

**DEMOCRACY CORPS
GROUP 1
DES MOINES, IA
NON-COLLEGE WOMEN, AGES 30-49
INCOME UNDER \$50,000
OCTOBER 24, 2001, 5:45 P.M.**

My name is Tina. I live in Beaverdale. I have four children under five. I have two boys, they're 2 and 4, and I have twin girls that are seven months. I do not work outside the home. My husband fortunately makes enough money that I do not have to. That's me. No pets, thank God.

I'm Dawn. I'm right here from Des Moines. I have two children that are supposed to be grown but are back to roost along with a granddaughter who's 3. And she's the apple of my eye. And that's my favorite hobby. And other than that, I'm like her. I don't need no pets.

My name is Linda, and I live in Ankonee. I have a 17-year-old boy, and I do have a dog. Her name's Molly. And my favorite hobby would be like scrapbooking.

I'm Diana. I work with families. I work for the Des Moines Public Schools. I also work at Yonkers on the weekends. And I keep busy. I work with high risk families. I've got three kids. I'm married. And he's a kid, too. So that means I've got four. I've got an older daughter, Shelly, that's married, and then I've got Suzanne who's the child from hell that's 20. And I've got a 12-year-old boy who's the dream child. He plays ice hockey. And so, and I've got a dog named Lucky Lady. She's a golden retriever. Smartest dog I've ever had in my whole life. Her feet are as big as my hand. She's huge, and I just adore her. That's what I do.

My name is Debbie. I have three children and one grandson. And that's my life. Work full time. That's it.

I'm Suzanne. I'm not her daughter. I have a five year old daughter, my husband and the dog.

I'm Pam. I have three children, Mariah, Dylan and Gage. They're all under 5. I have a husband and a house. I have a dog, a cat, and a rat. We used to breed fish, but we no longer do that. And I'm just starting to go back to school. And one of these days I'll be done with school.

I'm Terry. I also work for Des Moines schools. I have two daughters. I have one, Brooke, who's a junior at Iowa State. Lauren, she's 13, got braces put on today. And we're busy right now with a six month old bulldog puppy. And I know why they call them bull dogs. Bull headed, bulldozers. She's quite a challenge. But she's so much fun, and we start obedience training Monday night.

My name is Donna. I have three children and a dog, a beagle, whose name is Ricky. My oldest daughter just started at the University of Iowa and I have a 13-year-old daughter and an 11-year-old son.

MODERATOR—I WANT TO KIND OF START OF TALKING, GIVEN EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED, SEPTEMBER 11TH, THE RESPONSE AND EVERYTHING THAT'S GONE ON, HOW DO YOU THINK THE COUNTRY'S REACTING TO IT ALL?

I think extremely well. I just see, I'm afraid the first little glimmers of panic over anthrax. I think the way the country has stood together over New York, and the bipartisan, the parties, I think they've done really well. It sounds odd, but it's actually the first time I really feel proud to say I'm an American.

I have to say I'm really impressed with how we as a nation have handled it, to be honest with you. I spent two weeks in Ohio. My husband worked out there for a little while. And then we saw some friends from Illinois. So between here and Toledo, you can't imagine how many flags we saw on cars and places of business and houses and stuff. And I have to say, having been out there, I think the pulse of the people around here, everyone is just really proud to be an American. And I think people have a lot of confidence in how things have been handled.

My first fear was rush right in and start war, and they've haven't. And I'm just really proud of that aspect, that they're aren't going to, I mean, they're not just pointing fingers. They're really looking into seeing who's to blame and why and trying to get a real control of it. And I'm real proud of that.

I'm proud of the way that Bush has handled everything, and I had a cow because he was elected or appointed or whatever, about the way the elections went. Because I was voting for Al Gore. But I think George Bush, his role, I think he's really done well. And I like the way that he's handled everything. And I like the way he delayed everything for awhile before he went over to Afghanistan and started raising hell. I watch CNN all the time. When I went home, it's on. So I really keep apprised of what's going on. And I'm proud to be an American, too, and I think it's a big deal, the way he's handled it. And it makes me feel secure with everything that's going on so far. I'm still really scared of what could happen. I work with a lot of refugees. So I kind of was a little paranoid because I work with people that are Arabic. So I was a little paranoid. I was watching what side their watches are worn on, because I'm seeing on CNN that the radicals wear their watch on their right arm and everything. And the teacher says, Diane, what if they're left handed. I was really paranoid, but I think I'm getting better.

I voted for Gore also. And I was really upset about the way the election was handled and what not. But I also spent some time thinking what would Al Gore have done during the crisis, and I don't really know. I don't think he could have been as strong as Bush.

MODERATOR—WE'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO TALK ABOUT THAT IN A LITTLE BIT, SO HOLD OFF ON THAT FOR NOW. HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU?

I think America, I'm all for America, don't get me wrong, I'm not a terrorist or anything, but I think it's cold that it takes something to lose so many people for us to come together as a nation, and I think that's just wrong. I think we all should be strong. And we shouldn't have had to lose so many innocent people. We shouldn't have had to have a terrorist attack to be proud to be an

American. Since I was born here and I was raised an American and I am an American, I've been proud since day one.

(Many talking at once.)

You took it for granted.

Yes. It hasn't touched me personally, I didn't lose anybody. But the fear is still there. I mean, those planes could have come here. Then it would have touched us a different way. Would we have reacted the same way. Would everybody have done the same as if something would happen in Des Moines, Iowa. New York is the hipby hub. Wall Street's there and you have a lot of things going on in New York. If it would have been Ohio, Nebraska, it would have touched us completely differently.

Our husbands are from Nebraska. We were out there talking, Nebraska.

I also voted for Al Gore, and I know we're going to talk about that later. But there was something on the internet, it was like a letter, Dear Al, from George Bush. And he said, Dear Al, they counted the votes again, and it's yours if you want it. They counted the votes again and the job's yours if you want it, which is very unlike George Bush now, because the last thing he would do is give up on this now. But I just thought it was kind of funny.

Wasn't his father in a war, too?

Mm-hmm.

Well, I think the best president is in there to do the job that needs to be done at this time. He has strong background. He hasn't done anything. I mean, I'm an Al Gore all the way Democrat. But I mean . . .

(Many talking at once.)

MODERATOR—NOT NECESSARILY ABOUT BUSH AND GORE, BUT ABOUT HOW THE COUNTRY IS REACTING.

Actually I'm proud about how the country is reacting, too. I agree with almost everything that was said. I think I'm a minority from what you all have said, but I truly think that there's a reason George Bush is president right now. And I think he's handling the situation very well. And I find, like Terry said, we take for granted that we're Americans and we don't have to live in this situation all the time. And what I read, I watched documentaries on Afghanistan, and it's really made me very thankful that I'm an American. And I like to see us all pull together. I think we're very strong right now. And you can see that Americans are all taking care of each other, but I think it's a shame that it did have to take something like this to do that.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT DEB AND SUZANNE, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Pretty much what everyone else has said. I, too, was a Democrat.

That was very disappointing with the way the election went.

Very disappointing. I voted for Al Gore, and I thought it was terrible. But now I think there was a reason, I do believe there was a reason why we went that way.

I was a Bush fan. And I have to go along with what everybody said. We did not need a tragedy to happen to pull us all together. We should have been there in the first place. Now I have a sense of fear.

MODERATOR—WOULD YOU SAY THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT THINGS HAS CHANGED SINCE THEN?

Oh, yes.

MODERATOR—HOW HAS IT CHANGED?

I have a safety plan on my son. I'm on one side of town, he's on the other. I have a whole safety plan for my whole family. I've got my house socked. I was in the Sunday paper. They've got a picture of the guy sitting with his gas mask on. I don't have that. With his gas mask on, with all the SPAM. And what else did he have? Water and everything. I've got my house socked to the hilt. If anybody's hungry, come on over. I'm prepared for anything. It's just that, I don't know, I've just been real paranoid about safety every since then. I really worry about what would happen if they did some other phenomenal thing. I don't know what. But it's made me real conscientious. I never walk out of the door without telling my son I love him or my husband, even though I don't talk to him much. Anyhow I give the dog kisses often. But I'm more conscious. I'm very cautious. I have a plan for everything.

I think, too, like she said, you look at foreigners different now. We don't look at them as we used to, friendly, we're in the United States, we're open. I know I do. I feel differently about them now. I don't feel like our borders should be so open anymore.

Nope. I'm doing several things that drive my husband nuts. I agree with you. The borders need to be closed. If we're in the store and I see somebody that looks foreign, I just try and get away. I'm paranoid, I guess you could say. I got a box of rubber gloves, and I put those on to go outside and open the mail. My daughter is supposed to start kindergarten next year, and I have her home with me. And I'm looking into home school so she's home with me.

I grew up in a small farming community here in Iowa, and I lived in Chicago for ten years, and I had a heightened sense of awareness the whole time I lived there because it was downtown, and it's a totally different world from small town Iowa. And I've been back in Des Moines now with my family for about three and a half years, and that heightened sense of awareness is now back with me since September 11. I don't feel quite as safe anymore. And I do watch out for people. It was Dr. Phil one day, he said, and I think it's absolutely true, I don't know how many people are in this country, but if we all kept our eyes and ears open as to what was going on around us

and who our neighbors were and the people we come in contact with, something like this would be a little bit harder to happen if we just kind of knew what was going on. And I agree, too. I think that we need to, I mean, I'm not opposed to people coming over here if they want to make a better life for themselves and their families. If they don't like us, I'm sorry, you can get out. And we need to somehow have some safety guards in place that we kind of get those people out of here.

You'd never know who it was. They said you would never know. You would never know.

