being good friends with the Saudi king is probably a good thing. I'm kind of glad that his is.

MODERATOR – LET'S GO TO HANDOUT #2. WHAT DOUBTS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT HIM?

I don't think that he knows how to handle the situation in Iraq with the timetable on getting our troops out. That's one of my main concerns. And the Social Security reform issue.

MODERATOR – WHAT ABOUT HIS STANCE ON SOCIAL SECURITY?

I don't know if it's a good thing, he's trying anyway. It may be the right thing to do, but I don't know.

MODERATOR – ALL RIGHT. OTHER DOUBTS YOU HAVE ABOUT BUSH?

He's just not diplomatic enough for my taste. He doesn't come across to other people, he just comes across pushy to me. I know that's against our President. . .

Hey, you're allowed.

. . .but to me, he doesn't come across as a confident person in his abilities and what he's going to do.

MODERATOR – OKAY. OTHER THINGS?

He comes across as not having the knowledge of world leaders, world politics or policy and stuff like that. that he shouldn't (inaudible).

One thing that kind of worries me about him is, if you all remember when we got our tax rebate back. My husband and I got \$300 each. He got \$96,000. to me, that's something for the working person to look at. He's not as concerned. . .

He should give that back or something.

. . .well, I know my poor husband worked every day as hard as he did and he got \$300 and he got \$96,000 and it just didn't go over good with me.

That's wrong.

MODERATOR – OTHER THINGS?

I read that he didn't know about the fuel price. I still think that he could do more about it. That stands out in my mind right now.

MODERATOR – ANYTHING ELSE? WE TALKED ABOUT THE ECONOMY, SOCIAL SECURITY, GAS PRICES, IRAQ. ANY OTHER ISSUES?

I think he needs to step in, we were talking about the drugs for anybody. It's expensive if you don't have insurance. And even if you do have insurance, the medications are high.

Or your insurance won't pay for them. They won't even do a co-pay.

I wish he would do something about that.

I realize that we're part of a bigger conglomerate in the world. But I told you about that lady living on \$500 a month and her drug bill is \$400 a month. we spend all this money and lives on a country that's been fighting and behaving like this since the beginning of time. You know, the Bible tells us that this is probably always going to be going on over there. And I think we have gotten ourselves into a financial situation. We are just so very buried up now in debt because of this that I just don't have a lot of confidence.

You're supposed to help secure your family first and his family is the United States. And the medicine that they need, one of the nursing homes not taken care of, it's hard.

We have to take care of ourselves.

Well, you know, if we could just spend a portion. I realize that our county is obligated for lots of things, but I just feel like there's more that we can do for our own.

MODERATOR – I WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE DEMOCRATS AND THE REPUBLICANS. AND I KNOW A LOT OF PEOPLE TELL ME THAT WHEN YOU GO TO VOTE, YOU DON'T VOTE FOR THE PARTY, YOU VOTE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL REGARDLESS. AND I UNDERSTAND THAT. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THE REALITY OF THE WAY THINGS WORK IN WASHINGTON, THE DEMOCRATS DO A LOT OF THINGS TOGETHER. THE REPUBLICANS DO A LOT OF THINGS TOGETHER. AND THERE ARE CERTAIN SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PARTIES AND I WANTED TO TALK ABOUT THAT. LET'S START WITH THE DEMOCRATS. TURN TO HANDOUT #3. FIRST QUESTIONS, WHAT ARE THE POSITIVES ABOUT DEMOCRATS? WHAT DO THEY GET WRONG? WHAT DO THE DEMOCRATS GET RIGHT?

They're more for the working class.

I think they're more for middle class people.

MODERATOR – HOW DO THEY DEMONSTRATE THAT?

They seem to listen more and care about what you have to say.

MODERATOR – ANYTHING ELSE THEY DO THAT DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY'RE MORE FOR THE WORKING CLASS?

They work for the programs that help out people instead of wanting to give the rich folks a tax break and things like that.

MODERATOR – OKAY, WHAT ELSE? OTHER POSITIVES ABOUT DEMOCRATS.

I don't think that they're afraid to try change. If something is not working, I hear them trying to brainstorm a plan that will work.

MODERATOR – ANYTHING ELSE? ANYONE? ALL RIGHT. WHAT DO THEY GET WRONG?

They come across strong for their issues.

To me, it's the same way with Republicans. One party versus another party. It's just shots at each other and spreading bad rumors about each other.

Negativity.

Yeah, if you could just keep the negativity out of all of those, I'm so sick of all politicians and anybody. When those commercials start 6 months before the election and you get so sick of that crap. All that's on the TV, you just want to choke the next politician that you see.

If you disagree about something, we've got to project a united front. I think the Democratic party is a little weak on that.

MODERATOR – OTHER THINGS?

They do tend to mud sling. They want to point out the issues that go wrong that the Republicans are making. And yet, they don't really have a solution of their own.

That's why they don't ever win now.

They both do that, to me. I wrote the same thing on the other page. That's what's wrong.

MODERATOR – OTHER THINGS THAT ARE HOLDING YOU BACK FROM SUPPORTING DEMOCRATS? NO? ANYONE ELSE? OKAY. FLIP TO HANDOUT #4 AND DO THE SAME THING FOR REPUBLICANS. WHAT'S WHAT DO THE REPUBLICANS GET RIGHT?

I think they kind of go more along the lines that the Democrats do. But some of the issues that the Democrats are pushing for are not quite, it's kind of hard for me to get this right, what I'm trying to say. The Democrats basically support partial-birth abortion, and things like that. Republicans are usually against that. I find that an issue. And tax issues, in my opinion, I think that the Democrats usually are the ones that taxing more. I think a lot of times when it looks like a Democrat has done a good job, after a Republican has set that in motion.

MODERATOR – DO THE REST OF YOU AGREE THAT REPUBLICANS ARE STRONGER ON MORAL ISSUES?

I just put that they run a stronger race.

They're a more conservative party.

They're more unified. They're more conservative and I think part of that is that they're protecting their money. They're unified in their money.

I think that they have a lot of financial backing.

