
June 28, 2007

Transcript of the Third Democratic Primary Presidential Debate

The following is a transcript of the Democratic primary presidential debate on PBS. The participants were Senator Joseph Biden, Jr. (D-Del.); Senator Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.); Senator Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.); Former Senator John Edwards (D-S.C.); Former Senator Mike Gravel (D-Ak); Representative Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio); Senator Barack Obama (D-Ill.); and Gov. Bill Richardson (D-N.M.). The moderator was Tavis Smiley, host of "Tavis Smiley" on PBS. The panelists were Michel Martin, journalist and NPR host; Ruben Navarrette, Jr., nationally syndicated columnist; Dewayne Wickham, USA Today and Gannett News Service columnist. The debate took place at Howard University on Thursday, June 28, 2007. Transcribed by the Federal News Service, a private transcription agency.

MR. SMILEY: To ask the first question tonight, I'm pleased to be joined by Crecilla Cohen Scott from Bowie, Maryland. She is a winner of our online contest in which we asked the listeners of the Tom Joyner Morning Show to submit questions to the website, BlackAmerica.com. This question will go first to Senator Clinton, and we'll work our way, of course, down the line. Please welcome, from Bowie, Maryland, Crecilla Cohen Scott for tonight's first question. CRECILLA COHEN SCOTT (Bowie, MD): (Applause.) Good evening, candidates. In 1903, the noted intellectual W.E.B. DeBoise said the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line. Is race still the most intractable issue in America, and especially, I might add, in light of today's U.S. Supreme Court decision which struck down the use of race as a factor in K through 12?

SEN. CLINTON: Well, thank you for that question. And it is abundantly clear, especially today, that race and racism are defining challenges not only in the United States but around the world. You know, we have made progress. You can look at this stage and see an African American, a Latino, a woman contesting for the presidency of the United States. But there is so much left to be done. And for anyone to assert that race is not a problem in America is to deny the reality in front of our very eyes. (Applause.)

You can look at the thousands of African-Americans left behind by their government with Katrina. You can look at the opportunity gap, the Cradle to Prison Superhighway that The Covenant talks about, and you can look at this decision today, which turned the clock back on the promise of Brown v. Board of Education, that was resting on the fact that children are better off if they are a part of a diverse, integrated society.

So, yes, we have come a long way, but, yes, we have a long way to go. The march is not finished, and I hope that all of us, the Democratic candidates, will demonstrate clearly that the work is yet to be done. And we call on everyone to be foot soldiers in that revolution to finish the job. (Cheers, applause.)

SEN. BIDEN: The answer to your question: It is still the defining issue. And the decision today -- look at the minority views. The minority stated, had the rationale that was applied by the majority been applied the last 50 years, we would have never, never overcome the state's effort to ignore Brown versus the Board.

But we can do something about it, and the place to start is through the next president of the Supreme Court of the United States of America. As some of you know, some of the people out on this stage and the press criticized me for being awful tough on Justice Roberts and awful tough on Alito; the problem was the rest of us weren't tough enough on them. (Applause.) They have turned the court upside down, and the next president of the United States will be able to determine whether or not we go forward or continue this slide. It's the single most imperative generational decision the next president will make, and you better pick the right person to make it. (Applause.)

GOV. RICHARDSON: Leading on the issues of race is about being authentic, about speaking honestly. Race is a major issue in this country, and the next president has to talk about it. Race is not just passing new laws. Race is not just naming solid Supreme Court justices. Race is also dealing with bigotry and racism that exists in this country.

And I believe very strongly that the next president is not just going to have to pass laws and take the steps necessary to reaffirm affirmative action and take steps to make sure that our schools are integrated, but also the next president is going have to lead and speak passionately about a dialogue among all people.

And I believe very strongly that issues of diversity, for me, the first Latino to run for president, aren't talking points; they're facts of life. (Applause.)

MR. EDWARDS: Well, let me say first, thank you to the Howard Bison for hosting us here tonight. We're very proud to be here. This is one of the great HBCUs in America, which all of us should be proud of. I'm proud of some that we have in my home state of North Carolina.

And I also want to thank you for hosting this debate where finally we can talk about inequality in America, which is at the heart and soul of why I'm running for president of the United States. The truth is that slavery followed by segregation followed by discrimination has had an impact that still is alive and well in

America, and it goes through every single part of American life. We still have two public school systems in America. These two Americas that I've talked about in the past -- man, they are out there thriving every single day. We have two public school systems in America -- one for the wealthy, one for everybody else.

We have two health care systems in America, and we know that race plays an enormous role in the problems that African Americans face and the problems that African Americans face with health care every single day. There are huge health care disparities, which is why we need universal health care in this country. But we have work to do. All of us have work to do. And by the way, also making sure that every single American, including people of color, are allowed to vote and that their vote is counted in the election -- (applause) -- and that we know that their voice is heard in the election. But we have, all of us -- all of us have a responsibility to build one America that works for everybody, across all racial barriers that still exist in this country. (Applause.)

SEN. OBAMA: First of all, thank you for the question. Tavis, thank you for helping to organize this. All the contributors of the covenant, thank you. And thank you to Howard and Dr. Swygert and all of you who have made me what I am. You know, this is where Thurgood Marshall and the team from Brown crafted their strategy. And if it hadn't been for them, I would not be standing here today. (Applause.)

And it was their fundamental recognition that for us to achieve racial equality was not simply good for African-Americans, but it was good for America as a whole; that we could not be what we might be as a nation unless we healed the brutal wounds of slavery and Jim Crow. Now, we have made enormous progress, but the progress we have made is not good enough. As many have already mentioned, we live in a society that remains separated in terms of life opportunities for African-Americans, for Latinos, and the rest of the nation. And it is absolutely critical for us to recognize that there are going to be responsibilities on the part of African-Americans and other groups to take personal responsibility to rise up out of the problems that we face.

But there has also got to be a social responsibility, there has to be a sense of mutual responsibility, and there's got to be political will in the White House to make that happen. (Applause.) That's what I'm committed to doing. That's the reason I'm running for president. (Cheers, applause.)

REP. KUCINICH: I want to share the remarks of Barack Obama, because the fact of the matter is that racial inequality is real, that it affects every area of our lives, as the Covenant pointed out. Now, it's interesting the philosophy that's guiding leaders at every branch of -- in the executive and the judicial branch of government, because they go out and tell people, "Pull yourselves up by the -- by your bootstraps," and then they steal their boots. (Laughter.)

We need to have a policy in education which first of all is guided by certain fundamental rights. [Jesse Jackson](#), Jr., has a bill that makes having an equal opportunity for education a matter of a constitutional privilege. And with this Supreme Court ruling, it is imperative that we have a constitutional amendment guaranteeing educational opportunity equality. (Applause.)

Next, in the meantime, universal free kindergarten. Every child age 3, 4 and 5 should have access to full, quality daycare. Eliminate those disparities that we see early on in school. Eliminate No Child Left Behind, which is aimed at testing instead of improving children's educational opportunity through language, music and the arts. (Applause.) And finally, we need to take the resources away from war and military buildups and assure that every child should have a chance for a quality college education as well.

Thank you. (Cheers, applause.)

MR. GRAVEL: First off, let me thank the organizers. This is the fairest debate or forum that we've had thus far this year.

