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Transcript of 12-12-2007 Republican debate

(Note: This is a raw transcript of the debate. An edited version will replace this one when it is available.)

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They've blanketed the state to secure support for their presidential aspirations. The candidates are unified in their quest to retain the White House. But party faithful are still largely uncommitted. Today a large field of candidates will confront the issues that are important to their party, to Iowa, and to the nation. From the studios of Iowa Public Television, this is "The Des Moines Register" presidential debate, the Republicans.

Hello, I'm Carolyn Washburn, editor of the Des Moines Register, and welcome today one of the Des Moines Register debates. Today we're going to talk with nine Republican candidates for president of the United States. The Democrats have spent lots of quality time in debates during this campaign, but this is the first time since summer that the Republicans have gone head to head in Iowa, and it's a critical time. Six in 10 Iowa Republicans who say they expect to caucus told us just two weeks ago that they could still be persuaded to support another candidate, and now we're down to 22 days to go. So we're going to focus on issues Iowans say they still want to know more about. We won't talk a lot about issues like Iraq or immigration. They are important issues, no doubt, but Iowans say they know where the candidates are coming from on those. Instead we'll dig in on issues that need more clarification. Iraq or immigration may come up because, of course, everything is interrelated, but we're not going to spend concentrated time on those. First, I'd like to welcome the candidates. Rudy Giuliani, former mayor of the city of New York. Congressman Duncan Hunter of California. Congressman Ron Paul of Texas. Congressman Tom Tancredo, Colorado. Former senator Fred Thompson of Tennessee. Mitt Romney, former governor of Massachusetts. Former governor Mike Huckabee of Arkansas. Senator John McCain of Arizona. And ambassador Alan Keyes of Maryland.

Thanks to all of you for being with us today despite the ice yesterday. The rules are pretty simple. I'll ask the questions and let you know how much time you have. There are timing lights, you'll see a yellow light when you have 10 seconds left and a red light when it's, please, time to stop. I will try not to be a Grinch about it, but I do ask you to respect the time so that we cover as much time as possible. I will offer up to 30 seconds of rebuttal time for any candidate criticized by name, and I may allow other candidates to respond if we have time. I'll explain everything as we go along, so let's begin. We're going to start with a discussion about the financial situation facing our country, which was the single biggest issue lowans of both parties wanted you to talk about. I'd like to ask everyone briefly to answer this question, and then we're going to talk more specifically. The comptroller general has said the U.S. faces a tsunami of debt that is a great threat to our national security. Do you agree our country's financial situation creates a security risk, and why are why not? We're going to just go down the line starting with Mayor Giuliani, and, please, limit your answers on this to 30 seconds. I believe that it's a major problem, and it's one that hasn't been addressed the way it should be over the course of the last seven, eight, maybe really 20 years, and there are three major things we have to do. First, we have to reduce government spending, and we have to be disciplined about that. And we have to do it by imposing spending caps on spending agencies in government, 5, 10, 15%. Say we're not going to rehire half of the civilian employees coming up for retirement, they should not be rehired. That would give us a \$20 billion, \$22 billion reduction, the other would even be higher, and then we have to reduce taxes. Right now we should reduce the corporate tax to 25%. It'd be a major boost in revenues for the government. Most importantly, it would be a way of dealing with our fiscal policy in the same way the fed is dealing with our monetary policy to create more liquidity, and there are other taxes we should get rid of. The death tax and a whole group of others.

Okay. Yes or, no i just want to be sure i'm clear, is the a threat to our national security. Yes or no, please.

I wouldn't call it national security, i think that islamic terrorism is national security. Economic security is also important.

There are two debts to the national security, one is the budget deficit, but the real deficit, the real loss that we have right now that is a threat to national security is a trade loss. The trade loss this year is going to be \$800 billion. It's going to be \$200 billion to communist china which is rapidly becoming our banker. And there's an old saying you don't want to have a banker that doesn't have your best interests at heart. We should level the playing field, bring back a lot of those high-paying manufacturing jobs to this country that we pushed offshore. That means bigger paychecks, more money going into the federal treasury and to social security and to medicare. Eliminate those twin debt sits, and we'll be on the right track.

We do need to stay at 30 seconds, this is not the time to get behind. Congressman?

It's absolutely a threat because we've spent too much, we borrow too much, and we print too much. When a country spends beyond its means, eventually it will destroy the currency, and we're in the midst of a currency crisis. Our dollar is going down rapidly as we speak. It's because we have lived beyond our means, we can't afford the foreign policy we have. We have to cut back, live within our means. If we're going to spend money, spend it at home, and that is why we have to change this foreign policy. We can't afford to do what we're doing today, because it will destroy our dollar.

The reason why it becomes a national security problem is because the bulk of our imbalance of trade is a result of our importation of oil from countries that are not our friends. That's really where it rests. Most of the rest of the stuff we bring in doesn't constitute that kind of threat to the united states, but when we are supplying funds, supplying the funds for the people in other countries that have an intent, a malicious intent in regard to the united states, it's a national security issue. So, of course, energy independence is one huge step in the direction of trying to alleviate that problem.

Senator?

Our country has a \$9 trillion debt, a good chunk of that is owned by china. We're bankrupting the next generation without any question. Every economist in washington who's looked at it will tell you that. It affects our national security for one reason is because we're squeezing military spending. We're spending at below historic norms under these circumstances for our defense, and we're spending twice as much for entitlements. That's why i put out a specific social security plan that'll save social security while saving the government \$4 trillion. It's all in entitlements. We've got to spend more for the military, as a matter of fact, but we've got to look at social security and medicare and do some things now that won't hurt anybody badly but will save it for the next generation.

Governor?

This is, indeed, a time of extraordinary challenges in this country, and the overspending in washington and the overpromises that we've made are certainly among those challenges, but this is not a time for us to wring our hands and think that the future is bleak. In fact, the future is bright. We need leadership in washington that will rein in excessive spending, and we also need leadership that will help america grow. The best answer is to make sure we have good jobs for our suicides, good health care for everyone, and that we have policy that is promote the growth of the nation. We can have a level playing field around the world, get ourselves off foreign oil, reduce the excessive spend

anything washington, and have a bright future for our kids. This, again s based upon the strength of the american people. If you want to see a strong america, you don't look to washington, you look to strength in the american people.

It's most certainly a national security threat because a country can only be free if it can do three things, first it has to be able to feed itself, to be able to put food on the table for its own citizens. Secondly, it's got to be able to fuel it's itself. And it also has to be able to fight for itself. It's got to be able to manufacture its own weapons for defense. When we start outsourcing everything, and we're in that kind of a trade deficit, just remember who feeds us, who fuels it, and who helps us to fight, that's to whom we're enslaved. If we didn't do those things, our national security is very much at risk.

Of course any nation that no longer has economic strength sooner or later will lose its military strength, so it's a national security issue. Obviously, we've been on a spending spree. We cannot increase taxes. If oil reaches \$100 a barrel, which many people think it may, \$ho 0 -- \$400 million of the treasury will go to oil-producing countries, some of those monies will go to terrorist organizations. We have got to achieve energy independence, oil independence in this nation. I will make it a manhattan project, and we will, in five years, become oil independent.