Yeah, and they all agree that they want to keep their people. . .(END OF SIDE A/BEGINNING OF SIDE B). . .

MODERATOR – WHAT ELSE DO REPUBLICANS GET RIGHT? ANYTHING ELSE? WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK ABOUT THIS QUESTION THAT REPUBLICANS ARE STRONGER ON MORAL ISSUES OR NOT? ANYBODY SEE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PARTIES ON THESE KIND OF ISSUES?

They're way more conservative about it.

Bush has got a lot of good morals. But I'm one of these that you said that don't take that into consideration. I vote for the person. Sometimes I go Democratic. Sometimes I vote Republican.

That question is kind of hard to answer because (inaudible – many speaking at once).

Sometimes you have to put their party aside.

MODERATOR – THIS ISN'T NECESSARILY WHEN YOU GO TO VOTE, IT'S ABOUT WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS THAT REPUBLICANS HAVE IN COMMON AND DEMOCRATS HAVE IN COMMON. ANY OTHER POSITIVES ON REPUBLICANS? OKAY. WHAT ABOUT THE FLIP SIDE? WHAT DO THE REPUBLICANS GET WRONG?

Overspending and overtaxing.

They're for their money.

They seem to be for the upper class.

That's what most of them are.

MODERATOR – OKAY. WHAT ELSE? ANYTHING ELSE? DID ANYBODY AGREE WITH WHAT CLAIRE SAID ABOUT OVERTAXING AND OVERSPENDING?

[Laughter.]

It appears to me sometimes when I sit and look at it, it sounds like the Republicans, and I'm like these other ladies. I want to know, when it comes time for election, I want to know as much as I can know about each candidate before I make my mind up. it almost seems like with the Republicans, they're either for the extremely wealthy or the extremely poverty ridden who are on welfare. The working middle class are just left out in the cold, I think.

MODERATOR – AS YOU GUYS KNOW, THE CURRENT SITUATION IN WASHINGTON, THE REPUBLICANS HAVE CONTROL OF THE WHITE HOUSE. THEY HAVE THE BIGGEST MAJORITY THAT THEY’VE HAD IN THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE. THEY BASICALLY HAVE A LEVEL OF CONTROL THAT UNPRECEDENTED IN ANY OF OUR LIVES. BASICALLY SINCE EISENHOWER. SO GIVEN THE SITUATION OF THE POWER OF THE REPUBLICANS HAVE AND THE LEVEL OF CONTROL THAT THEY HAVE IN WASHINGTON NOW, WHAT WORRY YOU MORE ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN? ARE YOU AFRAID THAT THE DEMOCRATS MIGHT, NOW THAT THEY’RE STUCK IN THE MINORITY AND WHERE THEY ARE, STAND UP AND BE OBSTRUCTIONIST AND PREVENT REPUBLICANS FROM DOING ANYTHING AND GETTING THINGS DONE WHAT THEY WANT TO GET DONE? OR ARE YOU MORE WORRIED THAT THE REPUBLICANS WITH ALL THIS POWER ARE GOING TO GO TOO FAR AND MAYBE DO THINGS THAT ARE MAYBE CONTRARY TO WHAT’S BEST FOR THE COUNTRY?

Probably the first. I think that the Democrats are putting up a lot of pit stops and obstacles on issues that maybe aren’t really important to try and draw the attention away. I don’t know. They seem to smokescreen things.

One thing that you have to think about when you’re voting, if you’re voting for all Democrat, then the balance of power could shift.

I’m not worried about them having too much power and doing things that I didn’t agree with. But to my surprise, some of the Republicans have forced opposition to a lot of the things that have gone one. So that made me feel better.

MODERATOR – ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES SINCE THE ELECTION WHERE YOU FEEL REPUBLICANS HAVE GONE TOO FAR OR WHERE DEMOCRATS HAVE BLOCKED PROGRESS?

The Supreme Court appointments. Bush had several appointees and I heard an ad on TV, although I don’t know how true it is that the President appointed all these appointees and the Democrats were blocking it. For whatever reasons, they didn’t like them or they just didn’t want the majority of Republicans to put them in there. And if that’s the case, if they didn’t want a majority of Republican judges in there, but I mean, but the President is Republican, so that’s probably the way that it’s going to be anyway. So they’re sort of stonewalling there

But they don’t look at it like we do, if it’s a good woman or a good man. They look at it by. . .

The balance of power and how many Republicans are in there.

MODERATOR – ANY OTHER ISSUES? OKAY. I WANT TO PRESENT TWO DIFFERENT POINTS-OF-VIEW ON ISSUES FACING THE COUNTRY RIGHT

NOW. I'M GOING TO ASK YOU TO PICK WHICH POINT-OF-VIEW YOU AGREE WITH MORE. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE 100% ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, BUT IF YOU HAD TO PICK ONE THAT BETTER REFLECTS YOUR OPINION AND YOUR POINT-OF-VIEW, WHICH WOULD IT BE? LET'S GO TO HANDOUT #5. I'LL READ THEM OUT LOUD. JUST MARK WHICH ONE YOU AGREE WITH MORE AND THEN WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT.

THERE ARE MORE AMERICANS HOLDING JOBS, OWNING THEIR OWN HOMES, GOING TO COLLEGE AND OWNING THEIR OWN BUSINESSES THAN ANY TIME IN OUR HISTORY. OUR CURRENT ECONOMIC POLICIES HAVE US ON THE ROAD TO INCREASE GROWTH AND PROSPERITY.

OR

JOBS ARE SCARCE, INCOMES ARE STAGNANT WHILE PRICES SKYROCKET, BENEFITS ARE BEING CUT AND MILLIONS OF EMPLOYEES HAVE LOST THEIR PENSIONS. OUR ECONOMY IS FAILING WORKING AMERICANS.

WHICH ONE OF THOSE BETTER REFLECTS YOUR POINT-OF-VIEW ON THE CURRENT ECONOMY? HOW MANY PICKED THE TOP ONE? BOTTOM ONE? WE'VE GOT 9 ON THE BOTTOM ONE AND ONE ABSTAINING. WHY DID ALMOST ALL OF YOU GO TOWARD THE BOTTOM?