Let me add that racism was here with us at the beginning of this country. It was here in the last century, and it's going to be with us in the 21st century. And one of the areas that touches me the most and enrages me the most is our war on drugs that this country has been putting forth for the last generation.

In 1972, we had 179,000 human beings in jail in this country; today, it's 2.3 million, and 70 percent are black, African-Americans. (Light applause.) And I hope my colleagues will join me in standing up and saying, like FDR did with Prohibition, "We'll do away with that." And FDR did it. And if I'm president, I will do away with the war on drugs, which does nothing but savage our inner cities and put our children at risk. (Applause.)

There's no reason for this. There's not an American that doesn't understand the culture and the understanding that Prohibition was a failure, and so we repeat it again like we repeated Iraq after we had the failure of Vietnam. When will we learn? When we learn that the issue of drugs is a public health issue. Addiction is a public health issue, not a criminal issue where we throw people in jail and criminalize them to no advancement to the people -- (applause) -- and if there's one group of people in this country that needs to face up to that problem, and we have to face up to it, and that is the African American community.

(Applause.)

MR. DODD: Well, let me add -- let me add my voice in thanking Howard University for hosting this this evening and Tavis, thank you as well.

It's an appropriate first question that was asked here. And to bring up the issue of education, of discrimination, at this wonderful institution is critically important. The shame of all of this is that long before the decision was reached today or yesterday in the Seattle cases, the shame of resegregation has been occurring for years in our country here. The reality that our public educational system is today a segregated system and that we have not taken enough leadership over the years to understand the great damage that has done to our country.

This evening there'll be many subjects that'll be raised, and important ones. None is more important, in my view, than the issue of education. Whether or not from the earliest education opportunity to the highest level of education opportunity, this is the key to equal access to our society. It is something that can never be taken away from you if you get it. To say today that you're going to exclude race as a means of allowing for the diversity in our communities is a major step backwards. And as president of the United States, I would use whatever tool is available to me to see to it that we reverse this decision today, get back on the track to see to it that our country once again will identify with the identity of unity as a nation, blind, if you will, to the racial distinctions in our society. That's the only way we're going to deal with the new frontiers of the 21st century. The barrios, the ghettos, and the reservations of our society. That's what I stand for, that's what we'll achieve as a Democratic administration.

(Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: I want to thank Crecilla Owen Scott for her question. Crecilla, thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MS. SCOTT: (Off mike) -- thank you --

MR. SMILEY: Please thank Crecilla for her question. (Applause.) It just -- it just seemed to make sense to us to start this conversation with a question from an everyday person in America.

Now I want to turn over this conversation to a terrific panel of journalists I've asked me to -- join me in handling questions this evening. Although I may use moderator discretion if necessary -- (mild laughter) -- from time to time to remind you of that clock out there. So that you can know that we're keeping answers, by the way, to one minute per person.

First up, DeWayne Wickham, syndicated columnist for USA Today and the Gannett News Service. (Applause.) Next, Michel Martin, former "Nightline" correspondent and now host of her own NPR show called "Tell Me More." (Applause.) And Ruben Navarette, Jr., nationally syndicated columnist and member of the editorial board of the San Diego Union-Tribune. (Applause.) DeWayne Wickham's question will be answered first by Senator Joe Biden. MR. WICKHAM: Thank you, Tavis. This question is about the link between education and poverty. According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), in 2006 the unemployment rate of black high school graduates -- black high school graduates -- was 33 percent higher than the unemployment rate for white high school dropouts. To what do you attribute this inequity, which keeps many black families locked in the grip of poverty?

SEN. BIDEN: You know, DeWayne, one of the things that we all talk about is this achievement gap. We should remind everybody that the day before a black child, a minority child, steps into the classroom, half the achievement gap already exists. That is, they already start behind. So the moment they walk into that school, they are already behind.

And that gap widens. And it widens because we do not start school earlier. We do not give single mothers in disadvantaged homes the opportunities that they need in order to know what to do to prepare their children. A mother who talks to her child on a regular basis from infancy to being a toddler, that child when it's two years old will have a vocabulary 300 words more than a child not talked to.

So it's simple. You've got to start off and focus on the nurturing and education of children when they're very young, particularly children from disadvantaged families. You've got to invest in starting kids in preschool at age four. They have a 20 percent better chance of graduating when they're there. And you've got to make sure, as you go through the system, you have smaller classrooms, better teachers in the disadvantaged schools.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Biden.

SEN. BIDEN: It's a -- time's up. Thank you.

MR. SMILEY: Sorry about that. (Applause.) Thank you very much, sir.

Governor. GOV. RICHARDSON: You know, sometimes when I talk about education, and this is the first time we have talked about it in any debate, the first thing you hear is, how are you going to pay for it? Nobody asks how we're going to pay for the war. (Applause.) But it's important to state that improving our schools, improving education, access to education to all Americans, should be America's foremost

priority. You know, I want to just state that for the record, I am for a minimum wage for teachers. The key to a good education is to pay our teachers and have accountability. (Applause.)

And we have to have also -- we have to make sure that we deal with this achievement gap. One out of two minorities in this country, one out of two African-American, Latino kids don't make it through high school. They drop out. That has to be combatted with at-risk programs, with programs that deal with more parental involvement. We have to start early, universal preschool. We did this in New Mexico. We did this. Kids under 4 -- full-day kindergarten.

MR. SMILEY: Governor --

GOV. RICHARDSON: We have to have healthy breakfast for every child.

And finally, we have to find a way to give every American access to a college education.

GOV. RICHARDSON: Thank you, sir. (Applause.)

Senator Edwards.

MR. EDWARDS: Let me say, first, DeWayne, this issue of poverty in America is the cause of my life. It's the reason I started a poverty center at the [University of North Carolina](#). It's the reason I've been working so hard on this issue.

And I think the starting place is to understand that there is no one single cause of poverty. You know, when you have young African- American men who are completely convinced that they're either going to die or go to prison, and see absolutely no hope in their lives; when they live in an environment where the people around them don't earn a decent wage; when they go to schools that are second-class schools compared to the schools in wealthy suburban areas, they don't see anything getting better, there are lots of things that we need to do.

I actually agree with what Senator Biden said about early childhood, but I think we should start much earlier than 4 years of age, which is what the focus has been.

I think it's also true that we need to pay teachers better. I think we ought to actually provide incentive pay to get our best teachers in the inner-city schools and into poor rural areas where they're needed the most. But it goes beyond that. We also have to make work pay for young men who are graduating from high school, the very group that you're describing, which means we're going to have to do a whole group of

things. We need to significantly raise the minimum wage. We need to strengthen the right to organize. And we need to help low-income families save --

MR. SMILEY: Senator Edwards.

MR. EDWARDS: -- so they're not prey to predatory lenders that are taking advantage of them today. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Obama?

SEN. OBAMA: A number of the things that we've got to do have already been mentioned. Early childhood education. And John's exactly right, it starts from birth. And where we can get parenting counselors to go in and work with at-risk parents, it makes an enormous difference.

We've got to make sure that teachers are going to the schools that need them the most. We're going to lose a million teachers over the next decade because the baby-boom generation is retiring. And so it's absolutely critical for us to give them the incentives and the tools and the training that they need not only to become excellent teachers but to become excellent teachers where they're most needed.

