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## CNN LIVE EVENT/SPECIAL

### Republican Debate

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JOHN KING, CNN ANCHOR: Welcome to Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire, and the first Republican presidential debate in this first-in-the-nation primary state. Behind me on this stage, the Republican candidates for president appearing together on the same stage for the first time tonight.

And tonight's debate will be different than any presidential debate you've ever seen. Over the course of the next two hours, in addition to questions from myself and journalists from our partners, WMUR and the New Hampshire Union Leader, the candidates will take questions directly from voters right here in Manchester, as well as from voters at town meetings taking place tonight all across New Hampshire.

So let's get right to it and meet the candidates. Now, we've asked for no opening statements. However, we will continue a tradition from our past New Hampshire debates, to ask each candidate in one short sentence -- hopefully, five, maybe six or seven seconds -- to introduce themselves to the voters of New Hampshire and the United States of America.

Let me begin with an example. I'm John King with CNN. I am honored to be your moderator tonight, and I am thrilled to be back in Red Sox nation.

(APPLAUSE)

Now, let's start at the edge of the stage with Senator Rick Santorum.

FORMER SEN. RICK SANTORUM (R), PENNSYLVANIA: Hello, New Hampshire. I'm Rick Santorum. I served 12 years representing Pennsylvania in the United States Senate, but I also have substantial executive experience making the tough decisions and balancing budgets and cutting spending. Karen and I are the parents of seven children.

(APPLAUSE)

KING: Congresswoman?

REP. MICHELE BACHMANN (R), MINNESOTA: Hi, my name is Michelle Bachmann. I'm a former federal tax litigation attorney. I'm a businesswoman. We started our own successful company. I'm also a member of the United States Congress. I'm a wife of 33 years. I've had five children, and we are the proud foster parents of 23 great children. And it's a thrill to be here tonight in the "Live Free or Die" state. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

KING: Mr. Speaker?

FORMER HOUSE SPEAKER NEWT GINGRICH: I'm Newt Gingrich, former speaker of the House. And when 14 million Americans are out of work, we need a new president to end the Obama depression.

(APPLAUSE)

KING: Governor?

FORMER GOV. MITT ROMNEY (R), MASSACHUSETTS: I'm Mitt Romney, and it's an honor to be back at Saint Anselm. Hopefully I'll get it right this year. And appreciate the chance to be with you and to welcome my wife. And I have five sons, as you know, five daughters-in-law, 16 grandkids. The most important thing in my life is to make sure their future is bright and that America is always known as the hope of the Earth. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

REP. RON PAUL (R), TEXAS: I am Congressman Ron Paul. I've been elected to the Congress 12 times from Texas. Before I went into the Congress, I delivered babies for a living and delivered 4,000 babies. Now I would like to be known and defend the title that I am the champion of liberty and I defend the Constitution. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

KING: Governor?

FORMER GOV. TIM PAWLENTY (R), MINNESOTA: Good evening, I'm Tim Pawlenty. I'm a husband. My wife, Mary, and I have been married for 23 years. I'm the father of two beautiful daughters, Anna and Mara. I'm a neighbor. And I'm running for president of the United States because I love America, but like you, I'm concerned about its future. I've got the experience and the leadership and the results to lead it to a better place.

(APPLAUSE)

KING: Mr. Cain?

HERMAN CAIN, GODFATHER PIZZA CEO: Hello, I'm Herman Cain. I am not a politician. I am a problem-solver with over 40 years of business and executive experience, father of two, grandfather of three, and I'm here tonight because it's not about us. It's about those grandkids. Happy to be here in New Hampshire.

(APPLAUSE)

KING: All right.

Our thanks to the candidates. You'll get to know them better as the night goes on. Our rules are pretty straightforward. Each candidate will be given one minute to answer our leadoff questions. At my discretion, I may ask other candidates to weigh in on each topic. Now, candidates would get about 30 seconds to answer those follow-up questions. I say about 30 seconds, because we're on the honor system tonight, no bells, no whistles. You won't see any flashing lights up here.