The benefits, jobs.

It shows. It's believable.

The benefits are low.

Exactly. And it just gets worse every year.

And prices are skyrocketing.

The minimum wage is not going up.

How do people live on that?

Immigrants are coming in and taking lower paying jobs. They'll work for less.

They'll work for nothing.

There are a lot of people in Arkansas who don't want to do the jobs that the immigrants are doing. I know all at UCA, the foreign students work because the other ones don't want to. That's how a lot of them get those jobs because nobody will take them.

MODERATOR – OTHER THOUGHTS ON THE BOTTOM ONE? SO IT'S THE BENEFITS BEING CUT THAT REALLY STANDS OUT, BUT ALSO THE IDEA THAT THE INCOMES ARE FLAT AND PRICES KEEP GOING UP AND UP. ALL RIGHT. HOW ABOUT THE TOP ONE? WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE TOP ONE?

I look and I see comfortable people. I see people that most of the majority, they do struggle in conditions that cause them to struggle. My husband lost his job three years ago and we're struggling to get our business off the ground. And it's rough. But I don't think that that's unusual under any President. I think that's not unusual. They're just happy. I don't think that when he lost his job, it had anything to do with the Republicans. I'm just saying that the economy fluctuates either way. I can really see a difference. My husband is retired now. He worked for a big corporation. He was forced into early retirement and they hired back four guys to do the job that he was doing. Of course, all four guys were being paid a lesser wage than they paid him. And I see this with friends and family and corporations in the last 10 years in lots of companies. And that's scary to me. The security is not there when my husband and I went into the workforce. It's just not there now and that's a sense of security that is really, really sad to lose.

If you make a decent wage and you get near retirement and they've paid you all they want to pay you, they get rid of you and just get somebody cheaper.

Exactly.

My husband is concerned about that right now at this company. They're cutting back at his company and he's afraid that he's going to lose his job. Where else is he going to go at 55 and make the kind of money that he's making?

I've been at UCA for over 10 years and I guess I'm going to retire from them because nobody is going to hire me to do what I do now.

And we were talking about the benefits. Those benefits mean a lot. Well, we retired 3 to 4 years ago, since we retired, our insurance, which the company is supposed to be paying the majority of it for us, every year has gone up between \$125 and \$150. This will be the fourth year that it's gone up \$170 a month. Well, you figure on retirement, you're talking about, what? Three, six, almost \$700 a month increase in health benefits when you get in your late 50's, when you need your health benefits. You don't need them at 25. So things are getting really scary in the economy. Really scary. And we tell our kids to plan as hard as you can plan and put as much money back as you can.

Right, because your money is not drawing anything in the bank.

But what scares me is if the Social Security thing comes about. My kids are (inaudible). They had parents that worked and they had pretty much every thing that they wanted. I'm scared to death that they'll invest this money, well, what's to say that they'll pull this money out and then they make it to their Dad's and my age and they don't have anything

for retirement? I realize that that's their responsibility, but come y'all. Look at our past histories. Even our own government hasn't done that great. So I'm kind of worried about that Social Security thing.

MODERATOR – THAT RAISES A POINT THAT SOMEONE SAID. YOU HAVE A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE HOMES AND STUFF AND THEY'RE LIVING COMFORTABLY THESE DAYS, BUT THEY'RE DOING IT ON \$10,000 OF CREDIT CARD DEBT AND THEY'VE GOT THEIR HOUSES MORTGAGED UP AND THEY'VE GOT CAR PAYMENTS AND THEY'RE NOT SAVING ANYTHING. THEY'RE JUST SPENDING IT ALL.

I get things in the mail all the time. You're pre-approved. Yes, they throw credit at you. And then places like Car Mart that target people with a very low income that they can't get a car any other way and they pay four times what that car is worth. These credit card companies are just extending credit to people, oh boy, a credit card. They don't know how to deal with credit.

They sent my 19-year-old daughter a credit card.
There ought to be a law against that. they're just pushing you to take credit. Especially young people. They don't have the common sense. They don't understand.

MODERATOR – OKAY. FLIP TO HANDOUT #6. TWO DIFFERENT TAKES.

THE KEY TO SUSTAINED ECONOMIC GROWTH IS TAX CUTS THAT ALLOW AMERICANS TO KEEP MORE OF THE MONEY THEY EARN AND ALLOW OUR COMPANIES TO COMPETE IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY.

OR

THE KEY TO FIXING OUR ECONOMY ISN'T MORE TAX CUTS FOR THE WEALTHY AND BIG BUSINESSES. IT'S PRESERVING AMERICAN JOBS, LOWERING HEALTHCARE COSTS AND PROTECTING RETIREMENT SECURITY.

HOW MANY VOTED FOR NUMBER TWO? WHY DID EVERYBODY GO TO #2?

That is right. We got \$600 and they gave President Bush \$96,000. That's a prime example.

Because the wealthy don't need tax cuts. They're right. They're wealthy. Businesses don't need tax cuts. It's the small businesses that do.

And I think that lowering the healthcare, it can be done. You can go to Mexico and get surgery that is very, very poor. Or they can get prescription drugs. We can get that, too.

I believe that we can get it, too, if they can force the drug companies, the medical equipment companies. . .

They're making a fortune.

. . .hell, they're making a fortune and we're paying for it.

(Many speaking at once).

The difference between generic and brand stuff, you know it doesn't cost them that much because the people that are making generic can sell it for nothing hardly.

One of the things that I heard on one of the news shows, one of the government's throwback against getting the drugs from Canada or wherever is the quality of the drugs. That's not so. Our drugs that we're taking everyday are coming from out of the country. And when your own government will give you that way, boy, it's a sad day.

MODERATOR – SO IN EVERY YEAR SINCE 2001, BUSH HAD A BIG TAX CUT THAT HE PUSHED THROUGH. YOU GOT THE REBATE CHECKS AND THEN THEY HAD THE INCREASE PER CHILD TAX AND STUFF LIKE THAT. THERE HAVE BEEN MORE TAX CUTS IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. DO YOU FEEL LIKE THOSE TAX CUTS HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR YOU IN YOUR LIVES?