We're going to have to put more money into after-school programs and provide the resources that are necessary. When you've got a bill called No Child Left Behind, you can't leave the money behind for No Child Left Behind. And unfortunately, that's what's been done. (Applause.)

But the most important thing is that we recognize these children as our children. The reason that we have consistently had underperformance among these children, our children, is because too many of us think it is acceptable for them not to achieve. And we have to have a mindset where we say to ourselves, every single child can learn if they're given the resources and the opportunities. And right now that's not happening. We need somebody in the White House who's going to recognize these children as our own. (Applause.) REP. KUCINICH: Dr. King recognized that when there's a war, people of two countries suffer, because what he was talking about was the link between war and fear and poverty, as opposed to peace and security and prosperity. And so when we shift the paradigm of this country away from war, then we start to have the resources which must be there for education, for universal pre-kindergarten, for fully-funded elementary and secondary education, for college for all. (Light applause.) But we have to remember that with a nation right now that will spend anywhere from 1 (trillion dollars) to \$2 trillion on this war, that is money out of the educational lives of our children. We need to remember the connection.

(Cheers, applause.) I'm ready to see at least a 15 percent reduction in that bloated Pentagon budget, stop funding war, start funding education. That's where we get the money.

Thank you. (Cheers, applause.)

MR. GRAVEL: Dennis, you're a little too modest on that. I think we can cut a little more than 15 percent, very much so. Stop and think what the opportunity costs -- now, you have heard these nostrums before. I've been watching your heads. You're nodding on all the programs. You've heard it 10 years ago, you've heard 20 years ago -- why doesn't it change? The Democratic Party hasn't done appreciably better than the [Republican Party](#) in solving these problems. It has to be solved the people, not by your leaders. (Applause.)

Stop and think. When he's talking about the money we're squandering -- 21 million Americans could have a four-year college scholarship for the money we've squandered in Iraq -- (applause) -- 7.6 million teachers could have been hired last year if we weren't squandering this money. Now, how do you think we got into this problem? The people on this stage, like the rest of us, are all guilty and very guilty, and we should recognize that, because there is linkage! (Cheers, applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Senator Dodd? Yeah, time's up. I'm sorry. Senator Dodd? SEN. DODD: Thank you, Tavis.

As I said at the outset on the first question, I don't believe there's any other issue as important as this one we'll discuss this evening, as education. There's a lot of good talk here, and I admire the fact that my colleagues here and candidates all care deeply about this issue. I stand before you as a candidate. We have to make a decision about, who is our best candidate to win the presidency in 2008?

For 26 years, through five terms in the [United States Senate](#), I have dedicated myself to this issue. I'm very proud of the fact that Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund has come to me over and over again, and proud to have authored the legislation to deal with the whole child, that authored the first child care legislation in this country, to begin in the earliest days to make sure that parents have the assurance that there will be a quality place for their child to be, and an affordable place, an available place, and then to begin with early childhood education, to see to it that we'd have a good Head Start program.

I'm proud of the fact that I was called the Senator of the Decade by National Head Start Association. (Applause.) I have walked the walk on these issues; I am committed to these issues. There's nothing that will be a higher priority to me as president of the United States than to see to it that America's children,

from the earliest days of their arrival, certainly through the upper education branches of our educational system, have the equal opportunity.

None of us here can guarantee success --

MR. SMILEY: Senator Dodd.

SEN. DODD: -- but we have an obligation to guarantee an opportunity to that success. The key to that door is the education of the American child. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, Senator.

SEN. CLINTON: Well, I really believe that it takes a village to raise a child -- (applause) -- and the American village has failed our children.

We have heard absolutely the right prescription. I have fought for more than 35 years for early childhood education, for more mentoring, for more parent education programs, to get our children off to a good start. I have fought to make sure that schools were fair to all children. That's the work I did in Arkansas, to try to raise the standards particularly for the poorest of our children, and most especially for minority children. And certainly in the White House years, and now in the Senate, I've continued that effort because I don't think there is a more important issue.

But I also believe we cannot separate the education part from the economic part. There is still discrimination in the workplace. There are still people who are turned down and turned away who have qualifications and skills that should make them employable. (Applause.) So this is a broader issue that we have to address.

MR. SMILEY: The next question, from Michel Martin of NPR, will be answered first by Governor Richardson.

MS. MARTIN: Thank you, Tavis.

Good evening, Governor. Good evening, candidates. I'm sure you'll agree there are a lot of beautiful young people out here in the audience today, and we're very pleased to be here at Howard University. So you can imagine how disturbed we were to find out from the [Centers for Disease Control](#) that African-Americans, though 17 percent of all American teenagers, they are 69 percent of the population of teenagers diagnosed with HIV/AIDS.

Governor and candidates, what is the plan to stop and to protect these young people from this scourge?

GOV. RICHARDSON: It is a moral imperative that America have a policy to fight this dreaded disease both nationally and internationally. You got to make some tough choices. First, we've got to have -- we have to use needles. We have to be sure that we have efforts in the African-American community, in minority communities, to have comprehensive education. In addition, we have to deal with Africa. Close to 20 percent of the African people have some kind of [HIV](#) virus. It's important that the president of the United States make a major funding effort, a major commitment to deal with this issue. And here I'm going to say something positive about President Bush. His funding for Millennium accountability and Millennium appropriations has been relatively impressive.

And I believe it's important that not only we deal with this issue in this country, bring -- bringing condoms, finding ways to increase needles, penetrating minority outreach in communities --

MR. SMILEY: Governor, you have --

GOV. RICHARDSON: -- that's how to deal with it.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you very much.

Senator Edwards.

MR. EDWARDS: Thank you very much for the question.

African-American women are 25 times as likely to be infected with AIDS today in America than white women. Over half of the new diagnoses of AIDS in America are African-Americans. So this is obviously having a disproportionate effect on people of color and on the African-American community.

I was in a medical center in Los Angeles just a few days ago, where they're providing treatment and help to those who -- first to determine whether they have AIDS; second, to provide them the treatment and the drugs that they need.

But we shouldn't be dependent on private funding to do what needs to be done about a scourge that exists in America, and particularly exists among African-Americans in America. Here are the three things I think we need to do.

First, we need to fully fund finding a cure for AIDS, so we can end this scourge once and for all.

(Applause.)

Second, we need to fully fund the legislation, the law known as Ryan White, to make sure that the treatment is available for anybody who's diagnosed with AIDS. (Applause.)

And then finally we need to ensure that Medicaid covers AIDS drugs and AIDS treatment -- (applause) -- to make sure that people get the treatment they need, particularly low-income families who get the -- who are diagnosed with AIDS -- low-income individuals.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Obama.

SEN. OBAMA: I think John's prescriptions are right. I would add the issue of prevention -- involves education. And one of the things that we've got to overcome -- (applause) -- one of the things we've got to overcome is a stigma that still exists in our communities. We don't talk about this. We don't talk about it in the schools. Sometimes we don't talk about it in the churches. It has been an aspect of sometimes homophobia that we don't address this issue as clearly as it needs to be.