If they're running over time, I'll try to gently remind them it's time to move on. And we're hoping some of the answers will be as short -- maybe a sentence, maybe even just one word. We can hope, right?

We've also asked the candidates to answer the questions that they're asked, rather than the question they might have wished to be asked.

That's enough -- uh-huh -- that's enough for me tonight. Let's get straight to the people of New Hampshire. Now, our first question comes from a voter up in Plymouth. Also there is the New Hampshire Union Leader's Tom Fahey. Tom?

(APPLAUSE)

JOHN FAHEY, NEW HAMPSHIRE UNION LEADER: Thank you, John.

I'm here with Mr. Marquez-Sterling. He is a retired professor from Plymouth State University, and he's got a question about jobs.

QUESTION: Yes. Mr. Gingrich said that 14 million people are unemployed. My question is this. The Democrats say that the Republicans don't have any plans to create jobs, and jobs -- and jobs in the private sector, not in the government jobs. I'd like to know, what are those plans?

KING: Mr. Cain, let me start with you tonight. And be as specific as you can. I hope I don't have to repeat this throughout the night. How would you -- what would you do as president of the United States to create jobs?

CAIN: The thing we need to do is to get this economy boosted. This economy is stalled. It's like a train on the tracks with no engine. And the administration has simply been putting all of this money in the caboose.

We need an engine called the private sector. That means lower taxes, lower the capital gains tax rate to zero, suspend taxes on repatriated profits, then make them permanent. Uncertainty is killing this economy. This is the only way we're going to get this economy moving, and that's to put the right fuel in the engine, which is the private sector.

KING: All right, let me come down to this. And, Senator Santorum, you mentioned -- you said you have executive experience, as well as your Senate experience. Governor Pawlenty laid out an economic plan. A lot of tax cuts in that plan. Some economists said he had some unrealistic expectations, and he said you could grow the economy 5 percent a year, then 5 percent a year, then 5 percent a year. Do you believe that is a possibility? Or is that too optimistic to the American people, who want help but don't want to be misled?

SANTORUM: Yeah, I think we need a president who's optimistic, who has a pro-growth agenda. I'm not going to comment on 5 percent or 4 percent. What we need is a -- is an economy that's unshackled.

And what's happened in this administration is that they have passed oppressive policy and oppressive regulation after -- Obamacare being first and foremost. The oppressiveness of that bill on businesses -- anybody that wants to invest to get any kind of return, when you see the regulations that are going to be put on business, when you see the taxation.

Throw on top of that what this president's done on energy. The reason we're seeing this second dip is because of energy prices, and this president has put a stop sign again -- against oil drilling, against any kind of exploration offshore or in Alaska, and that is depressing. We need to drill. We need to create energy jobs, just like we're doing, by the way, in Pennsylvania, where we're drilling 3,000 wells this year for gas, and gas prices are down -- natural gas prices are down as a result.

KING: OK, I'm going to try to ask all of you to keep the follow-ups to 30 seconds as we -- so we can get more in.

Governor Pawlenty, answer the critics -- and as you do so -- who say 5 percent every year is just unrealistic. And as you do so, where's the proof -- where's the proof that just cutting taxes will create jobs? If that were true, why during the Bush years, after the big tax cut, where were the jobs?

PAWLENTY: Well, John, my plan involves a whole plan, not just cutting taxes. We're proposing to cut taxes, reduce regulation, speed up this pace of government, and to make sure that we have a pro-growth agenda.

This president is a declinist. He views America as one of equals around the world. We're not the same as Portugal; we're not the same as Argentina. And this idea that we can't have 5 percent growth in America is hogwash. It's a defeatist attitude. If China can have 5 percent growth and Brazil can have 5 percent growth, then the United States of America can have 5 percent growth.

And I don't accept this notion that we're going to be average or anemic. So my proposal has a 5 percent growth target. It cuts taxes, but it also dramatically cuts spending. We need to fix regulation. We need to have a pro-American energy policy. We need to fix health care policy. And if you do those things, as I've proposed, including cut spending, you'll get this economy moving and growing the private economy by shrinking government.