I heard that point, too. But some of them, you would think that something would stand out. But when I was out in Toledo, it was 45 minutes from Detroit which has the highest Islamic population. There are a lot of people that wear the head coverings and that sort of thing out there. And that did make me feel a little bit leery when I saw them, because you just wonder. And as far as personally, I haven't taken any of the safety measures like the rubber gloves and everything. I don't open anything that doesn't have a return address or anything on it. But I think, too, we live more for the moment now. I hug and kiss my kids all the time, and my husband doesn't leave the house without hearing how we feel about each other. I feel for those poor women who are my age and widowed with young children. That could easily be you or I raising our kids by ourselves.

I think there is one person that could have stopped it all, and that was the pilot that was teaching them how to fly. They didn't say teach me how to land or anything. They just wanted to know how to navigate in the air. Right there is a big alarm. Hello!

MODERATOR—BUT PERSONALLY, HOW HAS YOUR THINKING CHANGED SINCE THE ATTACKS?

I don't feel paranoid. I don't feel scared.

Not at all. I'm not scared either. Not at all.

The biggest fear I had when this whole thing happened was my daughter who had just turned 18 who was a freshman at the University of Iowa and still is. Because she's far away and because it's a university, and I kept thinking target university, little, country, and that was my immediate fear. And I'm not saying I'm living my life casually and not worrying or not carrying, I just, I don't feel paranoid, I don't feel scared. I'm not stocked up in the house. I always say I love my kids, and they know I love them. And as far as seeing people from foreign origins in the store, I feel like I look at them less than I did before. And I think a lot of that came from my 13 year old who has a very good friend in middle school whose father is from India, and they have relatives in Afghanistan. And she's a wonderful girl from a wonderful family. And she is taking so much of this personally because she has family in Afghanistan and India. And she herself as a 13 year old looks like she's from a different country. So she's taking this personally. I think I learned a lot from my 13 year old who said it's not fair that people are staring at this girl. I do that myself in the store. I see a family walking in, whether the woman's veiled or what. You just know that they're from another place. And I find myself maybe smiling and turning away, but not wanting to stare because they're getting so much of that. And I think part of being an American is

accepting those people who are maybe first generation Indian or Pakistani as my great-grandparents are. I'm not talking about illegals. I believe on closing the doors on illegal immigration. I don't know.

MODERATOR—YOU JUST BEGAN TO ANSWER MY NEXT QUESTION WHICH IS WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN AMERICAN?

Freedom. We have freedom. I think one of the biggest things that I've looked at over all of this happening, is I really read about the Afghan women.

Oh yeah.

I think as women, that's a little frightening to me that their culture, they used to be able to work, they used to be able to go out. They used to be able to dress in jeans and shirts just like we do. And they're no longer able to do that. And sometimes I wonder what life would be like for us if we didn't have the privileges that we have. And I think one thing I do try to remember was that America was formed by immigrants. We all came over to this country. So I am saddened that people look at foreigners differently now. I understand that there's risk and that people do have to check into situations, but like the men that were on the plane that they made get off because they were different, that was sad. I hope that they understand everyone's panic, but I felt bad for them. I felt bad as an American that we were doing that to them, too. But I think, too, as far as what's changed in my life is my son has to travel on an airplane, he's not near me. I think as mothers we've all mentioned our kids, and he's in West Virginia. He has to travel on a plane. And that scares me. Even though I feel it right now, airplane travel is probably as safe as it's ever going to get. But still, it's because he's my child and he's not right in my hands. And he has to go through Detroit. So there's just a lot of things. But I think it's mostly like, just like everyone said. It's being a mother and not having our children right at hand. I really feel there's not a whole lot we can do if the Lord decides this is what's going to happen, it's going to happen.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN AMERICAN?

Responsibility. A responsibility to your country to be the best citizen you can be. I think it's a big deal, that you need to take and try and be a good citizen and try to follow the rules and try to do for other people and help other people and be kind and be a democratic type person. I think you have to, to be an American is a big deal, I think.

I think it's options. We're free here. We all make our choice.

The freedom to choose.

You know, if you choose who you're going to marry, and you choose if you're going to have children, and you choose if you're going to go to school, and you choose to move out of state to get a better job, and you choose whether you get on a plane. And that's why a lot of people want to come here is because there's a lot of choices. We don't fight the little wars that we did a long

time ago. You can't do this, like a lot of other countries are still doing. They're still fighting for things we fought a long time ago for. So I think that's mostly it, is choices.

The freedom, the choices, security.

Security.

MODERATOR—WHO ELSE, WHAT'S IT MEAN TO BE AN AMERICAN?

I don't think we really have, I don't think that any of us can comprehend what it truly means to be an American unless we actually see it first hand.

Or have it taken away.

Yeah.

You don't realize what you've got until it's gone.

Exactly. It's like when the country pulled together. That made us pull together, but also, you don't realize it until it's too late. And I think you can't help feeling that way. You don't know what it is until it's gone.

And we tend to forget the things of the past. I mean, we've pulled together before. It may not have been as grand of a deal as New York, but there's been floods and we've pulled together and fed those people and whatever it's taken. We've always been a nation that's helped and pulled together. And now we're leery of helping.

MODERATOR—ONE OF THE THINGS THAT'S HAPPENED IN THE SENSE OF PULLING TOGETHER, IS THAT, TINA MENTIONED IT, ESPECIALLY DRIVING CROSS COUNTRY, YOU SEE A LOT MORE FLAGS THESE DAYS. DIANE'S WEARING ONE. JUST ONE OR TWO WORDS. WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU SEE THE FLAG?

Pride.

Pride.

Mm-hmm.

Patriotism.

Freedom.

Support.

Sometimes I think it's nice to see the flag when it's not even Fourth of July. You used to only see it then.

I don't think I've seen this much red, white and blue even around the Fourth of July.

The military, too, you think about that. You think about the military.

MODERATOR—WHY DO YOU THINK WHAT'S HAPPENED IS HAPPENING HERE?

Jealousy.

Evil sick people.

I think they're being, I think they only get so much information from their government and correspondence or whatever. Just as we do. We seem to get a lot, but we don't know every little thing.

Very well educated people, multi-billionaires, very well educated. University.

And they're only telling their people certain things. So they're getting a bad picture, I think, of the United States. Because a lot of them are under the impression that we're terrible people. Just as we were under the impression that Afghans were all terrible people.

Well, bin Laden was an ally to the Americans before. He was one of our helpers before. We discussed issues with him that were beyond, hey, this is what we're going to do tonight kind of deal. He was one of the very highest.

I never heard that. I hadn't heard that.

I think that they think we're a very rich country and I think they thought if they brought down our economy and took on our military, I honestly think they were going to attempt to come in on us.

I think they believe in Ali [sic] and they're doing it for religious purposes. Plus they're senile.

MODERATOR—LOOKING BACK INTO OUR OWN COUNTRY AGAIN, HOW DO YOU THINK THE ECONOMY'S DOING?

It's not doing as well. But we're going to come back.

I think it's hurting, but I think it's just the beginning of being hurt.

Yeah. I think we're hurting, and I don't know if we're going to pull out of it very quickly. I think it's going to get worse. But I think, too, that Americans are doing as much as we can to help stop that or maybe prolong the agony or something.

I don't know that the September 11 thing had everything to do with how the economy is. It was going south before September 11. I know September 11 didn't help. We'll have to see how it comes out.

How's the economy in Delaware?

MODERATOR—HOW'S THE ECONOMY IN DELAWARE?

Is that where you said you're from?

MODERATOR—YEAH. I WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU GUYS THINK.

How's the economy there? Has it been hurting?

MODERATOR—IT'S DIFFERENT. IT'S DIFFERENT THAN IT IS IN IOWA.

I used to travel. We were doing well here, but you'd go to someplace that was making car parts or something, Detroit, different states, and you would see the economy wouldn't be as good in different places. Economy in Des Moines's been booming. There's jobs everywhere. There's 5 million jobs in Des Moines, Iowa. People are spending money. I work in retail on the weekends. There's a lot of money out there.

People are spending money on the weekend, but stores are (inaudible). My mom lives on the east coast, she said the same thing. My brother lives in California. And with all their talking about, the stores are jam packed.

(Many talking at once.)

I know it sounds corny on a real small scale, but on that level of the economy, I think it's booming.

I don't think it's bothered us much. The day after September 11 the gas station was packed because they said gas was going to go sky high. It's \$1.15.

They asked people to try . . .

That's one thing that, they didn't hit us.

Look at the people out Christmas shopping even.

I'm done my Christmas shopping. I know it's going to come. I'm going to wake up tomorrow. Hopefully.

I think it hasn't, maybe it doesn't feel like it's affected a lot of us personally. The paper this morning that had Principle on the front cover, that was a little bit uneasy to me, to see all those people standing in line waiting to see if it was going to go up or down. And I think something like that here at home, if Principle hadn't and it had gone even farther down and it would have affected those people here in Des Moines, I think we would have felt a little bit differently.

Going back to your last question about why us, it's my opinion, but the United States sticks its nose out into too many other wars, let's get 'em.

Can I answer the money question? I don't see it, my worries are not on the retail end, spending. I see it in the government cuts and the programs that we're going to lose. I work for the school, and, man, just like that, they froze our funding. People aren't really losing their jobs yet, but they're not feeling some really key important jobs out there that I see related to our services that we're used to seeing. And those jobs are not going to be filled. And they're going to have to start taking more money to cover the health care, fighting this thing. It's gotta come from somewhere. And I see where the cuts are coming and, hello, it's all going to affect us sooner or later.

I think they've been kind of attacking the schools for some time.

That's an easy target.

We've lost our special education teachers, we've lost our PR and our helpers in the school. We've lost even some of the people that used to, even our volunteer system has dwindled down, and people don't think that's important. But you go in there and sit and read with a child, it's important to that child. Might not be to everybody, but it makes a difference in one life at a time.

MODERATOR—WE TALKED ABOUT SOME ECONOMIC CONCERNS AND SOME SAFETY CONCERNS. WHICH WOULD YOU SAY YOU'RE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT PERSONALLY? YOUR PERSONAL SECURITY OR YOUR ECONOMIC SECURITY RIGHT NOW?