Ambassador?

I think it's obviously a national security problem, but you have to understand what national security is. The constitution defines it as securing the blessings of liberty. You want to secure the blessings of liberty for the american people you cut off the spigot by abolishing the income tax and restoring control of 100% of their income. Replace it with a fair tax system that puts the american people in control of their money. By doing that you will encourage the politicians to stop spending to fund their little political cliques and only limit their spending to what produces results for the american people.

Thank you. Want to dig into the budget issue a little bit more. You'll have 30 seconds to answer this next yes and, again, i want to start with mayor giuliani. What sacrifices would you ask americans to make to lower the country's debt, and i'd like you to be specific.

I think the most important thing is the federal government has to restrain its spending. That's the area in which we're hurting ourselves and in which we're creating this problem, national security, economic security, however you define it. The problem is not the american people. What we should be doing is restraining the amount of money that washington spends in a concerted way with major reductions in civilian spending and returning, actually leaving more money in the pockets of the american people. The strength of america is not its central government, the strength of america are its people. Restrain the central government, give people more choice, more money to spend, we're going to see our

economy booming. That's the kind of future where we can have dreams.

You've said you would cut nonmilitary spending 10% across the board. What sort of sacrifices would that require from people who use those government services?

That would require them trying to figure out other ways to do it rather than moving in the direction of more people on government medicine, I'd rather see us reduce the income tax burden, create an exemption for health care, so that's going to require they take a little more time, take a little more ownership of their health care, but rather than relying on government as the nanny government, let's rely on people to make choices about their health care. Let's rely on 50, 60, 70 million buying their own health insurance. That's an American solution. It's a bold one, but it's the kind of thing America's done in the past. We rely on our people, not on our government.

Thank you. Congressman Paul, what sacrifices would you ask Americans to make for debt reduction?

I think it's unnecessary to sacrifice. We want to give people more freedom, more chance to spend their own money. It's unnecessary. We can cut by looking at our foreign policy. We maintain an empire which we can't afford. We're in 130 countries, we cut there. And then we have a better defense of this country and the people get that money, and they get to spend it here at home. There's no need to sacrifice, we need more liberty, more rights for the people to spend their own money, and in that situation, there is no sacrifice and no need for it.

So, Governor Huckabee, your colleagues seem to think there is no sacrifice needed to reduce the debt. Do you agree?

Sometimes it's not so much doing things so that people sacrifice, it's doing them differently. Let me give an example. A lot of the federal budget goes to health care. We need to do what most American companies are finding works in reducing costs, that's moving from the intervention-based health care model to prevention-based. We wait until people are catastrophically ill, and then we spend the most expensive ways of trying to cure incurable diseases. If we would put the focus on prevention, we would find like American business is finding, that there really is savings if you kill the snake rather than treat the snakebites, which is the way our current system is built.

Governor Romney, I'd like you to address this first. Are there programs that –

We don't have to run a deficit to pay for the things that are most important because we can limit the things that aren't critical. In the private sector you learn how to focus on the things that are most

important, and you get rid of the things that aren't. We have in the federal government 342 different economic development programs often administered by different departments. We don't need 342. We probably need a lot fewer than 100. We have 40 different programs for work force training. There are probably five or six that are really working. We can get rid of some of those. We have 13 different programs to prevent teenage pregnancy, they're obviously not working real well, and we could probably cut it down to one or two that are making a difference. What anyone in the private sector's learned how to do is to focus on those things that have the biggest impact. Surely protecting our country is critical. Getting our free market finally able to allow our citizens to have health insurance, that's something we did in massachusetts. Improving our schools with school choice, better pay for better teachers, they don't require us to eliminate the things that are most critical in our society. Instead they require us to get rid of those things that are unnecessary, and the sacrifice we need from the american people, it's this: it's saying let the programs that don't work go.

Thank you.

Don't lobby for them forever.

Thank you. Congressman tancredo, how would you answer that?

I would say there is a clear way to establish what the government needs to do in order to reduce the costs it incurs, and that is called follow the constitution of this country. The constitution is a limiting document. It tells the federal government what it can and cannot do. Today we do far too many things that exceed the constitutional bounds that are placed there. We have a responsibility. It is to protect and defend this country. Concentrate on that. Concentrate on doing what's right and what the constitution itself gives us the responsibility for, and the rest of that stuff becomes extraneous. And honestly, if you think about it, if you ask america what would you do, what would you sacrifice? The one thing i would ask -- say is this, don't ask the government for womb to tomb protection because all of that will cost a humongous amount of money, but we will respond to you, politician will do it because they want the votes. Don't ask, and i guarantee you my administration will remain inside the bounds of the institution.

Senator thompson, could you answer that? Are there programs or situations so important you'd be willing to run a deficit for them?

Yes, the military, the security of our people first and foremost always, our infrastructure which is coming apart. Research and development which is going to help us solve problems in the issues and a lot of other issues. But i want to take a chance on telling the truth to the american people. Our

entitlement programs, about 20 or 40 or so are going going to eat up our entire budget. Nobody else will talk about that obvious problem we've got to address. The thing about it is we can do it now without hurting those programs so that our kids and grand kids have them. I don't think we as american people are so selfish that we're going to kick the can down the road and let everybody else solve that problem, you know, when our grand kids get to be working age. That's not america, that's not what makes us strong. And specifically as far as medicare's concerned, we need to tell people in warren buffett's category we're not going to take care of your medicare in the future, we can't afford it.

Which leads nicely to the next question. I want to go down the line in reverse order and hear from everyone very briefly, please, 15 seconds or so, who in this country is paying more than a fair share of taxes relative to everyone else, the wealthy, the middle class, the poor, or corporations? Starting with mr. Keyes.

That's one of those let's you and he and fight because they'd like to pretend it's about fighting amongst ourselves. We need to start sacrificing some of these incumbents who have funded their –

Remember, we have 15 seconds.

Overboard into deficits after promising us on the republican side that they would limit the government and then produce the highest budget deficits in our country. I think we need to stop listening to these phonies and start looking for people who will actually fulfill the words that they speak, that's what i think.

I'm happy to say low-income americans except for payroll taxes don't pay taxes, but we've got to reform the tax code. Nobody understands it, nobody trusts it, nobody believes in it, and we have to fix it. And we can't raise taxes as our democrat friends want. So i don't know exactly who's paying the most of the burden, but i would say that the american people need a tax code they can understand and that they know is fair.

Governor huckabee?

Over 80% of the american people know that the tax code is broken. I would lead one to a fair tax, and that means the rich people aren't going to be made poor, but maybe the poor people could be made rich. That ought to be the goal of any tax system, not to punish somebody but to enable somebody. The fair tax does just that.

Governor romney.

I don't stay awake at night worrying about the taxes that rich people are paying, i'm concerned about the taxes middle-class people are paying. Gasoline's expensive, home heating oil, health care costs are going through the roof, education costs and higher education are overwhelming, and as a result we need to reduce the burden on middle-income families in this country.

Okay. A little snappier, gentlemen. Senator thompson?

My goal is to get in the mitt romney situation where i don't have to worry about taxes anymore.

[laughter]

Well, you know, you're getting to be a pretty good actor actually.