No.

Just around tax time.

I could see with families with younger children. I could see that. But I don't see it for folks my age.

For people that don't have kids at home. . .

Yeah.

It's almost too little, too late.

Right.

What's that money going to do for them? Buy one extra bill of groceries?

Yeah, that rebate we got, it just went to the grocery store and paid the light bill.

(Many speaking at once).

MODERATOR – ANYONE ELSE?

On the health cost, I had to go to the doctor and the doctor prescribed me a prescription drug. And I went to get it filled and the pharmacist called me. I got your prescription but I don't know if you're going to want to get it filled. \$200. I said, no thank you. I can't afford it. So she said, well, I'm going call the doctor and see if I can get you something cheaper. Why don't do it in the first place?

The drug representatives visit the doctors every day.

And they want to push those drugs.

Right.

Exactly.

And how many times do you have to your primary physician in order to go to a specialist?

Right.

So you have to pay the co-pay for both.

MODERATOR – LET'S GO TO HANDOUT #7. HERE'S A DIFFERENT ISSUE.

THE CURRENT COURSE OF ACTION IN IRAQ IS FAILING. WE EITHER NEED A NEW PLAN, EVEN IF IT MEANS GIVING UP SOME CONTROL TO GAIN GREATER COOPERATION FROM OUR ALLIES OR WE NEED TO START BRINGING OUR TROOPS HOME.

OR

WE MUST STAY THE COURSE TO ACHIEVE STABILITY AND FINISH THE JOB IN IRAQ. IF WE ABANDON OUR MISSION NOW, IRAQ WILL BECOME A TRAINING GROUND FOR TERRORISTS. THERE WILL BE NO HOPE FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE SACRIFICES OF OUR SOLDIERS WILL HAVE BEEN IN VAIN.

HOW MANY GO WITH THE TOP ONE? BOTTOM?

I went with the top one.

MODERATOR – DID ANYONE ELSE GO WITH THE TOP ONE? OKAY. SINCE MOST WENT TO THE BOTTOM, LET'S TALK ABOUT WHY THAT ONE MORE. EVEN IF YOU KIND OF AGREE WITH PIECES OF BOTH, WHY THE BOTTOM MORE FOR THE MOST OF YOU?

Because a lot of those soldiers over there, they have a sense of caring. They really care what is going on and they're risking their lives for that.

Yeah, loyalty.

Although we see our soldiers losing their lives everyday, you don't want the soldiers to have died in vain. We started this. And their family is thinking, if they pull out now and then it does turn into just a place for terrorists, you know, I feel for their families.

We want them home, but they can (inaudible).

MODERATOR – WHAT ELSE ON THAT ONE?

I think we should stay the course because of the simple fact, to show our strength as the United States. Because if it's tough times and we go, that's not good for our image.

But I don't want to stay there for 12 years.

I just wonder what we have to do to get out of there.

That's what I was saying.

What we have to do to finish the job.

Right.

MODERATOR – WHAT DID YOU LEAN TOWARDS #1?

Because we need to bring our troops home. We have not accomplished anything yet and all our soldiers are getting killed and it's not working. But you need a plan, too.

I don't think we'll ever see true democracy in the middle east, not in our lives.

Not according to the Bible, anyway.

MODERATOR – DO YOU SEE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SITUATION THAT WE'RE IN IRAQ AND THE SITUATION THAT WE WERE IN IN VIETNAM?

Yes.

MODERATOR – WE STAYED THE COURSE FOR A LONG TIME AND THEN ULTIMATELY, 10 YEARS LATER, WE ENDED UP PULLING OUT.

The situation in Vietnam was to help some other country out. It wasn't because we had been attacked by terrorists. Vietnam is that we just stuck our noses. We didn't need to be over there at all, period.

We weren't there to (inaudible) anything. We are now.

Yeah, there's a whole different perspective of what we are doing now over there in Vietnam. That a lot of lives were lost for nothing. Here it started out. . .

I don't think that they went over there to build a government. They just went over there to help a small country.

But we went over to Iraq, it was my understanding that we went over there because of the weapons of mass destruction. There have been no weapons of mass destruction.

There aren't any.

Saddam, he was. . .

He was awful. He murdered and tortured people all the time.

But he did a lot of other things, too.

Why couldn't we have sent some of our special forces over there? Kept everything quiet. We've sent our President and none of us knew it until he came back. Why couldn't we have taken care of it in that way? I just have a lot of issues with the way that this was handled and the diplomacy that wasn't there.

MODERATOR – LET'S GO TO HANDOUT #8. SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT.

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

OR

AMERICA'S STRENGTH IS IN OUR DIVERSITY. REGARDLESS OF WHERE WE LIVE OR HOW WE WORSHIP, WE ALL SHARE THE SAME BASIC PRIORITIES. AND RECENT POLITICAL TRENDS REPRESENT OUR ATTITUDES TOWARDS INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATES, NOT A LARGER DIVIDE IN OUR COUNTRY.

HOW MANY PICKED THE TOP ONE? BOTTOM ONE? SO EVERYBODY PICKED THE BOTTOM ONE. WHY?

Because diversity is important.

I like that we're not all the same.

We have the same concerns.

Everybody wants a good life. Everybody wants their family to be safe.

Yeah.

MODERATOR – HOW ABOUT THESE MORAL ISSUES THAT WE’VE TALKED ABOUT A LOT? A LOT OF PEOPLE WILL SAY THAT THAT’S THE BIG DIFFERENCE? IN OREGON AND MASSACHUSETTS HAVE PASSED LAWS THAT SUPPORT GAY MARRIAGE AND ABORTIONS AND OUR COUNTRY IS REALLY DIVIDING ON MORAL ISSUES AND ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS.

Isn’t’ it always dividing because of that?

And it’s getting worse.

I think there’s going to be more government control as time goes by because you can’t speak your religion.

(Many speaking at once).