KING: I don't want to do much of this, but I'm going to have to interrupt if people go a little bit long so we can get more done.

Governor Romney, I want you to come in on that point. Is 5 percent overly optimistic? And is it fair to compare the United States' economy, a fully developed economy, to the Chinese economy, which is still in many ways developing?

ROMNEY: Look, Tim has the right instincts, which is he recognizes that what this president has done has slowed the economy. He didn't create the recession, but he made it worse and longer. And now we have more chronic long-term employment than this country has ever seen before, 20 million people out of work, stopped looking for work, or in part-time jobs that need full-time jobs. We've got housing prices continuing to decline, and we have foreclosures at record levels.

This president has failed. And he's failed at a time when the American people counted on him to create jobs and get the economy growing. And instead of doing that, he delegated the stimulus to Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid, and then he did what he wanted to do: card-check, cap-and-trade, Obamacare, reregulation.

I spent my life in the private sector, 25 years.

KING: All right.

ROMNEY: And as I went around the world -- this is an important topic -- I went around the world...

KING: We'll have a lot of time on the topic. We just -- we won't get through this...

ROMNEY: You can tell how -- how to get jobs going in this country, and President Obama has done it wrong. And the ideas Tim described, those are in the right wheelhouse.

KING: Mr. Speaker, if you look at a poll in the Boston Globe just the other day, 54 percent of Republican voters in this state say they're willing to have higher taxes on the wealthy to help bring down the deficit. Are they wrong?

GINGRICH: Well, the question is, would it, in fact, increase jobs or kill jobs? The Reagan recovery, which I participated in passing, in seven years created for this current economy the equivalent of 25 million new jobs, raised federal revenue by \$800 billion a year in terms of the current economy, and clearly it worked. It's a historic fact.

The Obama administration is an anti-jobs, anti-business, anti-American energy destructive force. And we shouldn't talk about what we do in 2013. The Congress this year, this next week ought to repeal the Dodd-Frank bill, they ought to repeal the Sarbanes-Oxley bill, they ought to start creating jobs right now, because for those 14 million Americans, this is a depression now.

KING: The speaker just said, Congresswoman, repeal Dodd-Frank. Answer the American out there who says maybe I don't like all of the details, but after what happened in 2007 and 2008, I don't want Wall Street to not have somebody looking at them, watching what they're doing. BACHMANN: Well, I'm looking forward to answering that question, because I introduced the repeal bill to repeal Dodd-Frank, because it's an over-the-top bill that will actually lead to more job loss, rather than job creation.

But before I fully answer that, I just want to make an announcement here for you, John, on CNN tonight. I filed today my paperwork to seek the office of the presidency of the United States today. And I'll very soon be making my formal announcement.

So I wanted you to be the first to know.

(APPLAUSE)

KING: I appreciate that. Well, welcome. If you're out there and you don't get the distinction coming into the night, Congresswoman Bachmann was exploring. She hadn't taken that last step. The other candidates had taken it. I'm sure they welcome you to the fray.

Let's continue the conversation. I want to come to Congressman Paul. You're all here saying the president of the United States is making the economy worse. Has he done one thing -- has he done one thing right when it comes to the economy in this country?

PAUL: Boy, that's a tough question.

(LAUGHTER)

No, no, I can't think of anything, but may I answer the question that you alluded to before about whether or not 5 percent is too optimistic? No, there's nothing wrong without -- without setting a goal of 5 percent or 10 percent or 15 percent, if you have a free-market economy.

We're trying to unwind a Keynesian bubble that's been going on for 70 years, and you're not going to touch this problem until you liquidate the bad debt and the mal-investment, go back to work. But you have to have sound money, and you have to recognize how we got in the trouble.

We got in the trouble because we had a financial bubble, and it's caused by the Federal Reserve. If you don't look at monetary policy, we will continue the trend of the last decade. We haven't even -- we haven't developed any new jobs in the last decade. Matter of fact, we've had 30 million new people and no new jobs, and it's because they don't -- the people don't understand monetary policy and central economic planning things.