And I also think there's a broader issue, though, here, and this is going to be true on all the issues we talk about -- the problems of poverty, lack of health care, these are -- lack of educational opportunity -- are all interconnected. And to some degree, the African-American community is weakened. It has a disease to its immune system. When we are impoverished, when people don't have jobs, they are more likely to be afflicted not just with AIDS but with substance abuse problems, with guns in the streets. And so it is important for us to look at the whole body here and make absolutely certain that we are providing the kinds of economic development opportunities and jobs that will create healthier communities, that we've got universal health care that ensures that people can get regular treatments. Those are the kinds of strategies that over the long term are going to make a difference in our communities.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, sir.

Congressman? (Applause.)

REP. KUCINICH: When you think about the statistics that have been cited here, you realize that it's time to get real about health care and education in America. We need to understand that the ability of our public schools to be able to communicate sex education as a priority at the early age helps children to understand the consequences of their action.

But there's another dimension here, too, and that is we have a nation of such wealth, yet we have 46 million Americans without any health insurance, another 50 million underinsured. It's time for us to make every American know that they should have access. It is a basic right in a Democratic society. We should

be able to fund all those diseases where people are suffering and they need care, but we have to end that for-profit medicine. It is time to take the for-profit insurance companies out of the business -- (applause) -- [Michael Moore](#) is right about this, by the way -- and have a not-for-profit health care where everyone's covered.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Gravel?

MR. GRAVEL: I touched on it earlier. The scourge of our present society, particularly in the African-American community, is the war on drugs. I'll repeat again as a challenge to my colleagues on this stage, that if they really want to do something about the inner cities, if they really want to do something about what's happening to

the health of the African-American community, it's time to end this war.

There's no reason to continue it in the slightest. All it does is create criminals out of people who are not criminals.

Education? Yes. Health care? Yes. But understand that the health care that we're talking about, by and large, is going backwards, going backwards. We're subsidizing the insurance companies. And all the plans that I've heard of, except Dennis's, is a continued subsidization of the insurance companies.

Please, put pressure on these people to step up and end this war on drugs, which is ravishing your community. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Senator, thank you.

Senator Dodd.

SEN. DODD: Well, thank you.

I want to -- I'd certainly underscore a number of the suggestions that have been made dealing with this. I'd add another one additionally, and that is the -- a need for far broader usage of school-based clinics in our society, where children have the opportunity to be able to confront and talk with people that may be willing to give them the kind of sound advice they need on sexual education and the like.

But also each and every one of us can play a role in this. There's a job, obviously, for government here in funding and support. But I believe that each and every citizen bears a responsibility to reach out and do

what they can to educate a child. Our church is doing this in many ways. We need to do a better job in our schools, inviting parents and insisting there be more participation in our school systems.

It isn't just HIV/AIDS. The minority community, the African American community, in our country suffers from a lack of access to a wide variety of health care needs. Infant mortality among the black community is two-and-a-half times what it is in the white community. The problems of cardiovascular diseases, obesity, diabetes -- you go down a long list. (Applause.)

It isn't just AIDS; it's a wide range of these issues. And we need to begin to address this issue by understanding that it isn't just universal coverage but access to that coverage which has been missing --

MR. SMILEY: Senator Dodd.

SEN. DODD: -- and to understand there's a variety of issues that need to be addressed in addition to HIV/AIDS.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Dodd. (Laughter.)

SEN. DODD: But each and every one of us as citizens can make a difference. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Senator Clinton.

SEN. DODD: I was going to say, Tavis, I was going to say, I'll take [Global Warming](#) for 600 here. I thought maybe -- (laughter).

MR. SMILEY: Yeah, and I -- Senator.

SEN. DODD: (Laughs.)

MR. SMILEY: Senator Dodd.

SEN. DODD: Sort of the end of the line here.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Dodd, and I was going to say, well -- you [Paris Hilton](#), you'd have an hour, but you're not, so -- (laughter).

SEN. CLINTON: That was good. That was good, Tavis.

You know, it is hard to disagree with anything that has been said, but let me just put this in perspective. If HIV/AIDS were the leading cause of death of white women between the ages of 25 and 34, there would be an outraged outcry in this country. (Cheers, applause.)

So let me quickly say -- before I get compared to Paris Hilton -- (laughter) -- that yes, we have to do all of this, and I'm working on this. I'm working to get Medicaid to cover treatment. I'm working to raise the budget for Ryan White, which the Bush administration has kept flat, disgracefully so, because there are a lot of women, particularly, who are becoming infected in poor rural areas as well as underserved urban areas in states where, frankly, their state governments won't give them medical care.

So this is a multiple dimension problem. But if we don't begin to take it seriously and address it the way we did back in the '90s, when it was primarily a gay men's disease, we will never get the services and the public education that we need. (Cheers, applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Senator Biden.

SEN. BIDEN: I will try to answer your question directly. You said, how do we prevent -- prevent -- these 17-year-olds from getting AIDS, HIV, how do you prevent that. All the things that were said here are good ideas; they don't prevent that. What's happened is there is a policy of neglect, denial and lack of honesty out there. The fact of the matter is, what Hillary points out, there's neglect on the part of the medical and the white community focusing on educating the minority community out there.

I spent last summer going through the black sections of my town, holding rallies in parks, trying to get black men to understand it is not unmanly to wear a condom, getting women to understand they can say no, getting people in the position where testing matters. I got tested for AIDS. I know Barack got tested for AIDS. (Laughter.) There's no shame in being tested for AIDS. It's an important thing.

Because the fact of the matter is, in the community, in the communities engaged in denial, they're engaged in denial, no one wants to talk about it in the community, and we do not have enough leaders, in the community and outside the community, demanding we face the reality, confront the men in the community, as well as the women, letting them know there are alternatives. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Thank you.

SEN. OBAMA: Tavis, Tavis, Tavis, I just got to make clear -- I got tested with Michelle. (Laughter, applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Ah.

SEN. OBAMA: In -- when we were in Kenya in Africa. So I want to --

MR. SMILEY: All right.

SEN. OBAMA: I don't want any confusion here about what's going on. (Applause continues.)

MR. SMILEY: All right.

SEN. BIDEN: And I got tested to save my life, because I had 13 pints of blood transfusion.

SEN. OBAMA: I was tested with my wife.

MR. SMILEY: And I'm sure Michelle appreciates you clarifying it.

SEN. OBAMA: In public. (Laughter.)

MR. SMILEY: Let me take now moderator's privilege here. We unapologetically tonight want to cover as much as we can, and I know the candidates appreciate topics they haven't had a chance to address heretofore. So after the question that Mr. Navarrette will ask, that will be first answered by Senator Edwards, we will then cut your responses to 30 seconds to cover more subject matter tonight. And I thank you for your cooperation.

But you will have a minute --

MR. EDWARDS: We have 30 seconds on this --

MR. SMILEY: You have a minute to answer this question, a minute to answer this question. Then we'll go to 30 seconds for the remainder of the conversation.

MR. EDWARDS: Okay.

MR. SMILEY: Mr. Navarrette.

MR. NAVARRETTE: Thank you, Tavis.

This week billionaire [Warren Buffett](#) said that the very wealthy aren't taxed nearly enough. In fact, he noted -- (applause) -- in fact, he noted that he's taxed at a lower rate than some of his employees, who earn much less. Do you agree that the rich aren't paying their fair share of taxes? And if so, what would you do about it?