[laughter]

5% of americans pay over half the income taxes in this country, 40% of americans pay no income taxes at all. I think we need to concentrate on preserving the tax cuts of '00 and '03.

Congressman?

Everyone that is presently paying tax can make a case that they're paying too much. The reality is, of course, you need a different system entirely. We do need to move away from that system that taxes productivity to a system that allows for a fair tax. I believe in that.

Thank you. Congressman?

The most sinister of all taxes is the inflation tax, and it's the most regressive. When you destroy a currency by creating money out of thin air to pay the bills, the value of the dollar goes down and people get hit with a higher cost of living. It's the middle class that's being wiped out, it is the most evil of all taxes.

The tax that we're all paying that doesn't help anything, it doesn't go to defense, roads, medical care is a \$250 billion plus that we pay each year not to the federal government to the treasury, but to prepare our taxes, defend our taxes, and for the massive cost of the irs. That's all overhead, \$250 billion-plus dollars. We ought to have a system, a fair-tax system is a good one or a flatter tax or simpler tax because that young couple that would pay \$1500 in taxes may pay \$450 to their tax

prepare.

A flatter tax is simply a tax that you can file on one page would be a good idea. Reducing income tax rates across the board which would mostly benefit the middle class, that's where the focus should be, but we've got to reduce taxes across the board, and we should give the death penalty to the death tax.

Thank you. Periodically throughout the debate we'll give each of the candidates 30 seconds to make a free statement. The candidates drew for the order, and we'll hear from the first two candidates now, senator mccain followed by congressman hunter.

Thank you. I've devoted my life to keeping this nation safe. I've been involved in every major national security issue of our time. That kind of experience is what's given me judgment. The judgment to oppose a failed strategy in iraq, a judgment to call for the strategy that's succeeding now, and i wasn't very popular because of it. I have the judgment and the experience, and i believe that i can ask every american to serve. I have one guiding principle, one ambition and that is to keep america safe and to achieve and maintain our greatness.

Congressman hunter?

I stand for a strong national defense, enforceable borders and bringing back high-paying manufacturing jobs to this country that we've pushed offshore. I've been a member of the armed services committee for 26 years, and i've chaired that committee for four years, and i'm one of the few guys up here who's worn the uniform of the united states, and my own son has done three tours. I also built that border fence in san diego that wrote so well, and i wrote the law that takes it across arizona, new mexico, and texas, and as president i will finish that border innocence six months.

Thank you. Want to come back to some issue that is affect the economy. You'll have 30 seconds again, 30 seconds to answer these questions, and we're going to start with congressman paul. One in five jobs in iowa depends on exports to foreign countries. But we're also exporting a lot of high-wage manufacturing jobs. What's your plan for keeping foreign markets open while protecting good-paying american jobs?

Well, we need to adopt free trade agreements with other countries. Today we inhibit the export of, say, farm products to countries like cuba. It's time we changed our attitude about cuba. We should be looking to open these markets. But our markets get closed for monetary reasons because our chief export is our dollar because we have the reserve currency of the world, people take these dollars and

our jobs go overseas. You can't solve these problem ifs you don't look at the monetary system and how it contributes to these job losses in order to provide prosperity for our people here at home.

Governor romney, would you answer that?

Yeah, i've spent the last, as i told you, 25 years in the private sector. I understand why jobs come and go. I've done business in over 20 countries around the world, and i understand how we can build strength in our economy, and that's by invest anything education, technology, innovation, getting ourselves off foreign oil, and making sure the playing field is level. It's not right now. We're going to have to renegotiate deals with people like those in china. We want to make sure we do not have a circumstance where people close down their markets to our goods because we can competeer in in the -- compete anywhere in the world. Don't put up barrier that is keep us from being able to trade. America can compete anywhere in the world, and to remain a superpower, we must compete around the world.

Governor huckabee?

Well, job migration is a result of three things, excessive taxation that penalizes the productivity of a company, you add to excessive regulation which means you've got more red tape than is possible to get through. And i would say as president one of my goals would be i can't part the red sea, but i believe i can part the red tape. The third thing is we've got too much litigation. When a company goes into business, particularly small business, most small business people can't fight off the potential liabilities that they come from all of the lawsuits in litigation. Take care of those three things, we won't see the incredible level of job migration that we see today.

Thank you. Some of our big trading partners commit human rights violations. Considering that poverty and abuse are often blamed for fostering terrorism, should we alter trade policies with those countries? Senator mccain?

Well, obviously, we should make sure that every nation respects human rights, and we should advocate that and try to enforce it. But i will open every market in the world to iowa's agricultural products. I'm the biggest free marketer and free trader that you will ever see. And i will also eliminate subsidies on ethanol and other agricultural products. They are an impediment to competition, they are an impediment to free markets, and i believe that subsidies are a mistake, and i don't believe that anybody can stand here and say that they're a fiscal conservative and yet support subsidies that destroy our ability to compete in the road and destroy our ability to get cheaper products into the united states of america.

I'm going to move to the next question. What specific changes should be made in nafta? Mayor giuliani?

I think the main thing is it should be enforced, and the reality is nafta's been a good thing. I was concerned about nafta, and i became convinced watching it that it's actually helped us. Our percentage of exports, percentage of gdp has gone up dramatically, it's brought more jobs to america. America should think about free trade, global economy as something we want to embrace. This is what we've always wanted. America's a country of entrepreneurs and dreamers and creators, and what we should be thinking about is how much can we sell to these people as they're coming out of poverty? 20 million, 30 million people in india, china, these are new customers for the united states. We shouldn't lose the goal of free trade. We're big dreamers here in this country, we've got plenty we can sell all over the world that'll make up for what we're buying.

Senator thompson, what specific changes would you make to nafta?

I think free trade and fair trade has been the backbone of our economy. I think it's been just as good for us as it has for mexico, i think mexico needs to think about that when they criticize us for expanding our borders. It's been a good thing for both countries. It's a long, complex document. I have nothing in particular to point out, i just think we need to make a commitment to free and fair trade and enforce the agreements that we've got. The problem is too many people close their markets to us. They want trade with us, but they want to place restrictions to our farmers. We can't stand for that.

Congressman tancredo.

It's been a disaster for a lot of places and especially mexico. Southern mexico, it was a disaster. Guess what happened? They all came north. If nafta had worked so well as everybody appears to think it did, why would we still have so much pressure on our southern border trying to escape from a country that does not provide them the opportunities that nafta promised? Also the lack of sovereignty, the fact that our borders are now meaningless, the fact that mexican truck cans come across without being checked. These are the problems with nafta, and they have to be unwound.

Congressman hunter, you want inside on that?

Absolutely. We had a surplus with mexico when we passed nafta. Today we have a massive trade loss. We went immediately to a \$15 billion a trade loss. We've had that, now, for the last many years,

and let me tell ya, if you take your product, made in iowa, down to the mexican border right now and try to get it across, you will pay a saw % -- 15% tariff which they moved into place after we passed nafta. We haven't made good business deals between nations, and nafta is a bad business deal.

Want to move on and hear the three statements from our next two candidates, congressman paul first and then senator thompson.