Economic.

Economic.

Economic.

Economic. Couldn't have a gun and afford to buy the bullets if you didn't have the money. Think about it! You know what I'm saying.

Mine's personal. I worry more about my children and their future than I do mine. I've lived my life. I want my children to live the world that I have. I've lived with money in my pocket and always a job opportunity knocking on the door. I've got my chance to get an education. I've got my house. I want my kids to have what I have.

Or more.

Exactly.

I guess I agree with Pam. I tend to think more about what my son's future is going to be like in America and what his children's life will be like in America.

The question again was for us or our families?

MODERATOR—I SAID YOUR PERSONAL SECURITY OR YOUR ECONOMIC SECURITY?

For myself personally, economic, because I don't have any control over that, really, as far as what the economy does. I don't really fear for my personal safety because I feel I have a little bit more control over that. But I do fear for my kids. I want my kids to grow up and I want them to experience the freedoms that my husband and I have had. And I wonder what's the world going to be like in 20 years when they're adults and having kids.

Hopefully we'll get them all decided and we won't have to have wars.

I have a 12 year old boy and I worry about that.

MODERATOR—WE'RE GOING TO SWITCH GEARS. . . . WRITE DOWN ALL THE GOOD THINGS THAT COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF BUSH. THEN FLIP TO HANDOUT TWO AND WRITE DOWN ANY DOUBTS OR WORRIES WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT BUSH.

WHAT ARE THE GOOD THINGS THAT COME TO MIND ABOUT BUSH?

His honesty and his integrity.

Leadership.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY LEADERSHIP?

I think like when he spoke to the Congress, he brought them together. And I think the way he's rallied, his speeches, at the beginning, I think worked more to pull people together. I think he was one of the major influences as to why the country was so patriotic.

I liked how he's keeping things sidelined from the press that shouldn't be released. And then of course the tax refund that he passed this year. I'm a Bush fan. He took time to find out who the culprit was rather than just jumping in and firing back. And then I like that he has his father behind him. He's already been through the war. Dad, if he needs to.

He's well educated. I like the way that he's handling himself, and the press, the way that his mannerism, the way that he speaks. He seems confident, yet he seems common when he's with people. He goes to the scene in New York City, what's going on. He's right down there with everybody. He just seems like the president of the people to me. I like that.

Best thing though was when he gave the country the opportunity to pray together.

Yes.

That was, that just really set me back. It was okay to bring prayer back into school. I remember the Friday that they closed down so you could have prayer time.

I liked too that he's a Christian and he doesn't mind saying so. I think he does seek the Lord's advice. I think, too, that he's caring. I think he kind of represents some security and helps you keep grounded here in the United States. I like his father's guidance. I think he seeks his father's guidance. And just to know that he does have a person beside him that he can ask questions to and seek advice from. I think he's doing a great job. This is a huge thing for one man to carry, I think. And like someone else said, too, his willingness to go down to ground zero and talk to the people and get involved, and we can see him. He's been out.

One other thing I think is a good thing about him is he's humble. He surrounded himself with some very educated and wise people that have maybe some more personal experience in areas. And I'm proud that he's not afraid to seek the counsel of those people. I think that shows true leadership in that he doesn't think he's the thing.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT HANDOUT TWO? WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DOUBTS AND WORRIES?

He's a Republican.

[Laughter]

I'd like to know where the funds and the monies are all going to come from to pay for all of this.

Public schools!

Because you know somebody's going to hurt to get it done. It's going to be the little man, you and I. That's where it's going to hit.

No president is ever going to take money out of his pocket for none of us. I don't see that happening. My biggest worry is if he does call more, what measures is he going to take? Is there going to be bombs flying over us, hitting us, whatever. My brother has already been called to active duty. He's at Camp Dodge waiting to go to wherever. He's going to be gone for three years. What if we beat these guys in 66 seconds? I'm still going to lose something in three years. Not that I'm a big issue of losing anything, what measures is he going to take? Is he going to risk every American? I heard he was going to call active duty and if they ran out of men who are active duty, then it goes single men. So your 18 year old boy, bye! Without a choice. Single men, and then married men with no children, and then married men with children if it goes that far. How far will he take it?

If it goes that far, he doesn't have a choice.

Is it actually worth saving America?

I would guess, I would have to let my son go if it meant that his life would end up living a life

under the Taliban's control because they took over America. And he's my only child and I'm getting goose bumps just talking about this, but I would think that we would have to do anything it takes to save America for any of our children that come.

MODERATOR—WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OTHER DOUBTS AND CONCERNS ABOUT BUSH?

Like I kind of mentioned earlier, he's just one man. This is a big undertaking. It might be a little more than he thought would happen when he got to be president. I know he's got some good people around him, but I hope he's got some really good people around him, because this is a huge situation. And I don't want him to just jump into something, because they obviously planned this for a long, long time.

What I did like about him, is just what it is that's making him a good president now. He's a rich Texan, lots of influence, family, lot of money. I think he can reach out to anywhere and affect things. And had there not been a war, I don't like that idea. But I think that will help secure some of the help that he needs and get more opinions on things. So it turned out to be things that I didn't like about him is what he's doing a good job with. I thought he was conceited before, was really big on himself. But now it comes off to me as like Diana said, he's collected, he's calm, he's not going to panic anybody. Just the side I didn't like about him is working.

He was from Texas.

I watch Saturday Night Live when I get a minute on Saturday night. And I watch him always planning to be daddy's boy, and it just makes you feel like if something goes wrong he's gotta ask dad. When I watch that part of him, it makes me feel like he can't make a decision on his own and he's just this little kid that he don't know what the hell to do.

When it comes right down to it, it turns out to be twisted and it comes out for the good.

Two heads are better than one.

Yeah. Especially considering who his dad is.

MODERATOR—OTHER DOUBTS AND CONCERNS?

Again, he's a Republican.

What type of president is he going to be after the war? If this had never happened? What type of president would he have been if nothing would have gone wrong.

There had to be a crisis.

He was doing a good job. I really liked getting money in the mail. That was a good thing. But really what would he have done for us as a nation?

MODERATOR—DO YOU GUYS TRUST BUSH TO HANDLE THE ECONOMY?

No.

No.

No.

We had the best years, we had, what, ten years, the best years, the economic boom since ever in the United States, and all of a sudden now, look what's happening. Which they say war is good for the economy. But on the other hand, everybody was making a lot of money. Stock market was clear up there. Lot of money going all the time.

I disagree. Then it would just start going bad. It's a process, and it takes awhile. And him being in office the few months that he's been in office, he didn't make this economy start going bad. So I would say I would trust him as much as I would trust any president or any one person.

Considering the cost of the war and everything it is taking, I don't think it's a matter of trust.

It's gotta be done.

It's a job too huge for one person.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU, BUSH ON THE ECONOMY?

I don't have any worries about Bush. I voted for him, and frankly, I'm glad he's there. And this is, on a personal note, this is a thing I talk about with my in-laws all the time, because they think that, because Bush got in office, the very next day the economy went south. And I hate to say it, my personal opinion, I think the reason the economy was doing so good for ten years was because we had a strong Republican leadership all those years beforehand. I heard, I think it was in college, had a professor talk, it takes a good couple of years for a president to be in office to start moving things the direction he wants his agenda to go. So just because Bush got in there, they've gotta deal with the dirty laundry from the guy before. And I think the reason the economy was going the way it was was because of the leadership we had for eight years before that. So that's my personal opinion, and I don't really have any worries about what he's going to do.

MODERATOR—WE TALKED A LOT ABOUT BUSH'S LEADERSHIP IN TERMS OF THE MILITARY AND RALLYING PEOPLE AND THIS INCREASED SENSE OF PATRIOTISM. DO YOU THINK THE DEMOCRATS ARE AS PATRIOT AS BUSH AND REPUBLICANS ARE?

Mm-hmm.

Right now I think they are.

I think they are. I was thinking of something that Terry said, that some of the things that I didn't like about Bush before are the things that I think are winning me over a little bit now. Before I used to think, you know, does he have two feet of his own? The dad thing.

I think a lot of people held that against him right off the bat.

I don't feel comfort in knowing that George H. Bush is his father. That doesn't comfort me. Nothing against his father, but he's his own man. Let's not go back to old presidents. I know it's his dad. I also resented the people he was surrounding himself with, Colin Powell and all those people. Now I think who would have been surrounding Gore. Because I was like for Gore and against Bush's cabinet. And now it's like, oh, I'm really glad that cabinet's there. Who would have been there for Gore?

MODERATOR—LET'S STEP BACK AND USE YOUR IMAGINATION A LITTLE BIT. IMAGINE BUSH HAD NOT BECOME PRESIDENT, AND INSTEAD, JOHN MCCAIN HAD WON THE PRESIDENCY.

Oh, hell. He'd have them flattened over there, I think.

MODERATOR—HOW DO YOU THINK MCCAIN WOULD DO THINGS DIFFERENT?

I think he'd have them flattened.

He does, he kind of came off to me as a hot head. And I don't think that he would have had, this is my personal opinion, I don't think he would have had the wherewithal to kind of personally step back and say, okay, let's investigate this, let's find out. Let's get the big picture, let's find out what's going on. I think he just would have walked into Afghanistan, guns a-blazing, and would have made it worse.

I do, too.

I think we would have lost a lot more lives.

I do, too.

And the country wouldn't have pulled together. We'd all be split on should we be doing this.

Yeah.

MODERATOR—LET'S IMAGINE THAT AL GORE HAD BECOME PRESIDENT. HOW WOULD HE BE HANDLING THE TERRORIST ATTACKS AND EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED SINCE THEN?

I don't know.

Who's the vice president?

I think Al Gore is pretty laid back. He would have investigated. Not to say he wouldn't have jumped in to say, hey, this is war. Because you're president. Everybody's got a big head. You are in control of a nation.