Free markets will give you 10 percent or 15 percent growth or whatever (ph) and you will not have to turn it off because you think it's going to cause inflation. It doesn't work that way.

KING: All right, I'm going to jump -- I'm going to jump in here. I'm going to ask one more time politely. We want to get as many voters as we can involved, so please try to shorten the follow-up answers just a bit if you can. Let's go back to Tom in Plymouth. He has another voter with a question.

FAHEY: Yes, thank you, John. I'm here with Sylvia Smith. She's from Littleton. And she is a freelance journalist who's written about the health care industry. She has a question about health care.

QUESTION: Yes. As a journalist who's written frequently about health care and medicine for both newspapers and for corporate publications, I'm very concerned about the overreach of the massive health care legislation that was passed last year. My question is, what would each candidate do? What three steps would they take to de-fund Obamacare and repeal it as soon as possible? Thank you.

KING: Congresswoman Bachmann, let's start with you on that.

BACHMANN: Thank you, John. Sylvia, thank you for that great question. I was the very first member of Congress to introduce the full-scale repeal of Obamacare. And I want to make a promise to everyone watching tonight: As president of the United States, I will not rest until I repeal Obamacare. It's a promise. Take it to the bank, cash the check. I'll make sure that that happens.

This is the symbol and the signature issue of President Obama during his entire tenure. And this is a job-killer, Sylvia. The CBO, the Congressional Budget Office has said that Obamacare will kill 800,000 jobs. What could the president be thinking by passing a bill like this, knowing full well it will kill 800,000 jobs?

Senior citizens get this more than any other segment of our population, because they know in Obamacare, the president of the United States took away \$500 billion, a half-trillion dollars out of Medicare, shifted it to Obamacare to pay for younger people, and it's senior citizens who have the most to lose in Obamacare.

KING: Governor Romney, just yesterday, Governor Pawlenty, who is to your left on the stage tonight, called your Massachusetts plan, which you know has become a focal point of the criticism in this campaign from your friends here, Obamneycare, Obamneycare. Is that a fair comparison?

ROMNEY: You know, let me say a couple things. First, if I'm elected president, I will repeal Obamacare, just as Michelle indicated. And also, on my first day in office, if I'm lucky enough to have that office, I will grant a waiver to all 50 states from Obamacare.

Now, there's some similarities and there are some big differences. Obamacare spends a trillion dollars. If it were perfect -- and it's not perfect, it's terrible -- we can't afford more federal spending.

Secondly, it raises \$500 billion in taxes. We didn't raise taxes in Massachusetts.

Third, Obamacare takes \$500 billion out of Medicare and funds Obamacare. We, of course, didn't do that.

And, finally, ours was a state plan, a state solution, and if people don't like it in our state, they can change it. That's the nature of why states are the right place for this type of responsibility. And that's why I introduced a plan to repeal Obamacare and replace it with a state-centric program.

KING: Governor, you just heard the governor rebut your characterization, Obamneycare. Why?

PAWLENTY: Well, let me first say to Sylvia, she has put her finger on one of the most important issues facing the country, which is President Obama stood before the nation in 2008 and said he promised to do health care reform focused on cost containment, along with Republicans, he'd do it on a bipartisan basis...

KING: The question -- the question, Governor, was, why Obamneycare?

PAWLENTY: That's right. Well, I'm going to get to that, John.

KING: You have 30 seconds, Governor.

PAWLENTY: Yeah, so we -- this is another example of him breaking his promise, and he has to be held accountable. And in order to prosecute the case against President Obama, you have to be able to show that you've got a better plan and a different plan. We took a different approach in Minnesota. We didn't use top-down government mandates and individual requirements from government. We created market alternatives and empowered consumers. I think that's the way to fix health care in the United States of America.

KING: And you don't want to address why you called Governor Romney's Obamneycare?

PAWLENTY: Well, the issue that was raised in a question from a reporter was, what are the similarities between the two? And I just cited President Obama's own words that he looked to Massachusetts as a blueprint or a guide when he designed Obamacare.