The goal of all political action should be to preserve liberty. We need more freedom in this country, we need to look to ourselves and what we are doing. We have drifted so far from our constitution that the government, that the constitution was written to restrain our government, yet we've turned around and the constitution now is used to restrain the people. But we have no chance if we don't restrain the government all that they do in undermining our personal liberties, controlling our economic well being and using it as an excuse to police the world. If we don't change the role for government, this country is going to suffer a very, very serious economic crisis.

Senator thompson?

On all these issues i've been a strong, consistent, common sense conservative. But the most important issue facing our country and will be for a long time is national security and the safety of our people. I've spent a lot of time both in and out of government traveling, talking to foreign leaders, dealing with these issues. I know the world we live in, i think i know what we need to do. I think it's going to require strong leadership, and i would ask people to think one thing, when our worst enemy's thinking about what he can do to the united states of america, who do you want sitting on our side of the table representing you? That's probably the guy you ought to elect president.

Thank you. I want to take on a new issue. I would like to see a show of hands, how many of you believe global climate change is a serious threat and caused by human activity?

I'm not doing hand shows today.

No hand shows.

No hand shows today.

I'm with him.

[applause]

Is that yes or no for you? Do you believe that global claimant change is a -- well, do you want to give me a minute?

No.

Well, then i'm not going to answer it.

[laughter]

[applause]

How about 30 seconds?

No, you know –

You want a show of hands. I'm not giving it to you.

We're going to follow up on that, but i need to know who believings global climate change is serious, and –

I do. I believe that global climate change –

Change is real –

Let's have a chance to talk about it.

I'm going to start with –

Involved in this issue since the year 2000. I have had hearings, i've traveled the world, i know that climate change is real. But let me put it to you this way, suppose that climate change is not real and all we do is adopt green technologies which our economy and technology is perfectly capable of, then all we've done is given our kids a cleaner world. But suppose they're wrong, suppose they're wrong and climate change is real and we've done nothing? What kind of a planet are we going to pass on to the next generation of americans? It's real, we've got to address it, we can do it with technology, with cap and trade, with capitalist and free enterprise motivation, and i'm confident that we can pass on to our children and grandchildren a cleaner, better world.

Mayor giuliani?

I agree with john. Climate change is real, it's happening, i believe human beings are contributing to it. I think the best way to deal with it is through energy independence, and i think energy –

Who doesn't agree?

He said contributing but not totally –

Yeah.

Okay.

[laughter]

And i think our party –

You're getting closer.

Give us each a chance?

And i think our party should embrace this as an issue for us.

Let me come at it this way, what impact on the economy would be acceptable in order to reverse global warming and greenhouse gas emissions? Governor romney?

Well, it's going to help our economy because we're going to invest in new technologies to get ourselves off of foreign oil, and as we do, we also dramatically reduce our co2 emissions. Because buying 300-400 billion a year in oil from people who use it against us, that's bad for our economy and our environment. We can do it in a way that helps the economy and the environment. That's the beauty of what we're talking about, is it something we can deal with by becoming energy independent and energy secure? We sure k. But we call it global warming, not america warming. So let's not put a burden on us alone and have the rest of the world skate by. It's a global effort, but our independence is something we can do unilaterally.

Mr. Keyes, what do you think about this?

Well, i think a lot of folks ought to understand that what you're watching represents the situation in our country. Ask yourself who represents the people they don't let you hear from? And you'll know who you should vote for in the iowa caucuses. Who represents the voice that they're absolutely determined to overlook in the discussion of our sovereignty and the betrayal of this people's sovereignty? On the border, on our moral principles, on the major export overseas which is our jobs. These folks represent the very elite who year after year after year have destroyed our constitution and undermined our strength created by our people in the world.

Ambassador?

And jet the one person willing to talk about that is overlooked time and time again.

I agree with alan keyes position on global warming.

[laughter]

Yeah.

Mostly i would have to say i'm in favor.

Let me -- let me --

I'm in favor of reducing global warming because i think the most important emission we need to control is the hot air of the politicians who pretend one thing and don't deliver.

Absolutely.

Doctor, heal thyself.

Let me come to a question that iowans may not let you out of answering. Governor huckabee, you've said you support increasing government mandates requiring motors use six times what we're producing this year. Are you willing to increase that mandate even if it will drive up feed for lyestock -- livestock producers?

I don't think that's what's necessary, and the reason this issue ought to be important is because we don't own this earth. We are simply stewards of it, caretakers. And i know on a day like today it's hard

to believe there is global warming if anybody's been in iowa on a day like today, but climate change and who's causing it is of importance, senator mccain's right. We have done no harm if we take care of this planet.

Are you willing to increase the mandate?

I am willing for us to make the decisions which will not necessarily create the mandates. You know who one of the biggest energy users is in the whole country? The united states government if the government commits to being the primary user of alternative sources of energy, we have a market built in and, therefore, the big argument against having alternative energy is there's no market for it. Well, let the government be a marketplace, and we'll create the kind of demand that lowers the price rather than raises the price.

Congressman hunter?

Instead of mandates, incentives. The problem with mandating only biofuels, and, you know, ethanol's not the greatest thing in show business. You use a lot of energy to create ethanol, and there's other fuels out there, but by giving incentives in r and d and by bringing our government laboratories together with business, the united states can become the center with a grand new industry of energy innovation. We can be the leaders in the world until this. But you don't want to push away things like hydrogen, fuel cells and other things. Incentives is the way to go, and we should take the entire array of alternative energy sources and give incentives to private enterprise to get involved and get into the business of delivering us a great product. And we can produce a great new industry for this next generation.

Congressman tancredo? What would you do about mandates?

No, i don't believe in man daises -- mandates, i believe the market is the best determinant. I do not mind and i would not oppose research and development, but the idea that the government knows the right amount somehow, some way, some brilliant analyst will make a decision about what is the right amount of mandate to impose on the rest of the country? And you know what? It never works out right. Let the market -- i trust the market more than i do the government.

Let's hear free statements from two more candidates, first congressman tancredo and then governor huckabee.

We have had 45 years of unlimited immigration both legal and illegal into this country. That is a

problem, unlimited massive immigration is a problem. But when it happens without the same amount of assimilation, it becomes a catastrophe. It will become what teddy roosevelt warned of when he said you can have immigration, but if it happens without assimilation, all you end up with is not a nation, but a boarding house. Some of my friends on the stage both governors and senators say we should trust their judgment. Well, their judgment is what got us into this problem, so we need to trust somebody else to get us out.

Governor huckabee?

I think people are looking for leadership, for change, they're not looking for people to be elected to be so much a ruling class but a servant class. We've forgotten that. Our founding fathers had a brilliant, really revolutionary idea, that the people elected would not represent the elite but would represent the ordinary. Our founding fathers had the idea that when we are elected, we're not elected as a part to be elevated up but to truly remember who it is we work for. I think sometimes that's what's happened in america. We forget our job is to keep this country safe first and foremost, and to try to encourage americans to be the best at everything they do. It's a long way from the little rent house i grew up n to this stage. I'm still in awe this country would afford me the opportunity to be president. I'll try not to forget where i come from and where this country needs to go.