Yeah, that's true.

You know darn well. It's just like having coupons. These people are disposable. That's what they are. Go in there and dispose of them. And that's how I think he would have seen it. He would have waited. He'd probably have consulted his chief and his cabinet. I think the nation wouldn't have come together as well as Bush had brought it together.

I don't think he would have rushed in either.

No.

We'd be full alert. We'd be at a real, real war. They say there's a war going on now and it's a holy war, but I do believe we would see more of it.

I don't want to offend anybody, but I just don't think he would have known what to do. Because I don't see him as being president material.

I don't either.

I just don't see that he's got enough intelligence or backbone to carry it out by himself.

I think that it takes a whole bunch of people, not just one person, whoever stands there. George Bush just isn't standing there or whoever's in charge doesn't just say, okay, this is how we're going to do it today, guys. They've got a whole bunch of confidants. I think all those confidants are really who does make the decisions, and he's the figurehead. That's my belief. And I don't have any idea what Al Gore would have done. I don't know. But I just think George Bush is doing so well now. But I wouldn't have any idea. I wonder if he would have done anything or if he wouldn't have. I don't have any idea.

It's hard to step back and wonder about that. Maybe this wouldn't even have happened. I'm not saying that George Bush stirred the pot . . . I don't think Al Gore would have rushed into it. But I don't question his intelligence, though. Actually I question George Bush's intelligence. I did more so than Al Gore. But I just don't know about the people that surround him. I have more confidence in the cabinet. And Lieberman, I just didn't . . .

It's a difference in their personalities, the way they carry themselves, too.

To me, Al Gore wasn't very verbal as vice president. What would make him all of a sudden become more vocal as a president.

MODERATOR—HOW DO YOU THINK GORE MIGHT BE HANDLING THINGS DIFFERENTLY HERE AT HOME RATHER THAN MILITARISTICALLY AND IN AFGHANISTAN? WHAT WOULD THE ISSUES BE WE FACE HERE?

I don't think there would have been a refund. I don't think that would have happened at all. And what I don't understand is how there could have been all this money to begin with, and now they're saying, I don't know. I don't think that he would have gave out the \$600, that's number one. I don't think he would have done that.

MODERATOR—IS THAT A GOOD THING OR A BAD THING?

Bad.

It didn't make or break me, because it all went to taxes anyhow. I never saw it.

I'm kind of with her. I think more places that we really need it are going to hurt, like the schools. To me the schools are really suffering, and we're losing our special education teachers.

MODERATOR—HOW WOULD THAT HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT UNDER GORE?

I think that he would have stood up for that, because I think he would have withheld funds, I really do.

Yeah. He wouldn't have dished out \$600 to anybody to go on a shopping spree. He would have said education, that's important.

That's a dumb thing. I can't understand why they did that. It was in my benefit, it was in anybody's benefit. But in the future it's not.

Back to some of your questions, and this is getting to the question you just asked, we have to realize as Americans we have freedom. And when we don't have control over our own pocketbooks, the less and less freedom we have to do. The more the government takes, the less I have to do for me and my family. And I think if Gore was in office right now, I think his agenda would be for bigger government. Just fund that bigger government. They've gotta take more money out of my pocket, which means I can't do more things for my family and my kids.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT IF BILL CLINTON WAS STILL PRESIDENT?

He'd be too busy!

Busy having sex.

MODERATOR—HOW WOULD HE HAVE HANDLED THINGS IN RESPONSE TO THE TERRORIST ATTACKS?

I think it would be a joke.

(Many talking at once.)

I think the same things would have been going on. There's a lot of people, there's so many powerful people that make decisions. It doesn't have to do with one person. Wouldn't make any difference. Evidently this is the way things were going to go. There's a lot of people with a lot of power.

I would think, I would hope, that the country would see that as a perfect opportunity to put all this behind and let him do his job rather than make all this hubbub about his personal life. That doesn't mean I agree with him. But it got to where they were overlooking the job, and the job that he did was pretty good.

But it got all over his personal life.

You read more about his personal life than something he did.

You had forgotten that she was there too. She agreed.

I think he would have been okay with it. I think he had a strong cabinet. I'm not okay with it, but I think he was stronger than what everybody originally thinks when they think of Clinton, president during the war, laugh, laugh, that'd be scary. But his presidency . . .

When he went over in the Middle East, more or less, they were all giving up. They showed them all on television, everybody giving up over there, all the people who were fighting against the United States, they didn't want anything to do with it. They were all being killed, burnt, fried and everything else over there. They didn't want that war, I don't think.

MODERATOR—HOW WOULD CLINTON HAVE HANDLED THINGS DIFFERENTLY HERE AT HOME?

I think he's, like he went over there before and he hit his target and he left. And President Bush says that's not going to work this time. I don't know that he wouldn't have tried the same thing because it worked for him in the past. That would have probably been a logical thought for him to do to just try that. However, I think he might have realized that when he started cutting the military that he was in a little bit of a pinch. And I think also that he probably would have just, I don't know, I just don't think it would have really worked out quite as well.

I would agree with her. I don't think Clinton was the man to be in this position. I think when he did go to war, he went over there with a big head, hit his target, they gave up. This thing has been in these people's minds for a long time. It took a lot of detail, a lot of planning, for them to get what they have done, done.

I think there'd be more money in the schools now if he had stayed. Thinking about it, what she's staying, when you're talking about what would have happened in the United States. I think he would have had more money in social programs, more money to help the poor. I do think that. I don't think as much money would have gone to the military. I could be wrong.

MODERATOR—THERE ARE STILL A LOT OF ISSUES FACING THE COUNTRY HERE AT HOME, AND I WANT TO TALK ABOUT SOME OF THOSE SPECIFIC ISSUES RIGHT NOW. THE FIRST ISSUE IS ENERGY POLICY.

Energy's going to be down this year.

MODERATOR—THINK ABOUT THE ENERGY POLICY HERE IN THE COUNTRY. WHAT'S GOING ON AND WHAT SHOULD BE GOING ON? WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING ABOUT OUR ENERGY POLICY?

There should be a lot more peak times.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Isn't that where you turn on your furnace at a certain time kind of deal, save. Because it's going to hit us hard sooner or later. It's not over. So I think if everybody took their little peak times, like from 5 to 7, like in the summer. They'll tell you don't turn on your air conditioner between these times because California's having blackouts already. There's not enough.

They should be building more energy sites so you'd feel more secure in knowing you wouldn't have go without electric like California.

Your great-grandma went without electricity. Why can't you go without electricity? It's going to be give and take. If we were back on our own farm making our own food, you know, a lot of the stuff that's happening to us today wouldn't happen.

But a lot of people don't know those survival skills.

No, because we are America.

We're spoiled.

We are going up the ladder. We don't want to go back down the ladder. But we still need to preserve. She's got a seven month old baby. We need to preserve.

I'm not going to turn my heat off and stuff with my three year old granddaughter living in the house.

You shouldn't have to turn it off. It's called a peak time. Turn it low. It's not turn it off. It's like 60 . . . It's a peak time for a reason.

MODERATOR—BESIDES A PEAK TIME, WHAT ELSE?

I had to fill my gas tank up today, and I was real pleased with the price of gas. It hadn't been that low in so long. I got in the car so happy. I saved \$16, I'm filling up. And of course it doesn't really mean a lot to her, but it surprised me the gas prices are low considering, I guess it tells me there isn't going to be a shortage of oil coming over. So I think that's encouraging.

(Many talking at once.)

Oh, it's going to fluctuate up and down.

Especially around the holidays.

I didn't expect it to go so low. I really didn't.

It's fun to go to the gas station now because it's not so upsetting.

I think President Bush has stressed to everybody that we're in this for the long haul and this could take several years. And I think maybe energy isn't something that's talked about enough. Because I have never really given it a whole lot of thought, but . . .

(end of side)

. . . we're looking to fight terrorists. And the question's been asked, is Iraq, are they next on our list? Well, that's going to affect our oil when we start moving over there. So I think maybe we do need to put a plan in place or whatever to help us get through this, because we're probably looking closer to three to five years than a few months.

MODERATOR—WHAT KIND OF PLAN DO WE NEED TO PUT IN PLACE? WHAT KIND OF STEPS DO WE NEED TO TAKE?

President Bush has taken them. I thought he did a really good job. He went to other countries and said, hey, are you going stand beside us. It takes a big man . . .

MODERATOR—I'M TALKING ENERGY POLICY IN PARTICULAR.

Look at all the big cars everybody has, the big Suburbans.

Everything goes, big, big, big.

They like those, they like that power and everything. Every time you think you saw a big one, then, oh, you should see the Lincoln Navigator, that's the big one.

Some of us need big rigs, though.

I know. But I think it's interesting. I think cars will go smaller like they are in Europe. I think that's a trend that they ought to be looking at.

I think what Pam and Diane are saying, I think we all as Americans, we need to conserve what we can and not be gluttons and think we have to have the biggest car or have our furnaces up to 75 all the time.

That was on the 11th when people thought there was going to be a gas shortage, I was on my way after being in school all day to pick up my daughter, and I was about four blocks from where she was, and there was this massive traffic jam, just cars stopped everywhere. I didn't know what it was. . . . I thought something had happened, and it was everybody being greedy over gas. . . . They're all trying to hoard it, and I think that's the whole wrong attitude.

MODERATOR—LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON WITH HEALTH CARE IN THIS COUNTRY TODAY. WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING?

It's terrible. It's sky high. I think like they have socialized health care in Canada, and that's probably interesting, to look at that whole plan. And I talked to, I vacationed this summer, I talked to a Canadian doctor who was at the same campground I was, I'm a camper. And he said there's really no problems. I said, well, what about donors? What if you have to have open heart surgery or something goes wrong with you? And he said that there's really not that long a waiting list. I can't remember if he said, if you had to have a surgery right this minute, open heart surgery, I think they would do it. People who can wait. I think they try to do education. But I think that would be something to look at would be socialized health care.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE?