MR. EDWARDS: Well, I think we have -- in fact, I've heard Warren Buffett himself talk about the genetic lottery that we have in America, where, you know, the family you're born into has an awful lot to do with what happens with your life.

And what we want to do, I think, is live in an America where, no matter who your family is or what the color of your skin or where you're born, everybody gets the same chance to do well. And people who have done well ought to have more responsibility to pay back to the country and to the community and those around them.

I think there are at least a couple things we need to do. First, we need to get rid of George Bush's tax cuts for rich people -- (applause) -- which have distorted the tax system in America. I would use that money to pay for universal health care, to make sure everyone's covered.

But the second problem that he's talking about is, we have a capital gains rate, 15 percent, which is the rate that most pay on their investment income, like Warren Buffett, that's significantly lower than the tax rate that his secretary pays.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Edwards --

MR. EDWARDS: That's not right. There is a moral disconnect. We ought to honor work in this country, not just wealth.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, sir. (Applause.)

SEN. OBAMA: There's no doubt that the tax system has been skewed. And the Bush tax cuts -- people didn't need them, and they weren't even asking for them, and that's why they need to be less, so that we can pay for universal health care and other initiatives.

But I think this goes to a broader question, and that is, are we willing to make the investments in genuine equal opportunity in this country? People aren't looking for charity, and one of the distressing things sometimes when we have a conversation about race in America is that we talk about welfare and we talk about poverty, but what people really want is fairness. They want people paying their fair share of taxes. (Applause.) They want that money allocated fairly.

One of the distressing things about Katrina was the fact -- not only that the Bush administration did not -- (audio break from source) -- before the hurricane struck, and that is because we have not made systematic investments. And the only way we're going to make it is by making sure that those of us who

are fortunate enough to have the money actually make a contribution for all the programs that we've been talking about tonight.

MR. SMILEY: Congressman? (Applause.)

REP. KUCINICH: There's three questions involved here: What are we taxed? Who is paying? And how are our tax dollars spent? Right now we know that those who are in the highest brackets are not paying a fair share. We understand that. And we also understand that a lot of these corporations are taking their business offshore so they can offshore their profits and escape paying tens of billions of dollars in taxation. And we also know that our tax dollars right now are being spent overwhelmingly on war and military buildup. I want to see a new direction. (Applause.) I want to see the wealthy pay their fair share. I want to make sure that these corporations have to -- if they have an American name, they have to pay taxes here, and I want to see the end of war as an instrument of policy.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Gravel? (Cheers, applause.)

MR. GRAVEL: I want to say that none of you are going to live in your lifetime to see our system of taxation change, based upon what you've heard here. I was -- (laughter) -- I was eight years on the Finance Committee -- none of them have served on that committee -- and I'll tell you, the code stands that high and there's not a human being alive that understands it.

And it's with Democrats, with Republicans, they take care of the people. Do you think it's accident that all of a sudden we wake up, that the wealthy aren't paying a fair share? The only way they're going to pay a fair share is wipe out the income tax -- it is corrupt, it's corrupting our society -- (applause) -- and begin to put in place a tax that everybody will know what everybody's paying, and that's a retail sales tax. And you can make it as progressive as you want. Keep in mind, a tax where everybody will know what everybody is paying.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Gravel, thanks.

MR. GRAVEL: You won't see it with this.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Dodd.

SEN. DODD: Thank you, Tavis.

I happen to believe very strongly that our tax and fiscal policies ought to reflect our moral values and that our tax and fiscal policies ought to be fair, responsible, and pro-growth, as well. We live in a society

where obviously it's going to be important to expand our economy so that jobs will be created, businesses can grow, people have an opportunity in this life.

I'm deeply disappointed, as many. We had a very good period of time, I might say, under the Clinton administration, where we balanced the budget. We had a tax policy that was much more fair. We need to get back to those days again where we had that kind of fiscal policy.

One of the taxes that needs to be addressed -- because we're losing manufacturing jobs in this country. We today reward industries that leave America by giving them tax breaks. I would like to see us reward companies that stay in our inner cities, go to places where jobs ought to be created. (Applause.) That to be a part of our tax policy as well.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you.

Senator Clinton.

SEN. CLINTON: Well, I clearly think that our economy was working a lot better in the 1990s. We had the creation of 22 million new jobs, a balanced budget and a surplus. And certainly when the Bush administration came in, they were determined to tilt the balance back toward the privileged.

We are paying a very big price for this, because middle-class and working families are paying a much higher percentage of their income. That was Warren Buffett's position, that he pays about 17 percent, because don't forget, it's the payroll tax plus the income tax. And when you cut off the contribution at \$90,000, \$95,000, that's a lot of money between 95,000 (dollars) and the 46 million (dollars) that Warren Buffett made last year. And he's honest enough to say, look, tax me, because I'm a patriotic American and I want to make sure our country stays strong and is fair.

So, yes, we have to change the tax system, and we've got to get back to having those with the most contribute to this country. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Biden.

SEN. BIDEN: Warren -- Warren Buffett is right. I would eliminate the tax cut for the wealthy. They didn't ask for it, as someone earlier said. They don't need it. They're as patriotic as anyone else if you ask them, and we've asked nothing of them.

The second point is, understand what happened this last election, in 2000. The first time in our history since we had the federal income tax, there was a fundamental shift of the burden from (sic) people who are wage earners away from people who are investors.

For the first time in our history, we're in a position where those who are the wage-earners are paying a bigger chunk than they should. It's got to shift back, and the basis for them doing that is they really believe the wealthy know better. They think we don't know how -- average folks don't know how to make the economy work. It's all about their ideology. It's got to fundamentally change. You have to tax investment and you've got to give a break, a break to wage-earners.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, Senator Biden.

(Applause.)

Governor?

GOV. RICHARDSON: There's no question -- there's no question that there's tax unfairness in this country, but we have to rebuild the economy. Yes, the Bush tax cuts of 2 percent; that has to go.

But I would replace those Bush tax cuts with tax cuts for the middle class. (Scattered applause.) I would reward companies that pay over the prevailing wage, that go into the inner cities, that go into rural areas. I would also have tax-free holidays for technology start-ups -- three years, if they train people in the inner city, if they hire people over the prevailing wage.

We need to rebuild this economy by being pro-growth Democrats. We should be the party of innovation, of entrepreneurship, of building capital, getting capital for African American small businesses. We need to find a way in this country that we say that globalization must work for the middle class.

MR. SMILEY: Governor?

GOV. RICHARDSON: And we need to find ways also to use the tax code, not just to simplify it, but to make it fairer --

MR. SMILEY: Governor?

GOV. RICHARDSON: -- but also to generate jobs and reward entities in this country --

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, sir.

GOV. RICHARDSON: I'm -- I'm almost finished. (Laughter.)

MR. SMILEY: Your time --

MR. WICKHAM: Yeah, thank you.

MR. SMILEY: Yes -- you are, and I thank you. (Laughter.) As I asked -- as I asked your cooperation of a moment ago again, we unapologetically wanted this conversation to be different, to cover as many subjects as much as we could, in terms of subject matter. So DeWayne Wickham's question now will be answered first by Senator Obama -- 30 seconds, and we'll cover a lot more ground. Thank you.

MR. WICKHAM: Okay. Okay, please stay with me on this one.