It’s like the Christian religion is really getting socked. Like we’re the ones (inaudible) for the American Civil Liberties when you know, Christmas is a Christian birthday, it’s Jesus’ birthday. And at whatever church and whoever, we should be able to put a manger in the city market. I believe that everybody, they can put some snow flakes and we are Christian and we should be able to put a manger there. They’re giving everybody else rights. But it’s the Christian that we’re not allowed to give. Everybody else can get what they want to.

Look what’s on our money. In God we trust.

That’s right.

No Ten Commandments in the court house and stuff. And no pledge of allegiance to the flag. We’re in America. Our children should pledge allegiance. I’m very patriotic.

MODERATOR – BACK TO THE POINT HERE. DO YOU THINK THAT THERE IS A DIVISION IN THE COUNTRY? DO YOU THINK THAT THE COUNTRY IS DIVIDING ALONG THESE LINES? LOOK AT THE RE-ELECTION RESULTS. BUSH WON ALL THE SAME STATES IN 2004 AS HE WON IN 2000, EXCEPT FOR ONE STATE. KERRY WON ALL THE SAME STATES THAT GORE WON EXCEPT FOR ONE. DO YOU THINK THAT THAT’S JUST ABOUT THE INDIVIDUALS OR DO YOU THINK THAT THERE ARE DIVISIONS IN THIS COUNTRY ALONG DEMOCRAT AND REPUBLICAN, ALONG SOME OF THOSE KINDS OF LINES?

I think that's just the Presidential elections.

MODERATOR – YOU THINK IT'S JUST ABOUT THOSE TWO, OR IF IT WAS A DIFFERENT DEMOCRAT OR A DIFFERENT REPUBLICAN, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT RESULTS?

No, I think it might have been different.

Yes, yes. It's the way that the (inaudible).

And running for the moral issue like they did in this last election. There are so many issues that were on the table at the time of the election. And that's what ended up taking precedent was the fact that the issues in middle America, that the average American prefer and high moral standards.

We're supposed to have freedom of speech and religion. That's what this country was founded for. But now they're putting so many blocks on (inaudible).

(Many speaking at once).

(Inaudible) you can't put them over here because they mean religion. The Ten Commandments are the Ten Commandments.

[Right. Basically all the things in our Declaration of Independence, basically that's not relevant any more, in my mind.]

Even the department stores are getting into this stuff, too. Target wouldn't let Donna Summer (inaudible). I have a friend that was fired from a store for wearing a campaign button because her supervisor didn't like it, so she got fired.

(Inaudible).

MODERATOR – WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

There's something wrong with this picture. It's (inaudible) to be Americans, but not. . .

Not the way that it means to be an American. We're not teaching our children loyalty to your country. Your country is where you live, where you're raised and whatever, you have to be loyal to your country.

MODERATOR – OKAY. LET'S GO TO HANDOUT #9.

REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS ARE ABUSING THEIR POWER. VACATIONS AND HOMES PAID FOR BY LOBBYISTS. (INAUDIBLE) ETHICS INVESTIGATIONS AND GIVING THEMSELVES PAY RAISES WHILE IGNORING

OUR PROBLEMS AT HOME AND AROUND THE WORLD. IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE IN CONGRESS.

OR

REPUBLICANS HAVE A PLAN THAT REFLECTS THE RIGHT VALUES AND PRIORITIES FOR OUR COUNTRY. BUT ON VIRTUALLY EVERY ISSUE, (INAUDIBLE) SOCIAL SECURITY, JUDICIAL VACANCIES, CUTTING GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND REDUCING OUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL, DEMOCRATS ARE BLOCKING REPUBLICANS WITHOUT OFFERING ANY IDEAS.

WHO PICKED THE TOP ONE? FIVE. AND THE BOTTOM ONE? FIVE. SO WE SPLIT ON THIS ONE. THIS IS THE FIRST ONE WHERE YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN SPLIT. THE OTHERS YOU WERE PRETTY MUCH ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. TELL ME YOUR REACTIONS TO THIS.

It is time for a change. I wish I could get a paid vacation and then give myself a raise.

Tom Delay. And some of the costs were for taking a jet all the way across the country to this party. They spend so much money. They're so foolish and so stupid. I don't care how far up into the social ladder you are. We've got people here in dire circumstances in our own country and we can spend billions in countries that are going to be at war forever? What about the people here? I think that that's awful. My husband worked for the government. And I'm here to tell you that I know for a fact that the hammers that cost \$600 and \$800, yeah, I've seen those things. Something's wrong. Something is terribly wrong. And vacation homes and big fancy vacations.

(Inaudible). They should be able to pay for their own vacations with their own money. Obviously, the drug companies or whatever, pays for their vacation. So will I come into the Senate to vote for, no one on the campaign trail is allowed to accept gifts. So why should somebody already in office accept gifts?

These politicians (inaudible) their yearly salary. They have it debt free.

(Many speaking at once).

(Inaudible) they don't want to spend their money.

I think you'd be surprised at what their salaries actually are. It's the perks. Their salaries are not probably what we think they are. It's all the free stuff they goes with the position. Because I don't think that they make all that much.

The price that they pay for their homes. I mean, \$2 million can buy a lot of people some homes.

The corporate businesses, they're going to shell that money out to get them to vote, to help them out.

MODERATOR – SO WE AGREE THAT MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAVE GONE TOO FAR.

Yes.

Exactly.

Right.

MODERATOR – DO YOU THINK THAT THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE REPUBLICANS ARE GOING FURTHER THAN THE DEMOCRATS?

No.

No.

Everybody's doing it.

Look at the money that they spend on the inaugural ball. It's a waste of the taxpayer's money. Who cares what designer gown . . .

It's just the food that they have at the ball costs probably more than I make in a year.

Yeah.

They need to cut back. They just need to cut back.

MODERATOR – OKAY, SINCE THE REPUBLICANS ARE THE PARTY IN POWER, AND THEY'RE THE ONES THAT ARE CALLING THE SHOTS IN WASHINGTON RIGHT NOW, DO THEY BEAR MORE OF THE RESPONSIBILITY SINCE THEY'RE THE ONES IN CHARGE? OR IS IT JUST. . .?