KING: But you chose -- you say you were asked a question, which is fair enough, but you chose those words. And so one of my questions is, why would you chose those -- choose those words maybe in the comfort of a Sunday show studio? Your rival is standing right there. If it was Obamneycare on "Fox News Sunday," why isn't it not Obamneycare standing here with the governor right there?

PAWLENTY: It -- President Obama is -- is the person who I quoted in saying he looked to Massachusetts for designing his program. He's the one who said it's a blueprint and that he merged the two programs. And so using the term "Obamneycare" was a reflection of the president's comments that he designed Obamacare on the Massachusetts health care plan.

KING: All right.

Governor, you want to respond to that at all?

ROMNEY: No, just -- just to say this, which is my guess is the president is going to eat those words and wish he hasn't -- hadn't put them out there. And I can't wait to debate him and say, Mr. President, if, in fact, you did look at what we did in Massachusetts, why didn't you give me a call and ask what worked and what didn't? And I would have told you, Mr. President, that what you're doing will not work.

It's a huge power grab by the federal government. It's going to be massively expensive, raising taxes, cutting Medicare. It's wrong for America. And that's why there's an outpouring across the nation to say no to Obamacare. And I'm delighted to be able to debate him on that.

KING: OK. Mr. Speaker...

(CROSSTALK)

KING: ... you have a -- I'll let you -- Mr. Speaker, you have at times said, you know, maybe you do have a consider a mandate. You've been very open to the individual mandate. It has become, it seems, at least at the moment, a litmus test in this Republican primary. Should it be?

GINGRICH: Yes, it should be. If you -- if you explore the mandate, which even the Heritage Foundation at one time looked at, the fact is, when you get into an mandate, it ultimately ends up with unconstitutional powers. It allows the government to define virtually everything. And if you can do it for health care, you can do it for everything in your life, and, therefore, we should not have a mandate.

But I want to answer Sylvia at a different level. This campaign cannot be only about the presidency. We need to pick up at least 12 seats in the U.S. Senate and 30 or 40 more seats in the House, because if you are serious about repealing Obamacare, you have to be serious about building a big enough majority in the legislative branch that you could actually in the first 90 days pass the legislation.

So I just think it's very important to understand, it's not about what one person in America does. It's about what the American people do. And that requires a senatorial majority, as well as a presidency.

KING: All right. We'll have more time to discuss the health care issue. Let's get down to the floor.

Jennifer Vaughn from WMUR has a question from a voter.

VAUGHN: Hi, John. Thank you very much. I'd like you to meet Terry Pfaff tonight. Tell me I said that last name correctly, Terry. Granite State born and bred?

TERRY PFAFF, FORMER NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE SENATE CANDIDATE: Yes, ma'am.

VAUGHN: Thank you for being here. And what's your question for the candidates tonight?

PFAFF: Well, my question is that I am a New Hampshire native and I've been an active Republican for years from a town committee chairman, Republican chairman, Merrimack County, vice chairman, all the way up to 2004 delegate for President Bush.

My question is, how will you convince myself? I'm not a libertarian Republican, I'm not a Tea Party Republican. I'm just a mainstream Republican. And we need both -- the independents and mainstream Republicans to win in November.

How can you convince me and assure me that you'll bring a balance and you won't be torn to one side or the other for many factions within the party? You have to have a balanced approach to governing to solve our serious problems.

KING: Senator Santorum, let me go to you first on that one.

SANTORUM: Well, if you look at my record, I'm someone who's actually accomplished a lot on big issues. Take for example welfare reform. I was in the United States Senate and actually at the direction of Newt Gingrich I was on the Ways and Means Committee and I drafted the Contract with America Welfare Reform Bill.

It was considered this extreme measure. Well, that extreme measure we ended up winning an election and getting those seats. And that was now the starting point. And I managed that bill in the United States Senate because I cared about the dignity of every person.

I didn't believe that poverty was the ultimate disability. I believed that people could work and they could succeed. And we brought people together. I got 70 votes to end a federal entitlement -- to end a federal entitlement which was what Paul Ryan's proposed for Medicaid, he's proposed for food stamps, he's proposed for other welfare programs.