Get rid of these big insurance companies. We have several friends that are doctors, and it's a nightmare. You hear stories. They can't even perform a simple procedure on somebody because their insurance won't pay for it. I really seriously think the insurance companies need to be held accountable. They tell doctors how to doctor.

And I think we need to get back to letting doctors do their job.

That's right. The doctors will admit, they milked the golden goose for too long. There needs to be some accountability. Now the pendulum's swung too far the other way. The insurance companies are the ones telling the doctors how to doctor, and we can't have that. On the same hand, we can't have doctors just milking the golden goose either. But maybe they learned their lesson now.

The foreigners, we take care of those. Even the last time we went to the doctor, a nurse said, well if your name was Jose, you'd be getting better treatment than I am as Suzie with Blue Cross Blue Shield. We take care of foreigners but not our own. That's not good.

I have to agree. Just the other day in the newspaper they had a free clinic open for just foreigners. And I couldn't realize, there's no free clinics for me to go to.

You can go there, too. You can go there.

Didn't say that in that paper article.

No, you can. Hispanic clinic is what it was, and anybody can go there.

I have no problems with Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Chinese, Japanese or anything. They're coming here to better themselves. But don't give them something that poor white people might need. There's a lot of poor white people.

MODERATOR—ANYONE ELSE ON HEALTH CARE POLICY?

Personal opinion. I have good health care. It's more important to me personally to see refugees or immigrants have healthy children and not spread germs or contaminate everybody. They need health care like everybody else. I have good health care, I wish everybody did. And I don't mind that my taxes go to help a family that doesn't.

Helping those families helps all of our families, because that child isn't going to give your child something.

MODERATOR—LET'S TALK ABOUT ECONOMIC POLICY IN THIS COUNTRY. WHAT KIND OF POLICIES DO WE HAVE NOW AND WHAT KIND OF POLICIES SHOULD WE HAVE WHEN IT COMES TO THE ECONOMY?

Are you talking about the poor people and not working?

MODERATOR—I'M TALKING ABOUT THE WHOLE ECONOMY, THE COUNTRY'S WHOLE ECONOMY.

I think the policies that the current administration has are good, and I think we've gotta give it some time.

MODERATOR—ARE YOU THINKING OF ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR?

Yeah. I really like the tax cut. And I like how they phased in over the years. I like the fact that they're talking, I don't know if they have yet or not, they're talking about getting rid of the marriage penalty. I like the fact that they're going to give a larger child credit. And someone over there said it's the working class, it's the middle class that gets hit first. It's not those that don't pay taxes, and it's not the upper echelon. It's those of us in the middle. So I think just given some time, it's going to work. It's not overnight.

I don't think there is a middle class anymore. Either you're rich or you're poor, just making it. I think they do have some welfare issues that I think are really good. And I do agree with

your marriage thing. You're married, you should get a bigger tax cut than a woman out there spreading her legs having babies from 10, 15 different men who's doing drugs and not trying to live a moral life. Those that do try to do it the honest road . . .

Get hurt the worst.

. . . it's always a dead end always. That's why so many people want to cheat and under hand the government. Because what are we getting? We're not getting anywhere.

I think there are some issues. I don't like that the government helps people out as far as welfare and stuff like that, because a lot of us have needed help at different times, but I think there are some people that abuse the system. There are people that know every in and out on how to get money out of the government instead of trying to get a good honest job. And I think those people, they need to try to figure out who they are and deal with them. But I don't have any problem with helping somebody out who needs help, especially the way our society is with single moms, as far as a lot of times the dads aren't there to support the children. But I don't like the idea that somebody's going to continue to have kids because they can get more money from the government. And there's been articles in the paper. They should try to get them some schooling, some jobs. I don't mind helping people at all, but I don't want to be abused.

Teach them how to help themselves.

Yes.

I know there's a school, and going to Omaha, Nebraska, that is a vocational school where if you are a single woman that you can go there and they give you like six months of training in one career where you can come back and live wherever you want to, if it's even a secretary or something like that. But they did start, I don't know how long ago, but the food stamps where you can get it for three years only. You have three years time to get yourself up and do something with your life. I thought that was a great plan. Because I'm sure there's women out there who do abuse the system, which is unfair to people who do need it in the future.

MODERATOR—THINKING ABOUT THE DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS, DO YOU THINK THEY'RE TAKING THE RIGHT STEPS TO REBUILD AND RESTORE THE ECONOMY WITHOUT HURTING IT IN THE LONG RUN?

I think they're jumping in feet first, just putting bandaids all over the place. And I think it's hard to predict what will happen in the next few years.

MODERATOR—ARE YOU THINKING OF ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR?

I was until you said that. I think about the bail out for the airlines.

Oh, gosh.

Yeah, they took a big hit. But are they going to bail out every type of industry that suffers? And where is that money coming from?

The future.

It seems like favored industries, perhaps, are singled out to receive the government help.

Wealthy ones.

And the others get left behind.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK? DO YOU THINK THEY'RE TAKING THE RIGHT STEPS?

Yes and no. I have to agree with Terry, because, yeah, it's almost like they pick and choose. I'm sorry, but if my husband's company went under, do you think they'd come in and bail him out? No. And I know this is almost sacrilegious to say here in the heart of America, but I think there are way too many welfare checks handed out to farmers for way too many years. I know farming is not easy. I have lots of family in it. But I think it goes back to the same thing. If you can't get it to work after so many years, then maybe you need to look at something else. Like the airlines. Just handing out money just to bail people out. You can't bail out every company.

Because my airline ticket wasn't any cheaper. I paid more money for it this time than I've ever paid for an airline ticket.

I think there needs to be more money given to the states where the states need a lot of help. Like Iowa now. The government needs to be giving us money instead of us giving them money, because there are a lot of programs that do need to have a lot of money, in the state of Iowa, just look at your roads. The streets aren't even repaired, half the streets, and what it does to your car when you're running over them. I think they need to put more money into the state. And if we're in a war now, I'm just wondering how much money then is that going to be taking away from all of us and everything. And I also think that the grocery stores are ridiculous. All my money goes to the grocery store, and I think the groceries are way too high.

It's called the middle man. The middle man wants to make money,

MODERATOR—WHICH PARTY IN CONGRESS, DEMOCRATS OR REPUBLICANS, DO YOU WORRY MORE WILL DO THE WRONG THING, WILL HURT THE ECONOMY?

I don't worry about that.

MODERATOR—THE PARTIES HAVE DIFFERENT APPROACHES, DIFFERENT IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO DEAL WITH THE ECONOMY. WHICH PARTY DO YOU WORRY MORE WOULD DO THE WRONG THING?

What was Bill Clinton? Was he a Democrat?

Yes.

Because somebody had mentioned early on that it takes time for us to go south. And he has been in office for eight years, so over those eight years, you know something was going wrong even though we might not have felt it. But all of a sudden George Bush is in there, and now we're seeing the light of day where we're feeling it. So I think, even though I'm a Democrat, I'll go against myself and say I think the Democrats maybe didn't handle it well.

I think it all evens out. I think there's all kinds of, I think it evens out.

I have to agree with Pam. I'm a Republican, though. The Democrats scare me a little bit more. But against the Republicans, I think they give too many big breaks to big business, and I think they have to quit that.

They've always held that Democrats were more for the individual person, and the Republicans for business.

MODERATOR—WHAT SHOULD OUR CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS TODAY BE MORE FOCUSED ON, PROTECTING US FROM TERRORISM OR RESTORING OUR ECONOMIC WELL BEING?

Well, terrorism, what's going on right now, the terrorism issues number one.

I agree.

If you don't take care of the other, too, we're not going to have anything to take care of terrorism.

They're kind of supporting on each other.

Don't sit here all day worrying about when they're going to strike if nothing's happening. But you need to stop the press when something does occur like this. I mean, before September 11, he could have been doing something for our school systems. I think school and education is number one. Everybody needs to go to school. Everybody needs to get an education, if it's at home or not.

That's the backbone of our nation in the first place.

Exactly.

I think they're doing the best they can. I think they are a little bit concerned about both of them. I think we have to take terrorism as a top priority right now because I think there's more going on than what they're sure of what's happening. But I think they're also taking into consideration the economics. But this is a tough situation and we've not been in it before, so I think they're doing the best they can.

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT NUMBER THREE. THIS IS A LIST OF PROPOSALS THE DEMOCRATS HAVE MADE.

EXTENSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS BY 13 WEEKS FOR THE UNEMPLOYED IN HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AREAS. COVERING AT LEAST HALF OF THE COBRA HEALTH CARE INSURANCE FOR THOSE LOSING THEIR JOBS FOR UP TO ONE YEAR. FUNDING “READY-TO-GO” CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, SUCH AS IMPROVEMENTS TO AIRPORT AND GROUND WATER FACILITIES, WHICH WILL CREATE JOBS WHILE STRENGTHENING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE AND SECURITY. TAX REBATES OF UP TO \$600 FOR THE 40 PERCENT OF AMERICANS WHO FILED TAXES BUT DID NOT RECEIVE A TAX REBATE THIS SUMMER. TAX INCENTIVES FOR BUSINESSES TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT THIS YEAR IN NEW PLANTS AND EQUIPMENT. DELAY THE TAX CUT FOR THE WEALTHIEST ONE PERCENT OF AMERICANS – THOSE EARNING MORE THAN \$375,000 A YEAR – TO ENSURE NO MONEY IS BORROWED FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND TO PAY FOR TAX CUTS.

Sounds good.

It does? Oh, my.

MODERATOR—WHAT STANDS OUT HERE?

COBRA.

Yeah, I've been there. Health care is a big thing.

The COBRA sounds nice.

Think about the chicken pox . . .

Your cut off is not a wonderful thing, because if you've got a preexisting whatever, you're still going to need medicine. You're still going to need health care.