Well, when the Democrats are in charge, they do the same thing.

MODERATOR – THAT'S WHAT I'M ASKING.

(Many speaking at once).

I would feel one way about (inaudible).

MODERATOR – WHAT WAS IT (INAUDIBLE) THAT YOU AGREED WITH?

They had a plan, the right values. I really think that they have the right values as a priority.

MODERATOR – HOW SO?

I don't know. I just think that's it's thrown off somewhere. I guess because they're just strong. They're a strong political party and they have the backing.

MODERATOR – BUT AT THE SAME TIME, YOU AGREE THAT THEY'RE TAKING VACATIONS AND HOMES FROM LOBBYISTS. . .

Well, but. . .

The Democrats are, too, so. . .

Money speaks, money buys power.

MODERATOR – SO IT SOUND TO ME LIKE, THROW THE BUMS OUT, DEMOCRAT OR REPUBLICAN, WHATEVER THEY ARE. MORE BUMS ARE REPUBLICANS BECAUSE THERE'S MORE REPUBLICANS OUT THERE RIGHT NOW.

Throw the lobbyists out.

We should use common sense. There are none of these housewives here that would take a budget and do something frivolous just because it was there. And these men are not stupid or they wouldn't be where they are. But they know it's wrong when they do it. But you know everybody else is doing it.

MODERATOR – LET'S GO TO HANDOUT #10. LAST ONE OF THESE.

WHEN CONSIDERING CANDIDATES FOR CONGRESS, MOST IMPORTANT TO ME IS TO KNOW WHERE THEY STAND ON ISSUES SUCH AS ABORTION, GAY MARRIAGE, AND PROTECTING THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN PUBLIC LIFE.

OR

WHEN CONSIDERING CANDIDATES FOR CONGRESS, IT'S MOST IMPORTANT FOR ME TO KNOW WHERE THEY STAND ON ISSUES SUCH AS THE ECONOMY, JOBS, HEALTHCARE AND RETIREMENT SECURITY.

HOW MANY GO WITH THE TOP ONE? FIVE. THE BOTTOM ONE? FIVE.

I like this about healthcare and retirement security, but golly, if you support abortion and gay marriage, you're not going to have an economy.

Yeah. If you support this top one, you are going to get this all in line.

That's what I say.

That's right.

If they're going to stand behind the (inaudible) issues, we're going to get there.

That's right.

Because if you stand for religion and the right stuff, the others will go forward.

MODERATOR – SO IF SOMEBODY HAD A PLAN TO LOWER GAS PRICES AND LOWER THE COST OF DRUGS AND CAP THE PRICES ON HEALTHCARE, BUT THEY SUPPORTED GAY MARRIAGE, THEY WOULDN'T GET IN.

(Many speaking at once).

Throw them out and put the right person in there and (inaudible).

(Many speaking at once).

MODERATOR – IT'S YOUR OPINION. THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO UNDERSTAND. IN TALKING ABOUT REPUBLICANS MORE IN LINE WITH WHAT YOU GUYS ARE SAYING ON ABORTION, GAY MARRIAGE, AND THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN PUBLIC LIFE. BUT I HEAR A LOT OF DISSATISFACTION WITH THE ECONOMY AND HEALTHCARE AND RETIREMENT SECURITY AND ALL THOSE THINGS. HOW DO YOU KIND OF RECONCILE THOSE TWO THINGS?

It could be our economy is failing more so from what? Residuals from Clinton? If you look at Clinton, he did so well. But I look at his economy and what was going on when he was President, and you probably want to look at Bush before him. By the time a President comes in, the one that just left, (inaudible).

I think we'd be a whole lot better off if the Republicans hadn't spent so much money investigating Clinton's sex life.

I agree that that was a waste of time.

You bet, and with our money.

MODERATOR – SO WHAT I'M HEARING IS THAT YOU AGREE WITH THEM ON CERTAIN MORAL ISSUES, BUT YOU DON'T NECESSARILY LIKE WHAT THEY'VE DONE ON THE ECONOMY AND A LOT OF THESE OTHER KIND OF POCKETBOOK ISSUES THAT WE TALKED ABOUT. SO HOW DO YOU

RECONCILE THAT? DO YOU THINK DEMOCRATS WOULD DO ANY DIFFERENTLY OR DO YOU THINK THAT THEY WOULD BE JUST AS BAD ON THE ONE AND MAYBE NOT AS GOOD ON THE OTHER?

Either party, they're going to try and get that vote. Regardless if it's the gay community or the abortion issue. It's something that they have to straddle the line a little bit, but they want that vote and they want this issue to be handled, but they still want those people to vote.

The whole abortion and gay marriage issue and the role of religion, so many of that stuff is decided at the state. If there is a Presidential election, I'd be much more concerned with the bottom one than the top because it's the state that decides the issue on abortion and gay marriage. As far as economy and jobs and healthcare, that's the national. It takes a Presidential election, it would be the bottom one, hands down because the other things are state.

MODERATOR – SO IT DEPENDS ON WHAT LEVEL.

Yeah.

It kind of occurs to me, too, that the top issues are more of an individual choice. You make those decisions for yourself. It's your own moral decision. Where on the bottom, it's more of the economy and jobs. It's more of the whole country.

It affects everybody.

Yeah, yeah.

MODERATOR – A LOT OF THE FOLKS THAT HAVE TALKED ABOUT THIS HAVE SAID THAT THE TOP IS IN YOUR HOUSE. THAT'S PARENTS AND KIDS. THAT'S WITHIN YOUR CHURCH OR WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY OR WITHIN YOUR HOME, AND NOT WHAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE DOING.

And the role of protecting religion in public life. That's up to us.

Does it seem that it's just the last two or three elections that the young people have become interested in the elections and getting out the vote and trying to keep up with what's going on.

We've instilled in our children to vote. I saw a lot more effort of people with their kids.

MODERATOR – LET'S HEAR A LITTLE BIT OF WHAT THE PARTIES ARE ACTUALLY SAYING IN WASHINGTON THESE DAYS. FLIP TO HANDOUT #11. LISTEN TO WHAT DEMOCRATS HAVE TO SAY FIRST.