We did it. We set the template, and I led and got bipartisan support to do it.

KING: Can I ask you quickly now? That wasn't -- addressed part of the question. But are you concerned at all about the influence of the Tea Party?

SANTORUM: Not at all. I think the Tea Party is a great backstop for America. I love it when people hold up this Constitution and say we have to live by what our founders laid out for this country. It is absolutely essential that we have that backbone to the Republican Party going into this election.

KING: I know you agree, Congresswoman. So help the gentleman. Address his concerns that the Tea Party somehow -- the influence of the Tea Party somehow pushes him out?

BACHMANN: Terry, what I've seen in the Tea Party -- I'm the chairman of the Tea Party Caucus in the House of Representatives. And what I've seen is unlike how the media has tried to wrongly and grossly portray the Tea Party, the Tea Party is really made up of disaffected Democrats, independents, people who've never been political a day in their life.

People who are libertarians, Republicans. It's a wide swath of America coming together. I think that's why the left fears it so much. Because they're people who simply want to take the country back. They want the country to work again.

And I think there's no question, Terry, this election will be about economics. It will be about how will we create jobs, how will we turn the economy around, how will we have a pro-growth economy.

That's a great story for Republicans to tell. President Obama can't tell that story. His report card right now has a big failing grade on it, but Republicans have an awesome story to tell.

We need every one of us in a three-legged stool. We need the peace through strength of Republicans, we need the fiscal conservatives, we need the social conservatives. We need everybody to come together because we're going to win. Just make no mistake about it.

I want to announce tonight. President Obama is a one-term president.

(CHEERS AND APPLAUSE)

BACHMANN: You'll win.

KING: I'm being polite so far. But I want to remind everybody about the time.

Mr. Cain, as somebody who has no elective no experience.

CAIN: Yes.

KING: To this gentleman's question. If you were to become the nominee of this party.

CAIN: Yes.

KING: And you associate yourself with the Tea Party, politics is about math. It's about coalition building. And a candidate who loses a mainstream Republican as he describes himself might not win this state in November. Might not win a big state like Senator Santorum's Pennsylvania in November.

Address the concern of the gentleman who seems to think that at least some people in the Tea Party maybe in their dissatisfaction, their anger of the president are too negative, too critical.

CAIN: They're not too negative and they're not too critical. As a businessman, one of the first things that you do, which has allowed me to be successful throughout my career is make sure you're working on the right problem. If we make sure we're working on the right problem, I will surround myself with the right people and then we will put together the right plans that I'm going to take it to the people. I will be a president to do what's right, not what's politically right.

And so if the other party disagrees but the American people embrace those common sense solutions, that's how we get things done. So those experiences in the business world, managing large organizations with a very diverse constituency are the same skills that can help get the people involved and not exclude the people like this administration has done.

KING: I want to remind the candidates, though, this as I remind people in the audience. CNN is hosting a Tea Party debate September 12th. So watch how this plays out. The Tea Party was a vocal in 2010. We'll see how much the influence is in 2012.

Let's continue our conversation here with the voters of New Hampshire.

Jean Mackin of WMUR is in Hancock with a voter and a question -- Jean.

JEAN MACKIN, WMUR: Thanks very much, John. And welcome to the Hancock Inn. I'm standing here with Mike Patinsky. He is a small business owner from Harris Field, New Hampshire.

And Mike, what question do you have tonight?

MIKE PATINSKY, DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION, FRANKLIN PIERCE COLLEGE: Well, for the candidates I'd like to know how they plan on returning manufacturing jobs to the United States.

KING: Congressman Paul, why don't you start with that one?

PAUL: Pretty important because everything we've done in the last 20 or 30 years we've exported our jobs. And when you have a reserve currency of the world and you abuse it, you export money. That becomes the main export so it goes with the money.

You have to invite capital. The way you get capital into a country, you have to have a strong currency, not a weak currency. Today it's a deliberate job of the Federal Reserve to weaken the currency. We should invite capital back.