It's scary.

COBRA is really, really expensive.

Yes.

\$800 a month.

And that is with the insurance companies. They're milking it.

Yes.

I don't think insurance companies should actually have the chance to get away with things like that. And what is high unemployed areas. What is that? Hello? How many high unemployed areas do we have here in Des Moines that would affect us? You could be the CEO of Principles, like they're really going to lose their job tomorrow. They need to take care of the little people first. They're the ones who, sorry, you have to go because your job's being cut out because we need more spending in this area.

MODERATOR—WHAT DOES HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AREAS MEAN?

I'm taking it for like a CEO or an insurance filer or something where you're going getting paid \$55,000 a year. Those people should have a back up plan in case they lose their jobs.

I'm wondering if they say high unemployment areas, if those are places that just don't have very good economic development. There's not jobs in that area.

Yeah.

I'm sorry. If there's not a job in that area, regardless of whether you're from there or your family's there, move somewhere where there is.

(Many talking at once.)

But why are young Americans from Des Moines moving out? Because they're getting their education for cheaper here in Des Moines, but they're going to get paid \$65,000 if they move to Georgia or \$25,000 when they stay here.

Yeah.

Think of the people that worked at John Deere or Firestone when they were laid off. Those are big companies that have been in business for a long time. What if you worked at Boeing and you lost your job. I still say that they should increase that. The first two things are real good, I think.

I disagree with the first one, because I think that just prolongs people trying to get a job. There's plenty of jobs in the area.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REST OF THEM? WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THESE?

I was among the 40 percent of Americans who filed but did not receive a tax rebate. I still don't think I should get \$600. I mean, I didn't get it because I guess I claimed four kids, I was low income but I had a lot of deductions. I don't remember that was called. I didn't get a rebate. I understand why. That doesn't mean that everybody who didn't get one should get one, because I'm not really pro tax rebates.

I think it should be a case by case thing on that one.

Right across the board, give them to everybody who didn't get 'em, that's scary.

Uh-huh.

That's a lot of money.

I don't think we should give incentives to our big businesses either. It's their money, they need to use it. They're making money off of us by, you know, let's say it's a health care place. They're getting all this money for COBRA from this lady, she said she's paying \$800. That is way more than she should be paying for health care.

Right. Because how many times do you just not use it, but you still have to pay it on a monthly basis, right? That's ridiculous.

On the last one, I wouldn't want anyone taking any money out of the social security.

I agree.

MODERATOR—SO DO YOU THINK THAT THEY SHOULD DELAY THIS TAX CUT TO MAKE SURE NO MONEY COMES OUT OF SOCIAL SECURITY?

Yeah.

Yes.

Definitely.

(Many talking at once.)

If they're making \$375,000 a year, I really don't think they need a tax cut.

They don't.

I look at it this way. They earned it. Why can't they have it to spend it?

Exactly.

I don't understand why somebody who makes a large sum of money has to pay a larger percentage of their income just because, I don't know, luck of the draw or they made themselves better. If they're the ones that want to go out there and do what it takes to make that kind of money, then why should they have to pay 50 percent of their income to the government. But on the same hand, I'm one of those pessimists. I'm in my 30's, and I'm not counting on social security.

Also, on the tax incentives for businesses to encourage investments this year in new plans and

equipment, you have to have your plans, you have to have your business going. You need the people coming in. You need these people coming in. So that wouldn't be a good one, also, tax incentives for businesses. You wouldn't have a job if you didn't have business coming in.

I think that somehow we need to get American companies to stay, keep their factories in America rather than going to Mexico or someplace where they pay a penny on the dollar for help. And the jobs that are created here in the States, it seems like a lot of them are minimum wage. Obviously you can't raise a family on minimum wage. But I don't like the idea of a tax incentive. To me it's just like putting more money in the pocket of the businesses who already have money. And I don't know, maybe an embargo or something against their products. But I think that out of sheer patriotism, I guess, I would expect them to stay in the country and employ our people with good wages.

I agree with what she said about the businesses. I totally agree.

MODERATOR—LET'S FLIP TO HANDOUT NUMBER FOUR. THIS IS A LIST OF REPUBLICAN PROPOSALS.

CUTTING THE CAPITAL GAINS TAX RATE FOR THE SALE OF STOCKS. CUTTING THE CORPORATE TAX RATE FROM 35 PERCENT TO 25 PERCENT. ACCELERATING BY TWO YEARS TAX CUTS THAT WERE PART OF THE BUDGET PASSED EARLIER THIS YEAR SO THAT SINGLES MAKING OVER \$27,000 AND COUPLES MAKING MORE THAN \$45,000 RECEIVE A TAX CUT THIS YEAR. ADDITIONAL TAX CUTS FOR BUSINESSES TO RELIEVE THEIR FINANCIAL PRESSURE, INCLUDING \$25 BILLION IN PAYMENTS TO COMPANIES SUBJECT TO THE ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX. EXTENDED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR THOSE WHO LOST THEIR JOBS AFTER SEPTEMBER 11TH. \$13 BILLION IN TAX REBATES TO THE 30 MILLION WORKERS WHOSE INCOMES WERE TOO LOW TO ENTITLE THEM TO THE REBATES THAT OTHER TAXPAYERS RECEIVED THIS YEAR.

Where are they getting all this money?

Yeah. And why isn't any of it coming to my house.

I think they should definitely extend unemployment benefits to those who lost their jobs.

Yeah.

That's just common sense maybe.

How long do we extend it?

(Many talking at once.)

When they towers fell, they lost 55,000 jobs.

It wouldn't be just New York, though. It would be the airline industry.

That would be a big chunk of money.

Boeing has lost a lot of jobs.

I think that would have to be a little bit more detailed. I don't want somebody who just quit Burger King to get it.

September 11 had nothing to do with that, so I think they need to be a little bit more specific in that.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT SOME OF THE OTHER ONES?

I think accelerating by two years tax cuts that were part of the budget passed.

MODERATOR—DO YOU LIKE THAT ONE?

Yes.

MODERATOR—WHY?

Because I paid \$2400 in taxes.

I personally, I like the first three. I think maybe that would help jump start the economy a little bit maybe, because paying such high capital gains on my investments and stuff. And I think that's more that we can reinvest for our future. And I'm wondering, of course, this cutting the corporate tax rate, I wonder if that has something similar to this tax incentives for businesses. I see maybe where they're coming with that to make incentives for companies to stay here in the states, particularly to stay here in the state of Iowa. Because if they have to pay so much in taxes, that's less money than they can pay good wages to workers.

That's a big tax cut.

Yeah, it is.

I think it has to be more specific. But I wondering if that maybe wouldn't help if they could then increase the workers' wages.

If the tax cut money would go exactly to them.

Yeah.

I'd like that if it was maybe limited in time and also if it is similar to what the other one is, I like that in the way that it would, it's a tax cut as far as what they do throughout the year. They're not

just giving them some money up front for them to take this money and then close their business within a year after they got this money. This way they have to work here in the United States for this, to get this benefit.

MODERATOR—LET'S MOVE TO HANDOUT NUMBER FIVE. (INSTRUCTIONS)

REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS SAY THAT THE LESS DEPENDENT WE ARE ON OIL FROM THE MIDDLE EAST, THE MORE SECURE OUR NATION IS. WE NEED TO INCREASE DOMESTIC PRODUCTION OF OIL, COAL, AND NATURAL GAS. OUR NATIONAL SECURITY REQUIRES THAT WE OPEN ALASKA'S ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE TO OIL DRILLING, SUBSIDIZE THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW, CLEAN, COAL TECHNOLOGY, AND BUILD NEW POWER PLANTS.

DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS SAY WE NEED AN ENERGY SECURITY PLAN THAT REDUCES OUR RELIANCE ON OIL FROM THE MIDDLE EAST. WE NEED TO USE AMERICA'S TECHNOLOGICAL KNOW-HOW TO DEVELOP NEWER, CLEANER ENERGY SOURCES, SUCH AS WIND AND SOLAR, AND TO BUILD ENERGY EFFICIENT CARS AND APPLIANCES. WE CAN SECURE OUR ENERGY SUPPLY USING CLEAN FUELS LIKE NATURAL GAS BUT WITHOUT DRILLING FOR OIL IN THE PRISTINE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.

Democrat.

Democrat.

Democrat.

MODERATOR—LET'S DO A SHOW OF HANDS. HOW MANY AGREE WITH THE REPUBLICAN STATEMENT? 2. THE DEMOCRATIC? 7. WE HAD 7 PEOPLE ON THE DEMOCRATIC SIDE, SO TELL ME WHY YOU AGREED WITH THAT ONE?

I think it was the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge that kind of got me. I want to become less dependent on the Middle East. They both want to increase our own resources, but I like the ways, wind and solar and efficient cars and appliances. And I like not drilling in the national wildlife refuge.

I lived in Texas for awhile, and they did a lot of slam drilling. And basically there's major pockets of oil and gas down there they just haven't even touched. So why aren't we using our resources right here rather than going to other places?

I agree with it, because I think if we develop our know-how to get to our natural resources, it's only going to be in our best interest. And we always know that in the future if we need to or if we run short, then we can drill. But why use up all our natural resource when it hasn't even started to use up what we do have already drilled, easy to get to, instead of destroying natural . . .

I was agreeing with the woman on the end whole-heartedly, even though I am a Republican. And then everything Pam said. To a "T."

I like the technology, develop our technology. The Gen X generation seems to really, they excel so much in technology that it's exciting to watch this develop and grow. And I see this as some excellent job, new job developments out there. And we can open up the Alaska pipelines. We've gotta save some of the earth. That's what we're all kind of fighting for here. But we're hell bent on destroying all of it.

MODERATOR—THOSE THAT AGREE WITH THE REPUBLICAN ONE, WHY?