Thank you. A new topic that some iowans say hasn't had enough debate, and that's education. American 15-year-olds ranked behind 16 other countries in science literacy. What educational standards does the u.s. need to adopt or improve to compete in the global economy, and what will you do to move us toward those standards, and what's your timetable? Senator mccain?

The answer to the problem in education in america is simple, we need more choice and more competition. Entrance by a good student into college today, they have a number of choices, and people are seeking them to be part of those educational institutionings. We need competition in k-12, we need charter schools, we need vouchers where it's approved by the local state and school boards, we need to have, clearly, home schooling if people want that. We need to reward good teachers and find bad teachers another line of work. We need to have all of these compete n. My home state of arizona we have charter schools, some have failed, but they're competing with the public school, and the level of education is increasing. In new york city today there's a remarkable thing happening under mayor bloomberg and joel klein who have done marvelous work with an educational system that was clearly broken. Those can be examples of a way to improve education in america, provide choice in competition, and give every american family the same choice i and my family had, and that is to send our child to the school of our choice.

Thank you. Mayor Giuliani?

I'm here because of the educational choices my parents made, or I wouldn't be here or have achieved anything that I've achieved, and that's the place where the decision should be made. Instead of having education standards done in Washington by bureaucrats in a state capital or in a board, the choice should be made by parents. The same way people choose higher education, has it ever occurred to us that higher education is still the very, very best in the world, and you're asking me about K-12?

Well, higher education is based on choice, it's based on a large consumer market, it's based on competition. It's the area of K-12 where we have this government command sort of approach, and if we give the choice to parents they can choose public school, charter school, home school, let them be the decider, I think we'll see a big revolution.

Congressman Hunter?

Three words, a math teacher in the barrio of Los Angeles taught young kids calculus, the school district thought the kids were cheating. And he established this incredible system of calculus by inspiring young people. How many of us point back to a teacher and say that teacher inspired me? We have to take away the bureaucratic credentialing over teachers and allow people who are scientists and retired folks to come in and inspire young people in third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh grades, let's inspire them to reach for the stars and give them the incentive to reach there. Inspiration, changing the credentialing system and school choice.

Hasn't that teacher since left the public school system?

And you know why? The unions ran him out of the school district, and I think that goes right to one of the big problems that we have.

If we need to improve our education system quickly to be more competitive in the world, does the federal government need to exercise different influence than it has historically over educational standards? If so, in what ways, and if not, how do you encourage state to meet national goals to move us forward?

These are 60-second answers, right?

Yes.

Okay, let's make sure. The president was right to fight for no child left behind because we allow states to test our kids and see how they're doing in math and english. We've made the same effort in our state, we test our kids, we have high standards. We teach them in english, english immersion. We say to be successful in america, you've got to speak the language of america. We also put in place incentives for kids to do well. For those who take the graduation exam, we say you're going to get if you score in the top 25% a four-year tuition free –

But what about the role of the federal government?

And the federal government insists on those tests and standards, and it's key. Let me continue. We also have to have higher pay for better teachers, and finally, we need more parental involvement, and we've tested our kids in massachusetts along with the other kids in the nation, my eighth graders came out number one in english, came out number one in math, my fourth graders number one in english, first time in one state number one in all four measures. School choice, better pay for better teachers, high standards, scholarships for the best kids, these principles work.

Governor huckabee?

First of all, the whole role of session a state issue, it's not really a federal issue, and the worst thing we can do is shift more authority to the federal government. But i think the government can play a pivotal role primarily in helping to make sure that the best practices that are working in the states are shared with states who are struggling. Let me give you a couple of examples of what has to happen the federal government can share the data and information. One, personalize the learning for the student. We have 6,000 kids every day drop out in this country. They drop out because they're bored to death. They're in a 19th century education system in a 21st century world. If we really are serious, first of all, we make sure we build the curriculum around their interests rather than push them into something they don't care. Second thing, unleash weapons of mass instruction. I'm a passionate, ardent supporter of having music and art in every school for every student at every grade level –

Time.

Because let me understand you -- make sure you understand why. If we don't develop the right side with the same level of attention as we do the left side, the logical side of the brain, we end up with a bored student.

Congressman paul, what's the biggest obstacle –

Excuse me, do i have to raise my hand?

I'm getting to you.

No, you're not. You haven't in several go rounds, so i have to make an issue out of it. I would like to address the issue of education.

Go ahead you have 30 seconds.

Your unfairness is now becoming so apparent that the voters in iowa must understand there's a reason for it, and the reason is what i'm about to say. Governor huckabee just addressed the question of education claiming that he is the spokesman, do you know the major problem? We allowed the judges to drive god out of our schools. We allowed the moral foundation of this republic which is that we are created equal and endowed by our creator, not by our constitution or our leaders with our rights. If we don't teach our children that heritage and the moral culture that goes along with it, we cannot remain free, they will not be disciplined to learn science, to learn math, to learn history, to learn anything. And they don't want to talk about this except when they're squabbling about their own personal faith and forgetting that we have a national creed. And that national creed needs to be taught to our children so that whether they were scientists or businessmen or lawyers they will stand on the solid ground of a moral education that gives them the discipline they need to serve the right, to exercise their freedom with dignity, and to defend justice because they understand it is our heritage.

Congressman paul, what's the biggest obstacle standing in the way of improving education in the united states, and how would you address it?

Probably the federal government. We've been involved at the federal level for over 50 years, we've had a department of education, we finally get in charge and a chance to do something, so we double the size of the department of education, and we have no child left behind. The teachers don't like it, the quality of education hasn't gone up, the cost of education has gone up. So we need to look to our local resources, we need to release the creative energy of the teachers at the local level, but what we can do immediately is to give tax credits. I have a bill that would give tax credits to the teachers to raise their salaries. At the same time we should encourage home schooling. The parents have to get control of the education. It used to be parents had control of education through local school boards. Today it's the judicial system and the executive branch of government, the bureaucracy that controls things, and it would be predictable that the quality would go down. The money goes to the bureaucrats and not to this educational system at home.

Thank you. Senator thompson?

The question was what's the biggest impediment to education? The biggest obstacle, in my opinion, is the national education association. The nea. I read time and time again every time someone wants to inject a little choice into the equation for the benefit of the kids, inject a little freedom, inject a little competition because we're not exactly doing that well because of the things that you pointed out earlier, the nea is there to oppose it and bring in millions and millions of dollars to go on television and work and scare people and misrepresent the situation on the ground. I think that that just goes against everything that we know that can make progress in this country. We're a nation of freedom and innovation and choice, and well to do people are out in the suburbs, they don't seem to care that much. Inner city need a chance to enjoy the choice that the mayor's talking about for colleges and universities. Other people have a choice too. Let's give it to everybody else, and let's stop people from standing in the way of that.

Thank you. Congressman tancredo, what's your take?

I had the opportunity to serve under ronald reagan as the regional director for the u.s. department of education. We knew we couldn't legislatively get rid of it, although we wanted to. We went from about 222 people, it took us about four or five years to get down to about 60 people. We've gotten rid of 90% of the people in this department, has anybody been able to tell the difference? Do you know what? Not a single soul said they had. If you'd go to zero we wouldn't have known the difference. It's an encumbrance on our attempt to actually teach children in this country as is the federal government and its intervention and rules. But i don't think, governor, with all due respect you can't say on one hand you're against government intervention and then tell us you want music and art in a school. It is the job of a governor.