First thing is, we have trillions of dollars, at least over a trillion dollars of U.S. money made overseas, but it stays over there because if you bring it home, they get taxed. If you want to, we need to get the Fed to quit printing the money and if you want capital, you have to entice those individuals to repatriate their money and take the taxes off, set up a financial system, deregulate and de-tax to invite people to go back to work again.

But as long as we run a program of deliberately weakening our currency, our jobs will go overseas, and that is what's happened for a good many years, especially in the last decade. KING: Governor Pawlenty, does the congressman have it right?

PAWLENTY: There's a number of things we need to do. Restore manufacturing in this country. And I grew up in a meat packing town. I grew up in a manufacturing town. I was in a union for six or seven years.

I understand what it's like to see the blue-collar communities and the struggles that they've had when manufacturing leaves. So I've seen that firsthand. But number one, we've got to have fair trade, and what's going on right now is not fair.

I'm for a fair and open trade but I'm not for being stupid and I'm not for being a chump. And we have individuals and organizations and countries around this world who are not following the rules when it comes to fair trade. We need a stronger president and somebody who's going to take on those issues.

Number two, we need to make the costs and burdens of manufacturing in this country lower. We're asking them to climb the mountain with a big backpack full of rocks on their back. We have to take the rocks out.

One of them is Obamacare. I mean somebody in Arizona the other day. He's moving his whole company out of the country just because of Obamacare. The taxes are too high. The regulations are too heavy, the permitting is too slow, and the message everywhere around this country, from business leaders large and small, including manufacturing, is get the government off my back. As president I will.

KING: How about to help workers, Congressman, get ready for the new jobs in manufacturing? Should the United States government, the federal government we say help in community colleges with their vocational training programs and things like that?

BACHMANN: Well, the United States federal government and the states have done numerous job training programs over the year with mixed results. This is what we need to do to turn job creation around and bring manufacturing back to the United States.

What we need to do is today the United States has the second highest corporate tax rate in the world. I'm a former federal tax lawyer. I've seen the devastation. We've got to bring that tax rate down substantially so that we're among the lowest in the industrialized world.

Here's the other thing. Every time the liberals get into office, they pass an omnibus bill of big spending projects. What we need to do is pass the mother of all repeal bills, but it's the repeal bill that will get a job killing regulations. And I would begin with the EPA, because there is no other agency like the EPA. It should really be renamed the job-killing organization of America.

KING: OK. OK. I'll get to you in one second. I just want to show people. We're asking people watching at home also to tell us on Facebook, in Twitter what concerns them.

If you watch up here and take a look. Just look what's happened. Three most important issues this election season regardless of party, jobs, the jobless, and whether you want a job.

Senator Santorum, your state of Pennsylvania, a big industrial state that has struggled in recent years.

SANTORUM: I always am from Pennsylvania. We still make things there, and I represented the Steel Valley of Pittsburgh when I was in the Congress. And what I learned from growing up in Butler, Pennsylvania, steel town is that the broad middle of America was a broad middle of America when we had lots of manufacturing here because that's how the wealth from those who create the jobs get down.

And we've been outsourcing those jobs. So what we need to do is a lot of what was said here. I would add another thing that I'm specifically proposing. We need to cut the capital gains tax in half which others have proposed but for manufacturers we need to give a five-year window where we cut it to zero.

We want to encourage people to set up jobs here in America. Take that R&D credit, make it permanent, take that innovation and then invest that money here to create that broad middle of America and have that wealth really trickle down.

KING: Let's stay on jobs and the economy. We'll get to everybody. Just want to bring in Josh McElveen from WMUR who's down there on the floor. He has a question related to this.

JOSH MCELVEEN, WMUR POLITICAL REPORTER: Thank you, John. Good evening, candidates.

Governor Pawlenty, the possibility exists that New Hampshire could soon become the 23rd state to pass right to work legislation. Unions don't like it because they feel it making membership volunteer. We can organize labor, you know, you've seen the protest in your home state of Minnesota.

My question is, where do you fall on right to work and would you support a federal right-to-work law?