According to FBI data, blacks were roughly 29 percent of persons arrested in this country between 1996 and 2005. Whites were 70 percent of people arrested during this period. Yet at the end of this 10-year period, whites were 40 percent of those who were inmates in this country, and blacks were approximately 38 percent. What does this data suggest to you?

SEN. OBAMA: That the criminal justice system is not color blind. It does not work for all people equally, and that is why it's critical to have a president who sends a signal that we are going to have a system of justice that is not just us, but is everybody. (Applause.) And -- you know, this is something that I've got a track record working on at the state level, where a lot of the criminal justice issues come up.

That's why I passed racial profiling legislation at the state level. That's why I passed legislation to make sure that we didn't have wrongful convictions.

MR. WICKHAM: Senator Obama.

SEN. OBAMA: But it requires some political courage, because oftentimes you are accused of being soft on crime when you deal with these issues. (Laughter.)

MR. WICKHAM: Thank you, sir. I love you, but I'm trying to keep this moving.

Yes, sir, Congressman.

REP. KUCINICH: As president, I'll have an attorney general who's going to be sensitive to the very issues that you raised. First of all, we need to seek to end mandatory minimums. (Applause.) We know who's serving those mandatory minimums. Second, we need to have the emphasis, with respect to drug

offenses, on rehabilitation, not incarceration. And third, as president, I'll do anything I can to end the federal death penalty, which I've already introduced legislation for in the past. (Applause.) Because we need to have an approach that recognizes the discrimination which exists in our justice system.

Thank you.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Gravel.

MR. GRAVEL: Is it a surprise to anybody in this room that if you don't have any money, you don't get any justice? (Laughter.) Is that a surprise to you all? (Applause.) My gracious, the only way you're going to get justice is to turn around and empower yourselves to become lawmakers so you can change the system, and there's no thought of really changing the system today. It's politics as usual. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Senator Dodd.

SEN. DODD: Well, I agree -- I think the mandatory minimum sentencing has been a disaster. I'm a strong supporter of Charlie Rangel's efforts here to eliminate the distinction between crack cocaine and powder cocaine. (Applause.) That'll have a big difference in terms of who actually goes to jail in this country.

And then obviously, as well, we need to have a Justice Department that is not going to be politicized, as we've watched this one, with [U.S. attorneys](#) who do the political work rather than doing the justices' work in our country. As president, I will insist upon that. I'm sure the rest of my colleagues would here. We'll get better justice with Democrats in the White House.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Clinton.

SEN. CLINTON: In order to tackle this problem, we have to do all of these things.

Number one, we do have to go after racial profiling. I've supported legislation to try to tackle that.

Number two, we have to go after mandatory minimums. You know, mandatory sentences for certain violent crimes may be appropriate, but it has been too widely used. And it is using now a discriminatory impact.

Three, we need diversion, like drug courts. Non-violent offenders should not be serving hard time in our prisons. They need to be diverted from our prison system. (Applause.)

We need to make sure that we do deal with the distinction between crack and powder cocaine. And ultimately we need an attorney general and a system of justice that truly does treat people equally, and that has not happened under this administration. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Senator Biden.

SEN. BIDEN: As you well know, the bulk of the inequity's at the state level, not at the federal level, number one.

Number two, we need diversion out of the system. I'm the guy that wrote the drug court legislation that is in the law right now.

Number three, you have to eliminate the disparity between crack and powdered cocaine. I've introduced legislation to do that, one to one, no difference.

And number four, you have to find a way in which you insist from a federal level that the states in fact apply the law equally -- they don't -- through the Speedy Trial Act. The states -- 650,000 people coming out of the jail in the state prisons --

MR. SMILEY: Senator --

SEN. BIDEN: Three hundred thousand will come out addicted from the prison this year.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, Senator Biden. (Applause.)

Governor.

GOV. RICHARDSON: Carved at the marble top of the U.S. Supreme Court it says, "Equal justice under law." This country has had 200 years. Yet today 68 percent of those in jail are minorities.

In your own book, Tavis, you say that one out of three African- American males spends some time in jail. That is wrong.

And what we need is a strategy to deal with poverty. Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit. Increase the minimum wage. Have a living wage in this country. Find ways to expand child care. Find ways also to let Americans join a union. This will not only give them more health care but more accountability and the ability to protect themselves.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, Governor.

Senator Edwards.

MR. EDWARDS: Tavis, I -- everything that's been said is correct, you know -- changing mandatory minimum, changing the disparity between crack and powder cocaine, having a system that's fair. If you're African-American, you're more likely to be charged with a crime. If you're charged with a crime, you're more likely to be convicted of the crime. If you're convicted of the crime, you're more likely to get a severe sentence. There is no question that our justice system is not color-blind.

But can we also create an infrastructure for success for those who are charged and convicted for the first time, so that we help them with drug counseling, job counseling, job training, education -- (applause) -- help them get the back -- back into the community with some chance of changing their lives.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, sir.

Michel Martin's next question will be answered first by Congressman Dennis Kucinich. Michel.

MS. MARTIN: Congressman, would you support a federal law guaranteeing the right to return to New Orleans and other Gulf regions devastated by Hurricane Katrina, based on the [United Nations](#) Human Rights Standards Governing the Internal Displacement of Citizens?

REP. KUCINICH: Absolutely. What happened in New Orleans in the aftermath and how it was dealt with underscores everything that's wrong in this country about race.

First of all, New Orleans wouldn't have happened if the government had been more sensitive to make sure that those levees had been repaired when they were told they were supposed to be repaired. (Applause.)

Secondly -- secondly, New Orleans represents a hope also, because we have to make sure people have a chance to return, and they should be guaranteed that. They should also be guaranteed jobs.

I held a hearing yesterday in my Domestic Policy Subcommittee, which shows that people in New Orleans aren't getting jobs. They're hiring people from outside, and sometimes when they get jobs, they aren't being paid.

MR. SMILEY: Congressman --

REP. KUCINICH: We've got to change that. We must change it.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you.

Michel -- (applause) -- on this end, they could not hear the question. Could you repeat it again, right quick?

MS. MARTIN: Okay. The question is, would you support a federal law guaranteeing the right to return to New Orleans and other Gulf regions devastated by Hurricane Katrina, based on the United Nations human rights standards governing the internal displacement of citizens -- and I can go further -- that includes the requirement that authorities establish conditions and provides the means to allow internally displaced persons to return voluntarily in safety and dignity?

MR. SMILEY: Thank you.

Senator Gravel, 30 seconds.

MR. GRAVEL: The answer to the question is yes. And just keep in mind, if we weren't squandering our treasure on this terrible war that we didn't have to start, we would have 4 million housing units available, and a good portion of them could go to Katrina residents. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Senator Dodd?

SEN. DODD: I would as well. I -- New Orleans and Katrina have become a symbol of everything that went wrong with this administration's failure to respond to a people in need. I could think of no better way to have New Orleans and Katrina, that event, become a symbol of what we can do right in this country, by giving people the opportunity to come back and the support they will need to regain their lives.

This is an American city. Anywhere else in America, we'd want to step up and see to it that people would get that help; this is the least we ought to be able to do to see to it they get their lives back together.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Clinton? (Light applause.)

SEN. CLINTON: I have proposed a 10-point Gulf Coast Recovery Agenda, because it's sort of as a chicken and an egg issue, Michel.