DEMOCRATS SAY THAT THE REPUBLICANS HAVE USED THEIR CONTROL OF WASHINGTON TO ENRICH THEMSELVES AND THE PURSUIT OF WRONG PRIORITIES. THE REPUBLICANS HAVE DONE NOTHING ABOUT HEALTHCARE AND GAS PRICES AND HAVE BLOCKED EFFORTS TO RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGES AND TO PROTECT PENSIONS. YET THEY TOOK EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES TO INTERFERE IN THE TERRY SCHIAVO CASE, CHANGED CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS RULES TO PROTECT TOM DELAY AND ARE STILL TRYING TO PRIVATIZE SOCIAL SECURITY DESPITE OVERWHELMING PUBLIC OPPOSITION. ARE THESE REALLY AMERICA'S GREATEST PRIORITIES? DEMOCRATS HAVE OPPOSED THESE EFFORTS AND WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT TO PUT THE INTERESTS OF ORDINARY AMERICANS FIRST, SUCH AS PROTECTING AMERICAN JOBS, LOWERING HEALTHCARE COSTS, AND DEFENDING THE BASIC RETIREMENT SECURITY PROVIDED BY SOCIAL SECURITY AND PENSIONS.

That Terry Schiavo thing was wrong. It shouldn't have even been publicized.

Tom Delay, I think he's politically ruined. I said to my parents, I bet he's going out the next election that comes around.

MODERATOR – OTHER REACTIONS? ANYTHING THAT STANDS OUT TO YOU, GOOD OR BAD?

I guess you could tell from my voice before that I don't like all of it.

I feel that it's pretty much what it's saying. Democrats will do this and the Republicans will do that. And what's most important to America is that it sets priorities. All that up there ain't, this down there, that's what's important to the United States. The bottom line is their jobs. In other words, they're focusing on the wrong things. They need to do something about that, but this other stuff is more important. And with this Terry Schiavo thing, I think someday it's going to come down to the government chooses who lives and who dies. . .

If it continues along that same vein.

. . .you cut Medicare and you don't get your drugs. Are they going to cut your life support so they don't have to pay for anything any more? That's going to put the government in control.

MODERATOR – OTHER REACTIONS TO THIS ONE?

That last sentence. I like the way it was worded. The Democrats are for the people.

MODERATOR – DO YOU AGREE WITH THE BASIC POINT HERE THAT THE REPUBLICANS HAVE CONTROL IN WASHINGTON AND THEY CAN SET THE AGENDA AND THEY CAN DO WHATEVER THEY WANT AND THEY'VE

DECIDED TO DO TERRY SCHIAVO, PROTECTING TOM DELAY AND CHANGING SOCIAL SECURITY. AND THAT DOESN'T REALLY REPRESENT THE RIGHT PRIORITIES. DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT BASIC PREMISE?

If they were on minimum wage, they would want it to get raised.

Why point out those things in particular? So they stuck their noses in the Terry Schiavo thing. There's so much more. What's to say that if the Democrats were in control that they wouldn't have done the same thing?

Exactly. This is a blanket. . . .

MODERATOR – AND AGAIN, THIS IS WHAT IT IS. THIS IS DEMOCRATS ARE SAYING. THEY'RE NOT GOING TO SAY WE'RE JUST AS BAD AS THE OTHER GUY.

Not until we get in there.

MODERATOR – LET'S GO TO HANDOUT #12 AND HEAR WHAT THE REPUBLICANS ARE SAYING.

REPUBLICANS SAY, WE'RE FOCUSED ON TWO ISSUES. GROWING OUR ECONOMY AND PROTECTING OUR CITIZENS. OUR POLICIES HAVE PUT THE ECONOMY BACK ON THE TRACK TO GROWTH, BUT WE MUST CONTINUE TO REIGN IN SPENDING WHILE PRESERVING OUR RECORD TAX CUTS AND FIGHTING FOR A SIMPLER TAX CODE THAT REWARDS HARD WORK AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP. WE'RE ALSO WORKING TO DECREASE OUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL AND PRESERVE SOCIAL SECURITY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. AS WE WORK TO DELIVER OPPORTUNITY AT HOME, WE'RE ALSO KEEPING AMERICA SAFE FROM THREATS ABROAD. THE FIGHT FOR A FREE AND DEMOCRATIC IRAQ IS CRITICAL TO OUR SECURITY AND THE HOPE THAT IT REPRESENTS FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS CRITICAL TO WINNING THE WAR ON TERROR. REPUBLICANS ARE FIGHTING TO MAKE SURE THAT AMERICA'S FUTURE IS BOTH SAFE AND PROSPEROUS.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT ONE?

Well, reining in spending. They're reining in spending on us. They ain't reining in spending on them.

Yeah, (inaudible).

I think that has more truth than the first one.

MODERATOR – WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU, TRUE OR FALSE?

I think (inaudible) opportunity at home. I don't really know where they're going with that. There could be more opportunity (inaudible). They're not going to (inaudible) jobs. The people in the middle, it's not. You're locked into certain livelihoods.

I'm wondering about the (inaudible) abroad. What I'm watching. It's almost like we're focusing on the wrong countries. Where we're going with Korea and all these other places.

The dependency on the foreign oil. You know they got some electric cars now. They should just go electric on all of them. Could that do away with the oil situation? I don't know a lot about the electric cars, but I think before long, that's probably what we're going to go to.

Eleven years ago, gas was expensive to those people that made a certain amount of money then. And it's just gone up. They haven't done anything about it. Look how many years it's gone with nothing done to it.

MODERATOR – YOUR POINT, JANICE, IS THAT WE NEED TO BUILD SOME ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF ENERGY.

Right.

Does anybody remember the guy who in the late 60's came out with a car that had a carburetor that would run on only water? Does anybody remember that? we need things like that.

MODERATOR – THIS IS A VERY MUCH, STAY THE COURSE, MESSAGE. RIGHT NOW, THE ECONOMIC POLICIES THAT WE HAVE IN PLACE ARE WORKING. WE'VE JUST GOT TO KEEP DOING THIS. WE'VE GOT TO KEEP THE TAXES LOW AND NOT RAISE THEM. AND CONTINUE ON THE PATH THAT WE'RE ON IN TERMS OF THE ECONOMY. DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT?