Governor huckabee, would you like a rebuttal?

Well, i made clear to the congressman that i suggested federal government become the clearinghouse. I was a governor ten-and-a-half years, i had executive experience longer than anyone on this stage running a government, and i had also the most, i think, impressive education record. And you know what? I looked for things that other states were doing that worked. We raised standards, we measured, and we held people accountable for the results. Any time you give governors the opportunity to know what will work, they'll use it because it means jobs, it means economic development. That's exactly the only reason. If anyone doubts the president ought not use the bully pull pretty, i would say the second most job of importance to the president is to be the

communicator in chief. And we're losing a lot of kids in this country. A third don't graduate. For a president to say that's none of my business? It's recklessly irresponsible. A president needs to say it's unacceptable that that many kids leave our schools every single day.

Okay. Governor Romney.

Just one small adjustment to what Governor Huckabee had to say, and I don't believe you had the finest record of any governor because there's another one on the stand whose kids outperformed me. The kids in our state, as I indicated, scored number one in all four measures on the national exams, and they did that because of free market principles, and it was a partnership. You see education is not just the teachers union, I agree with Senator Thompson on that. They've been the biggest obstacle to change in education. It's not just one side of this, it's teachers, it's parents, it's the state, it's federal government, it's all levels coming together and working together for the benefit of our kids. And we face right now an education challenge that's really unusual. We're behind. America's behind in education. Our kids score in the bottom 10-25% in exams around the world, and we've got to have the kind of change that requires all of us working together, not just poking and saying it's someone else's job.

Thank you. In light of the big needs and the financial realities we've just discussed up to this point, realistically what do you believe you could accomplish in your first year as president? We're going to go down the line starting with Mr. Giuliani so that everyone gets a chance to talk, I need you to keep your remarks to 30 seconds.

We can make sure the country is secure against Islamic terrorism. We could end illegal immigration by beginning a border state. We could begin it. We could do a major tax reduction, the ones that I indicated early. I would immediately begin to reduce the size of the federal government the way I did when I was mayor of New York, and I would move toward energy independence as a goal similar to putting a man on the moon, the Manhattan project, you can use a lot of ways to describe the nature of it, but I would make sure we would find energy independence. You need bold leadership to accomplish that, and I think I can do that.

Congressman?

First you've got to strengthen the U.S. military. We have to look at the horizon and see the emergence of North Korea with nuclear capability, Iran proceeding on that path despite what the NIE says and also the emergence of Communist China. And also strengthen our border, enforcing the U.S. border. That means building the border fence and making sure we know who's coming into this country. Lastly,

bringing back the industrial base of the unite. It's being sent off to china and other places around the world which also is a security threat. Bringing back high-paying manufacturing jobs to this country that will serve this next generation well.

Thank you. That's a tall order for a year. Congressman paul?

You would have to work with a congress, but a commander in chief could end the war. We could bring our troops home. That would be very valuable. We could be diplomatically, we could become credible once again around the world. Right now today we're not. Even our allies resent what we do. We would have no more preemptive war, we would threaten nobody. Now it is proven once again iraq didn't have the nuclear weapons, the iranians have no nuclear weapons, there's no need for us to threaten the iranians. I think this would be a major step toward peace.

Thank you.

First five minutes after taking office i would free ramos and -- that's for sure. The second thing is enforcing the law inside the united states against hiring people who are here illegally. Then i would use that bully pulpit that the governor talked about, absolutely accurate in terms of the importance of it, for a president of the united states. For this reason to explain that it is, in fact, a war is not going on in iraq. That's a battle. We are fighting a war against radical islam. It is a threat to our existence as a nation, it's a threat to western civilization. It will take someone who's willing to say that and lead western civilization in this clash.

Thank you. Senator thompson, your first year?

Well, it wouldn't take me a year. I'd go before the american people and tell them the truth and try to establish my credibility and tell 'em that we haven't come to terms, yet, with the nature of the threat that we're facing or what we're going to have to do over the years. I'd tell them we're bankrupting the next generation, and nobody wants to talk about it, much less do anything about it. I'd tell them that judges are setting our social policy now in this country, and that's going to stop, and then i'd bring in members of congress and say, look, i just got a mandate. We can work and cooperate together or i'll go over your head to the american people.

Governor romney.

I want to do more than talk in my first year. First of all, i want to establish a strategy to help us overwhelm global jihad and keep the world safe. I want to end illegal immigration, we can get that

done. I want to end the expansion growth of entitlements, rein 'em in, and i want to keep our tax burden down and reduce our tax burden on middle-income families. I want to get us on a track to become energy independent, get our schools on track to become competitive globally. I'll get us on track. We'll have a stronger military, a stronger economy, and stronger values with stronger families after my first year in office.

Governor huckabee?

Well, i like the laundry list that everybody's had, and i would agree that every one of those things is important. Reality is none of that's going to happen until we bring the country back together. I think the first priority is to be a president of all the united states. We are right now a polarized country, and that's led to a paralyzed government. We've got democrats who fight republicans, liberals fighting conservatives, the lefts fight the right, who's fighting for this country? We've got to quit fighting amongst ourselves and start putting the better interests of this nation. If that doesn't happen, we'll get none of these things done. We've got to be the united people of a united states, and a president has got to somehow remind us that we are a great, resilient nation that has to stick together to solve all of these problems.

Senator mccain?

Our first obligation and any qualifications lend to making america safe. We must make america safe. This is a military, diplomatic, intelligence, and cyberspace challenge. And i have a credentials and the knowledge and the background and the judgment to do that. The second most important thing if we're going to complete that laundry list is restore trust and confidence in government. There is none today. We have to fix medicare, we have to stop this wasteful pork barrel spending that has led to corruption in washington. Of course we have to fix our borders. We have to sit down together and fix medicare and social security. I can lead, i can inspire confidence and restore trust and confidence in their government again. That's the key to any success we want to achieve.

Ambassador?

What i would concentrate is on restoring the sovereignty of the people of this country. I would restore their moral sovereignty which is something i can do by declaring that no action taken by the executive branch would support, aid, or abet anyone who is destroying the constitutional rights of those in the womb. I would sign an order to that effect day one and we would reestablish this government's commitment to our posterity. You can't respect them if you're killing them in the womb, it doesn't make sense. And i would also want to abolish the income tax. We need to start talking about it and

talking about actually implementing the fair tax proposal that will end the wasteful spending by putting them under the discipline of a people who can actually withhold their taxes by changing their patterns of spending, and finally, i would establish a national border guard, i would see the borders of the united states so that only those who cross our borders are subject to our laws –

Thank you.

And i would encourage a real respect for the security that must be maintained along that border if we're serious about the war on terror.

We're going to move to the last three candidate statements. Governor romney has 30 seconds followed by mr. Keyes and finally, mayor giuliani.