First, we've got to get the hospitals back up. We've got to get the law enforcement and the fire departments -- you know, right now this administration has basically neglected with almost criminal indifference the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast, in particular New Orleans and the parishes.

So even if we were to give people a right, there is nothing to return to. We have got to rebuild New Orleans, and it's not only the protection from the levees, it is all the infrastructure. And until very recently, the administration would not give the people of New Orleans the same right we had after 9/11, which was to get [FEMA](#) money without a 10 percent match.

And we finally got that changed, but it was outrageous that it took so long. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Biden.

SEN. BIDEN: The U.S. Constitution should be sufficient. We don't need to go to the United Nations; all we got to do is step up. We got to step up and pay to rebuild those firehouses, pay to bring those cops back, pay to rebuild those hospitals. It is a nation's problem, it is not the problem merely of the people of Louisiana or New Orleans. This is an American city incapable on its own of doing this. (Applause.) It's an American problem. We should guarantee the reconstruction.

MR. SMILEY: Senator -- Governor.

GOV. RICHARDSON: The answer to your question is yes, I would support that. I would also support the Katrina Recovery Act of Representative Waters.

This has been the most disgraceful episode in an American response to help our own people. (Applause.) What we need to do in this country is not just atone for a miserable performance before, during and after Katrina, but for the future.

One, we need to make sure that FEMA is directly under the president. Secondly, we need to make sure that we eliminate the 10 percent match. They did it for 9/11 in New York; they ought to do it for this situation. Third, we should get rid of all the burdensome loans that are taken out. We also need to say --

MR. SMILEY: Governor?

GOV. RICHARDSON: -- to the insurance companies: You have to insure these people and rebuild homes in Louisiana. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Thank you. Thank you, Governor.

Senator Edwards.

MR. EDWARDS: This is an issue I care about personally and deeply. As many of you know, I announced my presidential campaign

from the Ninth Ward of New Orleans. I think we took 700 college kids down to help rebuild who gave up their spring break to work with me and others to help rebuild New Orleans. I'm proud of those kids.

(Applause.)

We have a huge responsibility. As president, I would make one person -- a very high-level, competent person in the White House -- responsible for reporting to me every day on what he did in New Orleans yesterday -- (applause) -- and then I'll say the next day: What did you do yesterday? And what we should do is allow the people of New Orleans to rebuild their own city. We ought to pay them a decent wage, give them health care coverage, instead of having big multinational --

MR. SMILEY: Senator?

MR. EDWARDS: -- corporation(s) get billion-dollar contracts with the government.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Senator Obama.

SEN. OBAMA: Well, let me -- let me finish John's thought because it's an important one. Halliburton or Bechtel or these other operations getting the contracts to rebuild instead of giving the people in New Orleans the opportunity to rebuild and get jobs and training is a further compounding of the outrage.

I think that what's most important, though, that we have a president who is in touch with the needs of New Orleans before the [hurricanes](#) -- hits, because part of the reason that we had such a tragedy was the assumption that everybody could jump in their SUVs, load up with some sparkling water and check into the nearest hotel. (Applause.)

And we've got to have -- we've got to have one person in charge. We've got to have a FEMA director that's reporting to the president, but we have to have a president who understands the reality that people in New Orleans were being neglected prior to the hurricane. And there are potential Katrinas all across this country that have been left unattended.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you.

Ruben.

MR. NAVARRETTE: Thank you.

MR. SMILEY: Ruben's question will be asked -- answered, rather, first by Senator Gravel. Yes, Ruben.

MR. NAVARRETTE: A lot of Americans are concerned with outsourcing of U.S. jobs. Most corporations, I think it's fair to say, don't share that concern. In fact, they argue that we're living in a global economy and Americans have to compete in that environment. Which side are you on? And if you agree that outsourcing is a problem, what's your solution?

MR. GRAVEL: No, outsourcing is not the problem. What is the problem is our trade agreements that we have that benefit the management and, of course, the shareholders, and have neglected on either side of the issue, whether it's in Mexico or in other countries or the United States. That's the problem that must be addressed.

So, no, it's not outsourcing. But I would add to it, it's the way all of these people want to finance health care, on the backs of businesses, that make them uncompetitive in the world. That's part of the problem. And our system of taxation is also part of the problem because it makes us uncompetitive in the world.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Gravel, thank you.

Senator Dodd.

SEN. DODD: Yes, I disagree. I think it's a huge issue here. The fact of the matter is we're exporting a lot of valuable jobs in this country and we shouldn't be doing it. I offered legislation that was passed that prohibited the Defense Department for outsourcing contracts, going off our shores here when many hard-working Americans ought to be allowed to do those jobs.

I talked earlier about providing tax incentives. When you have people literally driving to the international airports to fly to some country to provide some funding for a local project in those nations, bypassing the very communities that could very well use those kind of jobs and economic growth, that is wrong. I will continue to do what I can to see to it that we limit outsourcing American jobs. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Dodd.

Senator Clinton.

SEN. CLINTON: Well, outsourcing is a problem, and it's one that I've dealt with as a senator from New York. I started an organization called New Jobs for New York to try to stand against the tide of outsourcing, particularly from upstate New York and from rural areas.

We have to do several things: end the tax breaks that still exist in the tax code for outsourcing jobs, have trade agreements with enforceable labor and environmental standards, help Americans compete, which is something we haven't taken seriously, which goes back to the very first question about education and skills. Let's not forget that 65 percent of kids at an age, cohort, do not go on to college. What are we doing to help them get prepared for the jobs that we could keep here that wouldn't be outsourced -- and find a new source of jobs, clean energy, global warming, would create millions of new jobs for Americans. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, Senator. Senator Biden.

SEN. BIDEN: I agree with everything that was said here. But the bottom line here is that eliminating the tax breaks is not going to keep jobs here in America. We've got to make it more attractive to have jobs here in America and for corporations to be here.

You've got to take the burden off the corporations with a health care system that's universal, so we're not at a competitive disadvantage. You've got to have a better education system to provide for the highest-tech jobs that we educate our folks for, so we're not importing 400,000 computer engineers to work in Silicon Valley. And you've got to deal with the innovation and infrastructure needs in this country -- tunnels, bridges, et cetera -- which we haven't done to make us more competitive.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, Senator Biden.

Governor Richardson.

GOV. RICHARDSON: Outsourcing is a problem. Most outsourcing jobs are technical. We need to upgrade our science and math standards in our school. It's education. And I would create 250 science and math academies to deal with that gap.

In addition to that, what we need is trade agreements, fair trade agreements where we say, no slave labor, no child labor; we're not going to have -- we're going to have environmental protection; we're going to have to deal with wage disparity. And also, I would have a different attitude toward the private sector. I would say to the private sector, what is it going to take to keep you here?

I would have an industrial policy where we invest in high-growth industries, in health industries, in high-tech, in renewable energy, to keep those jobs here.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, Governor. Thank you very much.

Senator Edwards.

MR. EDWARDS: Let me say first, this is something I don't have to read about in a book. I've seen it up close. I saw what happen when the mill that my dad worked in all his life, and I worked in myself when I was young, closed and the jobs went somewhere else. It was not just devastating to him and his pride and his dignity. It was devastating to the community, and the same thing has happened all over America.