It was kind of a hard call, because I do like some of the things that the Democrats have. I wish that the Republican would be more put on developing newer cleaner energy sources. Using our technology, I like that. But I think this whole drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife, it was on some news pieces and stuff during the election, I think it was portrayed wrongly, maybe, that the Republicans want to just go in there and trash the landscape. They want them to go in there in a responsible way and harvest what we can out of there without disturbing much of the area. I mean, minimal disturbance to what it is. And I think other than just Alaska, I think having lived in Texas and having experience there, I think we need to explore all of our options within our own borders of what we have. And that includes having new technology of things and cleaner things and then realizing we can go into places and not quite rip it all up and harvest what we can out of it.

I would say, too, that I did agree with some of the things that were in the Democratic, what they said, too. However, I think a good example of why we have two different ones that disagree so much is that the statements, it really doesn't tell us what our plans are to do here. They could very well be planning the same type of things. I don't mind that they want to go to the Alaskan Arctic National Wildlife, because like she said, they're not just going to go in and wipe everything out and start from there. They're going to do it responsibly. And I think there's just a lot of things that doesn't tell us how we're going to do it. And the Democrat ones, they said what they're going to do and how. There's just a difference in the statements.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT JUST THE BASIC DIFFERENCE IN THE APPROACHES, WHETHER IT'S FOCUSED ON THE FUELS WE USE NOW, OIL, COAL, NATURAL GAS, WHEREAS DEMOCRATS ARE FOCUSED ON CONSERVATION, ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES, WIND, SOLAR, THOSE KINDS OF THINGS, WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE?

I wish we could put the two statements together to be honest with you. I don't see why they just can't meet in the middle. Because I totally agree that we need to use the things we have and harvest the things we have, but we need to have newer development and cleaner energy sources. Why can't we have a little bit of both.

Mm-hmm. That's what I was thinking.

(Many talking at once.)

The Democrats is kind of futuristic, develop all this stuff. The Republicans we can do right now. Too bad you can't combine them.

I guess I'm looking at this statement as it's now, what happened after September 11. And we don't have time to do all of this. We have to go in and do something now.

MODERATOR—LET'S FLIP TO HANDOUT NUMBER SIX.

DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS SAY WE NEED TO DELAY TAX RATE CUTS PASSED EARLIER THIS YEAR FOR THE WEALTHIEST ONE PERCENT TO PREVENT BORROWING FROM THE MEDICARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUNDS. THEY SAY THIS IS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN MEET OUR IMMEDIATE NEEDS – REBUILDING AFTER THE TERRORIST ATTACKS, EXTENDING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR THOSE LAID OFF IN THE WAKE OF THE ATTACKS, FUNDING NEW SECURITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS, AND INCREASING EDUCATION SPENDING – WITHOUT SACRIFICING MILLIONS OF AMERICANS' LONG-TERM SECURITY.

REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS SAY WE NEED TO EXPAND ON THE TAX CUTS PASSED EARLIER THIS YEAR IN ORDER TO GIVE MONEY BACK TO THOSE WHO WILL INVEST IT IN OUR ECONOMY. THEIR PLAN INCLUDES TAX REBATES FOR MANY FAMILIES WHO DIDN'T QUALIFY FOR THE EARLIER REBATE PLAN, ACCELERATES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OTHER TAX CUTS FROM THE EARLIER PACKAGE, AND OFFERS NEW TAX CUTS DESIGNED TO PROMOTE IMMEDIATE INVESTMENT BY BOTH INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES.

LET'S START WITH THE DEMOCRATS. HOW MANY AGREE MORE WITH THE DEMOCRATIC STATEMENT? 5. WITH THE REPUBLICAN STATEMENT? 2. WE MISSED A COUPLE PEOPLE.

I'm not sure.

Yeah.

I'm a little not sure on this one, but I tend to agree, I guess, with both.

MODERATOR—YOU'VE GOTTA CHOOSE ONE OR THE OTHER.

The Democrat.

To prevent borrowing from the Medicare and Social Security funds.

MODERATOR—THAT'S THE REASON?

Yep.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU, WHAT DO YOU THINK? THOSE WHO AGREE WITH THE DEMOCRATIC ONE, WHY?

That was the only reason I agreed with it, because I was 50/50.

MODERATOR—TO PREVENT . . .

Borrowing.

MODERATOR—ANYONE ELSE ON THAT?

I think that the one percent of the wealthiest people should consider themselves really, really fortunate and not mind the tax cut. I guess if I had millions I'd be more generous, that I wouldn't mind. Just consider how lucky you are, how fortunate you are, and willing to uphold a little extra.

And increasing education spending. Also the Democrats said that.

I guess I agree with it because of the Medicare and Social Security. I think this one did make it hard for a lot of us because it also does seem to make sense that they give the tax money back for us to invest to help the economy. So I guess really I would have to plead a little bit of ignorance on this.

When I think of the tax money that we did receive back, I wonder how many people actually went out shopping to spend theirs and how many applied it toward bills. I don't know if the little tax things are going for what they were intended for.

It went to my son's schooling.

MODERATOR—THE REPUBLICAN PLAN IS ABOUT GETTING MONEY BACK INTO PEOPLE'S HANDS SO THEY COULD SPEND IT. DO YOU THINK THAT IF THEY CUT TAXES, IF THEY INCREASE THE TAX CUTS, THE DEMOCRATS WILL SAY WE NEED TO SCALE IT BACK, THE REPUBLICANS ARE SAYING WE NEED TO DO EVEN MORE. AND IF THEY INCREASE THE TAX CUTS AND GOT MORE MONEY OUT THERE TO PEOPLE, WOULD THEY PUT IT BACK INTO THE ECONOMY? WOULD THEY SPEND IT? WOULD THEY INVEST IT? WOULD BUSINESSES TAKE THAT MONEY AND BUILD NEW THINGS OR HIRE NEW PEOPLE OR ARE PEOPLE GOING TO GET MONEY AND BECAUSE IT'S AN UNCERTAIN ECONOMY SAY I'M GOING TO HOLD ON? HOW DO YOU THINK PEOPLE WOULD REACT IF THERE WERE THESE BIG TAX CUTS AND THERE WAS MORE MONEY ROLLING OUT TO THEM?

If it was happening right now, I think we'd spend it. If something was more serious, more serious things continued to happen in our country, then I think you would find more people stashing it. At this point, I think they would spend it.

That's true.

I'll be honest with you. The reason I went with the Republican one is back to this whole thing about being American and the freedom. The more money I have in my pocket to do what I want with, I'll be honest with you, we're not spending as much as we were simply because of the way things are. But I really do. I think that if people had more money in their pockets, then given, if we didn't have this whole September 11 scenario or given some more time, we would be spending it in other areas. If I had more money to take care of my family's needs, I am more willing to give to charities and that sort of thing. But when I feel like I barely have enough money to cover what I need because I've got such a huge chunk of it going to the government for handouts or programs I don't think we need, I don't have as much or I don't feel like I can give as much to some of the charities or programs people need help with.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO THE REST OF YOU THINK ABOUT THIS IDEA OF GETTING MONEY BACK INTO PEOPLE'S HANDS SO THEY COULD SPEND IT? WILL THEY SPEND IT?

The first time around they did. They were even out Christmas shopping.

MODERATOR—SO YOU THINK PEOPLE TOOK THE \$300 OR THE \$600 THEY GOT AND SPENT IT?

They see it as a bonus and they went out while they had it and joined it.

I paid my house taxes with it. Wasn't too much of a joy.

I would have spent it if our situation wasn't what it is right now, and that's because it's a unique situation. It's not because of anything that happened in our government, it's just something else. But then we would have spent it and enjoyed it.

I think if you have more people with no money and the government doesn't help them, they're going to be over robbing your house. That's what I think. They're going to be putting the gun to you in the parking lot and taking your pocketbook.

We'll become the suppressed people like the people of Afghanistan. They're suppressed people and their way of getting empowered is to do something barbaric like attacking civilized nations.

MODERATOR—LET'S GO TO HANDOUT NUMBER SEVEN.

REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS SAY WE NEED TO RENEW OUR COMMITMENT TO NATIONAL SECURITY. WE NEED TO INCREASE OUR DEFENSE SPENDING SO OUR SOLDIERS HAVE THE MOST ADVANCED WEAPONS IN

THE WORLD AND PUSH FOR A MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM TO PROTECT OUR CITIZENS FROM ATTACKS BY ROGUE STATES. WE'LL WORK WITH OTHER COUNTRIES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, BUT WE NEED TO START PUTTING AMERICA'S INTERESTS FIRST AGAIN.

DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS SAY WE MUST PROVIDE OUR ARMED FORCES WITH THE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT THEY NEED TO FIGHT AND WIN THIS WAR ON TERRORISM, BUT SEPTEMBER 11TH ALSO REMINDED US OF HEROES AROUND US EVERY DAY. WE HAVE TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT AMERICA BY FUNDING THE RECOVERY FROM THE SEPTEMBER 11TH ATTACKS, IMPROVING OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM, PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT, AND MAKING SURE EVERYONE SHARES IN THE REBUILDING OF OUR ECONOMY.

Put 'em together.

Why can't they all just come together?

I know. Why can't they just come together.

MODERATOR—YOU GOTTA MAKE A CHOICE.

I want to know who wrote these.

Yeah, they're two different . . . This is like apples and oranges.

MODERATOR—YOU'VE GOTTA CHOOSE ONE OR THE OTHER. YOU CAN AGREE WITH BOTH WAYS, BUT YOU CAN CHOOSE ONE MORE A LITTLE BIT MORE THAN THE OTHER. HOW MANY WOULD CHOOSE THE REPUBLICAN STATEMENT? 1.

See, I have a son. So if my son was 18 or 19 or 20, I would have to go with 1. But because he's 12, I look at it another way.

I have to vote for the first one.