I want to begin by saying thank you to the people of iowa. Over the last year my wife and i have visited many, many homes, over 70 town meetings, 67 counties. Josh, my son has visited all 99 counties. People here have warm hearts, and it's something that's made me feel good about america. Anybody who's worried about the future of this great land needs to come tom iowa and meet the people. People here also recognize we face real challenges, and they want somebody who will strengthen america. I know how to keep america strong. I know a lot about the economy. I'll make sure we keep good jobs. I've learned a lot about education and health care. I'll get our health care system working for all americans, and i'll make sure we have the kind of values that we can be proud of that are essential to the great strength of this nation, and i want to say to the people of iowa, i need your help. I'd like your vote. Thank you.

Mr. Keyes?

I think that the critical thing is what you need to do. If you really want to see a thing in government, then we need to restore the credibility of the republican party. A credibility that has been destroyed by the betrayal of the promises that resulted in outrageously high deficits. The betrayal along the border with the president telling us he suddenly discovered we didn't have a secure border six years into his term. And if you want to accomplish that, join the army soft political revival at alan keyes.com and make sure you become part of that change. We're not going to restore self-government until you become an active people not willing to take the inadequate choices you have.

Thank you. Thank you, mayor giuliani.

I've been tested by having to provide leadership through crisis, through difficult crises, not just

september 11 but in my time as united states attorney, associate attorney general, mayor of new york city, and america needs bold leadership. We have big problems. We have problems that we haven't faced in the past and solved. Problems about how to deal with terrorism effectively, problems about our border, problems about our economic security that we've talked about. And to do that we need bold leadership, we need the kind of ideas i've put forward in the 12 commitments but most importantly we need an optimistic leader who can bring us these kinds of solutions. I've gotten results in the past, i'd like the opportunity to do that for my country.

Thank you. Voters have told us that character and leadership qualities matter as much or more than many issues. Over the past few months we've asked candidates who have spent time in iowa about some of their core values, and we videotaped the answers. Since we're pitching web sites you can see the videos at desmoinesregister.com, but today we're going to see a few and then expand the conversation. Let's watch the first ones.

I would do this as president. I would go get people's opinions. I'd walk the streets, i'd go on radio, do a call-in show. It was the purpose of hearing what people had to say because maybe even with multiple sources of advice within government, maybe if the you don't hear from the people, you get the wrong perspective.

Legislation is a function of compromise. When you put together a budget, for example, a budget to increase defense spending and that budget may have also pork barrel programs that you don't like and you've promised your constituents you'll fight against pork barrel programs, in the end, if you vote for the budget of the united states, you vote for a lot of things.

Internet is delightful for finding the information, and if there's a question that i need, ask, you can find it. So i spend a lot of time getting information that was at one time in my life was very difficult to find. There should be no excuse in this country anymore for not finding correct answers and analyzing the problems that we face because the correct answers are out there and judgments should be made to the best of one's ability.

So this next set of questions is entirely about character and leadership. Mayor giuliani, your administration in new york has been accused of handling your security expenses in a way that obscured public disclosure. What specifically will you promise to do to insure that a giuliani white house is open with information that might be inconvenient to explain to the public?

Well, the reality is that all –

30 seconds, please.

All that information was available, and known to people, known six years ago, and i would make sure that government was transparent. My government in new york city was so transparent that they knew every single thing i did almost every time i did it. So i would be extremely, i would be extremely open.

[laughter]

I'm used to it, i'm used to being analyzed. I haven't had a perfect life, and i do the best that i can to learn from my mistakes. As far as open, transparent government, i think i've had both an open, transparent government and an open, transparent life, and it allows you to lead with ohioan city and truth.

Are there things that you could have done that would have been more open?

No, the reality is that this was a bookkeeping practice. The way it was done actually made it more available to freedom of information act requests. Had it been just done in the police department, nobody would have ever found it. Everything that was laid out a few weeks ago had been laid out six years ago. Very well known. Some of the things that i wish if i had led a perfect life would have happened differently, but it was all well known. I can't think of a public figure that's had a more transparent life than i've had.

Mr. Keyes, how would you guarantee an open white house?

I think the most important thing is to be authentic about the person you are. Not to take a stand on the most important principle that faces our nation today, en endowed by our creator with our inalienable rights and not to abandon the heritage of the republican party as rudy giuliani would do, so i would not support him if he were nominated. And finally, i think it would be important to do what i'm doing in my campaign. We have phone calls every week, people gather online to talk to me, interact, state their views. We have technologies that allow people to communicate directly with their leadership.

Governor romney, would you like to respond?

I'm not sure.

[laughter]

It's entirely up to you.

[applause]

This audience and the whole nation has heard time and time again the fact that i was effectively pro choice when i ran for office, when hi game governor of matts, the first time that a bill came to my desk i simply could not side with taking a life, and i took the side of life every issue that related to protecting the sanctity of life, i came down on the side of life. I'm pro-life, i'm not going to apologize. Ronald reagan followed the same course as did henry hyde, and i'm proud to be pro-life.

Mayor giuliani, would you like to respond?

I think i've explained my position on abortion which is that i oppose it, but i believe the government should leave that decision to a woman and her consciosus. I would like to see limitations on abortion. I've brought those about in new york city. We reduced abortions, we increased adoptions by 135%, but ultimately it's a position that i thought out a long time ago. For me it's a position of consciosus, and in spite of the fact that alan wouldn't vote for me, i'm not going to change.

[laughter]

[applause]

Senator thompson, you've expressed doubts that the recent report on iran's nuclear capabilities is accurate. As president how would you decide when to disagree with available intelligence, and then what would you do?

Well, that's probably the most important question that's been asked today. We have a real problem with our intelligence community. It along with certain parts of our military were neglected for a long, long time in this country, and we're paying the price now. The fact is nobody has any real confidence in the result that they're getting. The result you're talking about was directly contradicted by their strong beliefs just two years ago. So you've got to rebuild from the bottom up. I think that in the mean meantime, we have to rely on other people, the british are helpful to us, the israelis sometimes are helpful to us.

Thank you.

They have advancements that we don't have in terms of our intelligence capabilities, but the president

cannot –

Thank you.

Let a piece of paper by a bureaucrat solely determine what his actions must be.

Thank you. We're going to have to move on. Let's watch the next videos.

If a person says i'm a person of faith but i don't let it influence me or talk about it, they've just told me their faith is so immaterial, insignificant, and inconsequential it isn't a faith at all. If it's a faith it will drive their judgment and value system, and, therefore, it'll help find them.

I think the hardest thing in this age of struggle against radical islamic extremism is balancing the rights of everyone's privacy plus our ability to combat this great evil of radical islamic extremism, and that's why i think there has to be the participation of the courts, the legislature, the executive branch, and the american people to what measures we take.

Governor huckabee, you are distinguishing yourself from other candidates by focusing on faith. You say your faith doesn't just influence you, that it defines you. A person who chooses you for president, then, would expect that to translate to public policy, so give me two examples you've not previously given where your faith would define change you want to see in policy?

The two overriding principles are you treat others as you wish to be treated. In health care that means we recognize that the person who is sick shouldn't be treated differently because heir in poverty than a person who has extraordinary wealth. That we have some sense of balance in how we approach that. That's the essence of what america is about. The second basic principle is that in as much as you've done it to the least of these, my brethren, you've done it unto me. As it relates to health, education, or any policy. It really means you go back to what the founding fathers said, all of us are created equal, endowed by our create or with those rights –

But two specific changes in policy.