That might be on track, but it's hard for us to see. We might not see it in our lifetime, but our grandchildren might. I think that they are (inaudible) to make sure that America's future is safe.

MODERATOR – SO YOU AGREE WITH THAT?

Yeah, I agree. I think that they should keep those tactics in our homeland.

MODERATOR – THEY SAY BASICALLY THAT A FIGHT FOR A FREE AND DEMOCRATIC IRAQ IS VITAL TO OUR SECURITY AND IT REPRESENTS THE HOPE FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST WHICH IS THEN THE KEY TO WINNING THE WAR ON TERROR. DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT, THAT APPROACH TO THE WAR ON TERROR, IN OUR APPROACH TO IRAQ?

We need a free and democratic Arab nation. They're surrounded by others that are seemingly all these other insurgents. They're coming from these other countries. They can be here just as easily, but we're protected.

MODERATOR – OTHER THOUGHTS? OKAY, GO TO HANDOUT #13.

DEMOCRATS ARE SAYING THAT WE CAN'T AFFORD TO BE POURING MONEY AND MANPOWER INTO AN IRAQ STRATEGY THAT IS CLEARLY FAILING. TAX GIVEAWAYS FOR THE WEALTHY AND BIG BUSINESSES OR UNFAIR TRADE POLICIES. DEMOCRATS HAVE A PLAN THAT ONCE AGAIN PUTS THE SAFETY AND THE STRENGTH OF AMERICA FIRST. ELIMINATE TAX CUTS FOR COMPANIES THAT SHIP AMERICAN JOBS OVERSEAS. STAND UP TO COUNTRIES LIKE CHINA WHOSE UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES CREATE RECORD TRADE DEFICITS, DESTROY HUNDREDS OF AMERICAN'S COMPANIES AND THOUSANDS OF JOBS. AND PUT OUR NATIONAL SECURITY AT RISK. AND WAR ON TERROR IS FOCUSED LESS ON OCCUPYING IRAQ AND MORE ON EXPANDING TRADE AND EDUCATION IN COUNTRIES WHERE POVERTY AND FANATICISM BREED TERRORISTS. SECURING LOOSE NUKES FROM FORMER SOVIET COUNTRIES AND SECURING OUR PORTS AND BORDERS HERE AT HOME.

I would think that the loose nukes are the least of our concern right now. The former Soviet countries, they don't have enough money to put them together to shoot them at us.

MODERATOR – I THINK THAT WHAT THAT WAS ACTUALLY TALKING ABOUT IS THE WEAPONS THAT THEY HAD BACK THEN AND NOBODY KNOWS WHERE THEY ARE NOW. WHEN THE SOVIET UNION FELL APART, THEY LOST TRACK OF ALL THOSE.

Focused less on occupying Iraq and more on expanding trade and education in countries where poverty and fanaticism breed terrorists. That's the truth. A fanatic would be a suicide bomber. Someone who gets taught only that with no other view.

Yeah, I think that the people over there are very ignorant of what we are. Their views are skewed. The impression that they get is very skewed. It's like blinders. And because they have been bought up in their type of lifestyle that they have, it is very different. Their sight is so different than ours. And it's very hard to make them understand what we are. They resent us. The Arab nations resent us. They want to see us all dead. It doesn't matter how they do it.

Because they look at us as rich.

They're a jealous country. They're a very jealous people. They're jealous of each other.

MODERATOR – OKAY. OTHER REACTIONS TO THIS STATEMENT? WHAT THINGS STOOD OUT TO YOU, POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE?

The tax cuts for companies that ship American jobs overseas. I would love to see that. I think that's one of our big downfalls here.

We need jobs here.

MODERATOR – EVERYBODY AGREES WITH THAT, THAT THE FIRST PART OF THE PLAN THAT THEY LAID OUT HERE. HOW ABOUT THE SECOND PART, LIKE STANDING UP TO CHINA AND TRYING TO GET MORE FAIR TRADE WITH THESE COUNTRIES? IS THAT A BIG DEAL? DO YOU THINK THAT'S PART OF THE PROBLEM WITH THE ECONOMY HERE?

People in Chinese work for 30 cents a day or something.

And look how much they buy from the United States. They are buying a lot of things from the US.

(Many speaking at once).

The Japanese did buy them and they sold out to the French. And that's why (inaudible) scooted on out.

MODERATOR – DO THE REST OF YOU THINK THAT THAT'S A BIG CONCERN FOR OUR ECONOMY OR NATIONAL SECURITY WHAT CLAIRE IS TALKING, THE CHINESE HOLDING A BIG PART OF OUR NATIONAL DEBT. AND SOME OF THESE BONDS, AND THE CHINESE OWN A LOT OF THEM AND THEY'RE BUYING ALL THE PROPERTY AND THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT BUYING SOME OF THE OIL COMPANIES THAT WE BUY GASOLINE FROM. DO YOU THINK THAT'S A BIG CONCERN? IS THAT SOMETHING THAT CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT SHOULD BE DOING SOMETHING ABOUT?

When you think about (inaudible), yeah. They smother their own people. Nobody gets in trouble. They don't say anything. The President of China, whoever he is. . .

MODERATOR – OKAY. SO DO SOMETHING ABOUT CHINA? OKAY. HOW ABOUT THIS DIFFERENT APPROACH TO THE WAR ON TERROR? EXPANDING TRADE AND EDUCATION? . . . **(END OF TAPE 1/ BEGINNING OF TAPE 2)**. . . WHILE YOU GUYS ARE FINISHING UP, A FEW HOUSEKEEPING THINGS. YOU CAN LEAVE YOUR NAME TAGS AND PLEASE LEAVE ALL THE PIECES OF PAPER AND LEAVE EVERYTHING. AND I REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR TIME. THANK YOU VERY MUCH. HAVE A GOOD NIGHT.

(END OF DISCUSSION)