MODERATOR—HOW MANY FOR THE REPUBLICAN STATEMENT NOW? 2. HOW MANY FOR THE DEMOCRATIC STATEMENT? 7. OKAY. TELL ME WHY.

I'm for the Democrat. Because they're talking about we need to, I think they're also saying we need to help our armed forces to get past this. And they're also talking about the people. We need to help them, not just push for the war.

Right. And strengthen the community, rebuild.

MODERATOR—WHAT ELSE ABOUT THAT STATEMENT MADE YOU CHOOSE THAT ONE?

Everything. Health care system.

It covers more.

Building your community. You have to have a strong community.

I think the Democrats are saying, not in so many words like the Republicans did, but they are putting America first because America is for the people. And by them doing the little things that they say they're going to do that is for the people. And why do you need all these million dollar advanced weapons to push more for a missile defense when we can go over there and fight 'em with guns and still win. Maybe bazookas or something.

We've got pictures of their people with rocks.

MODERATOR—WHO CHOSE THE REPUBLICAN MESSAGE?

First of all, the Russians went over there and they're the number two strength in war and they lost to Afghanistan.

That's true.

So I think the Republicans' statement here I think is saying what has to be done right now. We have to defend our country. We are behind in military because we've cut military and stuff in the past. We didn't really need that stuff. We were going along just fine. We didn't have any real problems like this. But when we cut the military, that means we're cutting all of our soldiers' pay and all this stuff. This money here that they're telling us they're going to be spending, we have to build our military back up. Because like I said, Russia was number two and they lost to Afghanistan who is not even close to their size. We can't think we're just going to walk in there and snap our fingers and this is going to be done. It's not. This is a whole new ballgame to us, and we have to train our guys, and we have to put some money out to train our guys to win this war. And the Democratic statement is good, too, because they're talking about here at home. That's why this is apples and oranges. This isn't the same thing these statements are talking about.

But it also says we must provide our armed forces with the resources and support they need. So that's gotta be first. We've got to do that first.

That is first.

I know that. But the Republicans are saying this has got to be our number one priority.

They're taking money away from our schools is what they're doing right now.

We're not going to have any schools if Afghanistan comes over here and we lose this war.

But do you know how much the Russians really wanted to win the war with Afghanistan.

They were there for years and they lost it. And you know Russia. They want to take over everything.

Yeah.

So they didn't go in there just to play. They went in there to win, and they lost.

MODERATOR—LET'S FLIP TO HANDOUT EIGHT . . . (INSTRUCTIONS).

GIVE A \$15 BILLION BAILOUT TO THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY, WHICH GOES ENTIRELY TO THE AIRLINE COMPANIES BUT PROVIDES NOTHING FOR THE MORE THAN 100,000 AIRLINE EMPLOYEES LAID OFF AFTER SEPTEMBER 11TH. PERMANENTLY EXPAND CORPORATE TAX LOOPHOLES LIKE PROPERTY DEPRECIATION AND DEFERRAL OF TAXES ON INCOME EARNED OVERSEAS. REDUCE THE CAPITAL GAINS TAX RATE, 80 PERCENT OF WHICH GOES TO THOSE EARNING MORE THAN \$200,000 A YEAR. REPEAL A 15 YEAR-OLD CORPORATE TAX AND MAKE THE REPEAL RETROACTIVE FOR THE ENTIRE 15 YEARS. THIS MEANS FORD MOTOR COMPANY WOULD BE GIVEN A REBATE CHECK FOR \$2.3 BILLION, IBM WOULD BE GIVEN \$1.4 BILLION, AND GENERAL MOTORS WOULD BE GIVEN \$832 MILLION. STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF PATENTS SO DRUG COMPANIES WHO MAKE ANTIBIOTICS USED TO TREAT ANTHRAX AND OTHER POTENTIAL THREATS COULD SELL MILLIONS OF DOSES TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AT FULL COST WITHOUT ANY COMPETITION FROM SIMILAR GENERIC DRUGS. RELAX ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AND DRILL IN THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, EVEN THOUGH IT WILL PRODUCE NO NEW OIL FOR 10 YEARS. REQUIRE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PAY PRIVATE INSURANCE CLAIMS ABOVE A PRE-DETERMINED AMOUNT IN THE EVENT OF FUTURE TERRORIST ATTACKS.

Well, to repeal the 15-year-old corporate tax, they can't be serious.

I'm like, come on.

They can't seriously be considering doing that, are they? Are they really?

MODERATOR—I'LL TELL YOU THAT PASSED THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TODAY.

Is there something we don't understand about that?

MODERATOR—FROM WHAT I'VE READ, IT'S THE SAME IDEA. GETTING MONEY INTO THE HANDS OF BUSINESSES SO THAT THEY CAN THEREFORE GO OUT AND SPEND IT.

Is there a little clause in there that they have to give it to employees?

If they're not giving it to the employees, who are they giving the money to then?

The CEO?

Where are the funds going?

Forget it. No way.

Not from the information we have here.

Yeah. Not from the information we have here. And that fourth one, I would say uh-uh.

Depends on your president.

MODERATOR—IT PASSED ON HALF OF CONGRESS, THEN THERE'S THE OTHER HALF OF CONGRESS, AND THEN THE PRESIDENT HAS TO SIGN. SO THERE'S STILL A LOT THAT HAS TO GO ON. BUT THESE ARE ALL THINGS THAT ARE BEING CONSIDERED THAT ARE AT VARIOUS STAGES OF THE PROCESS.

The antibiotics, that one's like, gee whiz. I don't get that one at all.

(Many talking at once.)

I think a lot of this is the way it's worded. Because I've been watching them on these drugs and everything. And they're saying how important it is to have the right drugs. They're saying on this fighting anthrax, on this medicine and all that, that it's very important how it's made. I don't know that a generic is . . . I take arthritis medicine, and the generic I don't think works as good as the regular. I don't like generic things.

It's like the businesses are getting everything here. They get the tax cut, plus they get to patent a product that would help everybody, but they're making money both ways. They're making money everywhere.

It's not going to do any good for the businesses to have all that money if we can't buy anything.

MODERATOR—ARE THERE ANY OF THESE THAT YOU THINK WOULD BE GOOD IDEAS?

I like the last one.

I do, too.

If they're giving money to the businesses.

That would cost us a lot.

It would cost us a lot of money, but . . .

MODERATOR—SINCE YOU DON'T WANT ANY OF THEM, WHAT WOULD BE THE ONE YOU WANT LEAST?

Number one.

(Many talking at once.)

If it's passed already.

MODERATOR—NUMBERS TWO, THREE AND FOUR WERE PART OF A PACKAGE THAT WAS PASSED TODAY.

So we don't need to consider those because they're already done.

MODERATOR—THEY'RE NOT LAW YET. THEY GOT PAST ONE STAGE OF MANY STAGES.

Haven't they already given the airlines all this money? Is it a done deal? Isn't number one a done deal.

MODERATOR—THE AIRLINE ONE HAS ALREADY PASSED, YES.

So it's already done. They're already doing all this. The Republicans are already doing all these things.

MODERATOR—NOT ALL OF IT. . . . DIFFERENT GROUPS ARE GOING TO CONGRESS AND SAYING, HEY, BECAUSE OF THIS, WE NEED X, Y AND Z. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE COMPANIES THAT ARE ALL GOING AND ASKING FOR THIS STUFF?

I think they're taking advantage of the situation.

They're making money off the tragedy.

That's right.

That's like the drug one bothers me because it's big companies making money off of the people.

Right there it gets back to what we talked about at the beginning of this whole group. What does it mean to be an American? Good citizenship, I think, you said Diane. Is it good citizenship to go gouge the government and gouge your fellow citizen? I don't think so, and I don't agree with it.

MODERATOR—ALMOST A YEAR FROM NOW, THERE ARE GOING TO BE ELECTIONS FOR CONGRESS. BASED ON EVERYTHING WE TALKED ABOUT TONIGHT, REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU PERSONALLY WOULD VOTE, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BEST REASONS TO VOTE FOR REPUBLICANS?

If you own a big business, boy, you'd be in.

MODERATOR—THESE AREN'T NECESSARILY REPUBLICAN THINGS, THIS LAST GROUP. THESE ARE THINGS SPECIFIC GROUPS HAVE ASKED FOR. WHAT ARE THE BEST REASONS TO VOTE FOR REPUBLICANS FOR CONGRESS?

I think security.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

We're more of a secure nation. We eased into this, didn't rush into it.

MODERATOR—YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT THE MILITARY ACTION?

Mm-hmm. And I think our preparedness. My biggest fear was we'd jump right in and end up in this big war and thousands of more people killed. And I figured we'd end up with more of a tragedy. And I am so glad we're easing into it and taking time and looking at this and we're really assessing who did what before we jump in with both feet.

MODERATOR—OKAY, WHO ELSE?

I'll be honest with you why I would be. Most of the Republicans, their campaigns, have been for smaller government which I agree with. They seem a little bit more, and this is my opinion, a little more level headed. What I don't like is they tend to be for big business, and that would be a real negative for me. If I could tell them what I think. It would be for the big business things they do, giving all the big businesses these tax cuts and pulls and stuff. But I'm personally for smaller government.

MODERATOR—HOW ABOUT GOOD REASONS TO VOTE FOR DEMOCRATS?

Health care policies. I think that they have good ideas on health care. They're trying to have health care for everybody. They want everybody have good health care. And education, putting money into education. To go back with your one little handout here, I think the Democrats are more level headed. They assess the future more than the Republicans do. The Republicans seem to go for big business, and I think the Democrats are more for the little man. Maybe big government, but little people.

It's like Democrats support the local people more. The agencies are, an example like DHS. We wonder why the case like [Shelby Wat-now] wasn't reported, it's because there are too many cuts there. The Democrats will keep the agencies and the Republicans put those agencies on the butchering block in favor of big business.

MODERATOR—FLIP TO HANDOUT NINE. (INSTRUCTIONS)

(end of session)