Well, i think i just tried to give them to you, both in education that everyone has an opportunity, that you have give education and health care, that you don't have some that are more equal than others. So there has to be a sense in which you have opportunity whether it's through choice in the education field, you have a curriculum that touches every child, not just a few, and in health care you don't have a health care system like congress has that is incredibly almost platinum. But there are a lot of americans who can't even go to the doctor and find out if they're critically ill or if they have a terminal

disease.

Thank you governor romney, as you look at the most pressing problems facing our country and the best opportunities to affect change in the next four years, do you think it's more important for the next president to be a fiscal conservative or social conservative?

I think it's incredibly important he be a conservative. We're not going to get the white house unless we can pull together the coalition of conservatives and conservative thought that has made us successful as a party. That's social conservatives and foreign policy and defense conservatives. Those three together form the three legs of the republican stool that allowed ronald reagan to get elected. And i'm going to continue to draw, as many on this stage try and do, upon those strengths and to build america by virtue of those conservative principles whether in health care, defense, spending, entitlement reform, you name it. Conservative principles work, and they'll keep working.

Thank you. Congressman hunter, same question?

Repeat the question? I was lost in governor romney's explanation. I thought it was quite good though.

[laughter]

Do you think it's more important for the next president to be a fiscal conservative or social conservative?

I think they both go to the core of this country because you've got to keep the economy running, the wheels turning, and of course the heart of our country is this idea that human beings have value. That they are given these inalienable rights that have been described by my friends. So those are two very important things, but one thing that's extremely important is this: we also in being conservative, having a conservative leader, part of that means not sending technology to our adversaries, and that's going to be the big threat of this next 15-20 years. Governor romney's corporation that he founded has joined up –

Thank you.

Has joined up with a chinese corporation to buy an american defense contract.

Thank you.

I think that is a mistake, and that's a defense contractor that did business with saddam hussein and

with the taliban –

Thank you, congressman.

And thank you.

We're going to look at the last video.

I think we're better off by strictly following the constitution as it existed and as it was brought forward, and if with think there's a need for a new right then going to the people or their elected representatives to establish that right rather than having judges from their own heart or their own mind establishing new rights and new laws. It's not for judges to legislate or to create a new constitution. That's something that only the people and their elected representatives should be able to do.

There are two sides to your human component, you know? One is the god-filled side, one is the human side. And there are things that feed either side, you know? And whichever you feed the most becomes the dominant side. And so you have to kind of concentrate on feeding the good side. Or else you will lose control over it.

The least we can do is look at our social policies and not just be concerned about the consuming of what's before us in the short view but what's best for the overall country, what's best for the future generations of the nation? And are we going to leave this place a better place than when we came into it? To me that's real patriotism.

Congressman tancredo, your foreign policy positions on your campaign web site consist of five sentences on iraq. What assures americans you're ready to lead our foreign policy?

Because the issue, of course, as i mentioned earlier is just a battle going on in iraq. The major battle is, of course, this clash of civilizations. I believe that the whole idea and debate can be narrowed to a relatively small area on a web site or any place else, and that is this: we cannot leave iraq. We are committed there and will be for a long time, and i don't care who's elected president, that's the reality of the situation. We can, however, stop, in fact, being the police force in iraq, and we are doing that. We are moving in exactly the direction that my web site, the statement anticipates. What more do i have to say? We're getting it done.

Thank you. Congressman paul, you call your campaign a revolution, and i think it's safe to say that your brand of change is one of the most sweeping proposed by any candidate of either party, but

getting your agenda through congress would likely require a revolution of an entirely different sort. So how would you adjust your plan in light of political reality in washington?

Well, the secret is the term revolution wasn't my word, and it didn't come up on my web page, it was coined by the supporters. But it is revolutionary to go back to the constitution, and we'd like to continue the old revolution. Believe me, freedom is unifying. We bring a lot of people together. People, then r free to choose what they would like to do with their lives, how they would spend their money, and all of a sudden we wouldn't –

But getting through congress?

And i think it's appealing to both left and right and middle, and our campaign really has that appeal, so, therefore, we would bring the congress together.

Okay, thank you. Senator mccain, your reputation as a maverick has put you at odds with your own party leadership from time to time. Give us an example of a time you wished you had to compromised to get something done instead of holding firms on your ideals.

I cannot think of a time, and i hope i can never think of a time. I came to washington because i had a set of principles and ideals. But at the same time i have more legislative achievements than anybody on this stage by far. I have joined together across the aisle on a number of pieces of legislation, many of them very important. I'm proud of my legislative record of conserving mill ideals and my conservative principles and getting things done in washington. And i am proud of that, and i will continue to hold to those ideals, but i will reach across the aisle to the democrats who i have worked with, who know me, and we know we can work together for the good of this country.

Thank you. We're going to talk about new year's resolutions, you have 15 seconds. We're going to start with mr. Keyes and go this way, please suggest a new year's resolution for one of your opponents here today. Lamp laugh can be

I, frankly, think the most important new year's resolution is resolve to the return to the fact that we are all created equal.

Fifteen seconds, please. Senator mccain.

Let's raise the level of dialogue and discussion and debate in this campaign. Let's not accuse each other of a lack of patriotism or a lack of character. There are different views on varying issues, there are difference in experience, and i think we should all be respectful of one another and the american

people, i think, will benefit from it.

Governor huckabee?

I'm going to be a lot more careful about everything i say.

This -- is a resolution for an opponent.

Well, i would make it of them too.

[laughter]

Governor romney?

Let's have a resolution amongst all of us that we'll have a spirited campaign but we'll come together, come together real soon when this is resolved, and we will fight to make sure that one of these people on this stage is the next president of the united states.

Senator thompson?

Yeah. It'd be for myself, try to be a better man. Be strong, have faith, try to be a better husband and father.

Congressman?

All sounds good but you asked what we would do, what somebody else we think should do in terms of a resolution. I have to say it because you're leading the pack, now, and congratulations to you, governor, but i have to ask you -- no, no, no pointing right over there.

[laughter]

Okay –

Just a minute, you know, laughter does not count.

I have to keep moving.

And the question is how are you going to convince america that you, in fact, changed your blind –

Congressman paul?

That's all i want to know.

My advice would be to reread the oath of office, take it seriously, obey the constitution. We are well defended against all enemies foreign, we should be much more careful about defending against the enemies domestic.

Yeah. To all my colleagues and, i think, to the american people, lots of folks coming back from the afghan and iraqi theaters, lots of young people whop need jobs. One thing we could do just a couple of weeks before christmas is buy american goods. If we do, we may save the job of our neighbor or provide a job for that young service person.

Mayor?

I would resolve all of us to take a look at better america and realize how lucky we are, how fortunate we have, not to have this pessimistic feeling. We've faced crises like this before, we've always overcome them –

Thank you.

A sense of optimism.

And we're out of time. You can find out more about this debate at pbs.org and at desmoinesregister.com. And tomorrow at 1:00 we'll have our debate with the democratic presidential candidates. I want to thank all of the candidates for being here today as well as our broadcast partner, iowa public television, our studio audience, and everyone at home and at work. Happy holidays, everyone.

[applause]

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you.