I think a lot the things that have been said are true. America's got to compete.

We have to be the best-educated, most innovative workforce on the planet.

We also need trade agreements with real environmental and labor standards that the president of the United States is willing to enforce.

And third, we need to eliminate all tax breaks for companies who are taking their jobs overseas and getting a tax break for doing it. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Senator Obama.

SEN. OBAMA: I now live in Chicago, but I'm not originally from Chicago. I moved there to work with churches, to -- that were dealing with the devastation of steel plants that had closed all throughout the region. Tens of thousands of people had been laid off.

There was never a federal effort to come in after those closings and to figure out how can we retrain workers for the jobs of the future, how can we invest and make sure capital is available to create new businesses in those communities.

And so not only do we have to deal with our trade agreements, not only do we have to eliminate tax breaks for companies that are moving overseas, not only do we have to work on our education system, but we also have to have an intentional strategy on the part of the federal government to make sure that we are reinvesting in those communities that are being burdened by globalization and not benefitting from it.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you. Thank you, Senator. (Applause.)

Congressman.

REP. KUCINICH: I've stood behind plant gates that were locked, where grass was growing in the parking lots, where they used to make steel, they used to make bicycles, washing machines. And now there's grass growing in the parking lots.

I know what the solution is, and you do, too, and I want to challenge my fellow candidates.

One of my first acts in office will be to cancel NAFTA and the WTO -- (applause) -- and go back to trade conditions on workers' rights, human rights and environmental quality principles. That's what we must do. A Democratic administration started NAFTA. A Democratic administration will end it. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: As I look at my watch, we're down to about five minutes in this conversation. This will be the last question, unfortunately. We've done a good job of covering a variety of subject matter different than the previous conversation, but DeWayne, very quickly, this will be the last question, and it will start with Senator Dodd.

MR. WICKHAM: This question is about Darfur. This is the second time that our nation has had a chance to do something about genocide in Africa. The first came in Rwanda in 1994, when we did nothing as more than a half a million people were slaughtered there. What does this country's unwillingness to move aggressively to end the slaughters that take place in Darfur today -- what does it say about our claim to moral leadership?

SEN. DODD: Well, we've unfortunately, as a result of our conflict in Iraq, the sustaining of a military presence there, have lost our moral authority, unfortunately. And as a result of that, our ability to mobilize the world on issues like Darfur has been severely damaged.

But the United States should be able to take some unilateral action here in providing the kind of protection where people are being slaughtered in that country; and in the meantime, get our military out of Iraq, as I've planned and offered to do, and thus regain that stature, which we need to be doing as a nation in this world and be able to build those coalitions --

MR. SMILEY: Senator Dodd.

SEN. DODD: -- (that will ?) respond to an issue like Darfur. But in the meantime, the United States ought to act. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, Senator Dodd.

Very quickly, Senator Clinton.

SEN. CLINTON: There are three things we have to do immediately. Move the peacekeepers that finally the United Nations and the [African Union](#) have agreed to into Sudan as soon as possible. In order for them to be effective, there has to be airlift and logistical support, and that can only come either unilaterally from the United States or from [NATO](#). I prefer NATO. And finally, we should have a no-fly zone over Sudan because the Sudanese governments bomb the villages before and after the Janjawid come. And we should make it very clear to the government in Khartoum we're putting up a no-fly zone; if they fly into it, we will shoot down their planes. Is the only way to get their attention. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Biden.

SEN. BIDEN: I have been calling for three years to stop talking and start acting. We don't have to wait to get out of Iraq to regain our moral authority. We've lost part of our moral authority because we stood by and watched this carnage. And if need be, if the rest of the world will not act, we should, and should have already -- two years ago -- imposed a no-fly zone, and we should have two years ago, absent the willingness of the rest of the world to act, put American troops on the ground to stop the carnage. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Senator Biden. Thank you, sir.

Governor Richardson.

GOV. RICHARDSON: You know, in the last debate I upset some people because I said we should use the levers on China, on them hosting the Olympics, to do something on Darfur. You know, I believe that fighting genocide is more important than sports. So what I would like to do is, one, a no-fly zone. Get economic sanctions backed by the Europeans.

We need to find ways to stop the massive rapes. I was in Darfur three months ago. Today a report by Refugees International laid out a plan to deal with --

MR. SMILEY: Governor, I got to --

GOV. RICHARDSON: -- that.

MR. SMILEY: I hate to cut you off.

GOV. RICHARDSON: We should not forget about Africa. American policymakers should take stands --

MR. SMILEY: Thank you, Governor. GOV. RICHARDSON: -- not just the Middle East and Iraq.

MR. SMILEY: Senator -- thank you very much.

Senator Edwards? Thank you very much. Senator Edwards? (Applause.)

MR. EDWARDS: I agree, a no-fly zone -- we need to get a security force on the ground; sanctions -- we need to put pressure on the Chinese. But I -- Darfur is part of a bigger question for America, which is, how do we re-establish ourselves after Iraq as a force for good in the world again? And I think there are lots of things we ought to do.

Instead of spending \$500 billion in Iraq, suppose America led an effort to make primary school education available to 100 million children in the world who have no education, including in Africa.

MR. SMILEY: Senator Edwards --

MR. EDWARDS: Suppose we led on stopping the spread of disease, sanitation, clean drinking water and economic development.

MR. SMILEY: Thank you. Thank you very much. I got just a few seconds.

Senator Obama? (Applause.)

SEN. OBAMA: The no-fly zone is important. Having the protective force is critical. But we have to look at Africa not just after a crisis happens; what are we doing with respect to trade opportunities with Africa? What are we doing in terms of investment in Africa? What are we doing to pay attention to Africa consistently with respect to our foreign policy? That has been what's missing in the White House, and that -- (applause) -- our term security is going to depend on whether we're giving children in Sudan and Zimbabwe and in Kenya the same opportunities so that they have a stake in order as opposed to violence and chaos. (Applause.)

MR. SMILEY: Congressman, I've got 15 seconds for you and 15 seconds for Mr. Gravel, very quickly.

REP. KUCINICH: It's time for the United States to stop looking at Africa as a place where our corporations can exploit the people and -- (cheers, applause) -- I mean, because let's face it, let's -- let's face it, if Darfur had a large supply of oil, this administration would be occupying it right now.

MR. SMILEY: Congressman --

REP. KUCINICH: We need to -- (cheers, applause) -- we need to stop --

MR. SMILEY: Congressman, thank --

REP. KUCINICH: -- we need to stop giving Sudan a pass. They're looking the other way --

MR. SMILEY: Congressman, I hate to cut you off. I got to get at least a quick response from Senator Gravel.

MR. GRAVEL: It's very simple. If we have a president, he has to have moral judgment.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: (Off mike) -- mike --

MR. GRAVEL: What? No mike? You can't hear me?

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: No.

MR. GRAVEL: You can hear me now? We have to have a president who has moral judgment. Most of the people on this stage with me do not have that judgment, and have proven it by the simple fact of what they've done. (Laughter.)

MR. SMILEY: We are up against the clock. My thanks to all. Please thank all the candidates for joining us tonight. We'll see you again September 27th for the Republican All-American Presidential Forum. Until then, good night from Washington. Thanks for watching. And as always, keep the faith. (Applause.)