PAWLENTY: We live in the United States of America and people shouldn't be forced to belong or be a member in any organization. And the government has no business telling you what group to be a member of or not. I support strongly right-to-work legislation.

(APPLAUSE)

PAWLENTY: Like I said, for much of his life my dad was a teamster truck driver. My brothers and sisters, many of them are in unions, I was in a union. We grew up in a blue-collar town. I understand these issues.

My family were Reagan-Democrats, now most of them listen to Rush Limbaugh actually. But the point is, I understand these issues, but we don't have a government tell us what organizations or associations we should be in. We tell the government what to do.

KING: Mr. Speaker, I assume you agree. And as you come into the conversation, one of the criticisms -- you tell me whether it's fair or not. One of the criticisms has been, as you watch some of these governors deal with this issue across the country, that some people say there's a tone about it. That they seem to be trying to demonize public employees or union workers.

GINGRICH: Well, that's a totally different question. The question that's asked was right to work. And one of the things the Congress should do immediately is defund the National Labor Relations Board which has gone into South Carolina to punish Boeing, which wants to put 8,000 American jobs in South Carolina by fundamentally eliminating right-to-work at the National Labor Relations Board.

That's a real, immediate threat from the Obama administration to eliminate right to work. And I think that it is fundamentally the wrong direction. I hope that New Hampshire does adopt right-to-work. I frankly keep it at the state level because as each new state becomes right to work, they send a signal to the remaining states, don't be stupid.

Why you want to be at California's unemployment level when you can be Texas's employment level? Or North Dakota's?

And I think, Kevin (ph), that if you believe in the 10th Amendment, we ought to -- let the states learn from each other. And the right-to-work states are creating a lot more jobs today that they heavily unionized states. The public employee union question is a totally different issue.

KING: All right. Maybe we'll come back to that.

Mr. Cain, I will let you in quickly on this one. As a businessman who says your strength in this campaign is someone who's created jobs, the question of right-to-work?

CAIN: Yes. I do believe that the states should have the right. I believe in right-to-work, and I hope that New Hampshire is able to get it passed. And I agree with the speaker and the others who believe that if the federal government continues to do the kinds of thing that this administration is trying to do through the back door, through the National Labor Relations Board, that's killing our free market system, and the free market system is what made this economy great. And we have to keep the free market system strong.

KING: A lot more ground to cover with our candidates. We're about to take our first break of the evening. We will have several. A lot more ground to cover. A lot more domestic policy, a lot of foreign policy. We want to see who you might want as your next commander in chief should you choose to make President Obama a one-term president.

One of the other things we want to do, though, is to learn a little bit more about these candidates and their personalities. So I'm going to borrow something from my sports fan experience. Every time we go to break or come back from break, I'm going to ask the candidates one at a time a question I'll call this or that. I give them a choice. These are not serious political issues. It's just to show a little bit of the personal sides of our candidate.

Senator Santorum, I want to start with you.

SANTORUM: Thank you.

KING: Of course.

(LAUGHTER)

KING: Leno or Conan?

SANTORUM: Probably Leno. But I don't watch either. Sorry.

KING: All right. That's all right. That's the answer -- the answer is the answer.

And for those of you watching at home, remember, the Facebook, Twitter, send us questions, send us your analysis. A little bit later we'll also give you a chance for some exclusive content. Get your smartphone ready. I'll explain that a little bit ahead. We'll be right back at Saint Anselm College in just a moment.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: Welcome back to our Republican debate at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire.

One of the things we are very eager to do throughout the campaign is to involve you at home and to use technology and innovation. So if you have a smartphone, look at your screen right now.

If you've used it before, you'll know. You'll see an electronic code on your screen. You can snap a picture of that code, you'll get some exclusive access about the debate. Some behind-the-scenes video, some analysis and content. We'll do this throughout the debate and we'll do it throughout the campaign.

Now we're going to get back to questioning our seven Republican candidates for president.

Right before the break we did this thing called "This or That." Just to learn a little bit about the personality of the candidates.

Senator Santorum doesn't stay up very late. He's a parent. I understand that. He said if he had to he would pick Leno over Conan.

Congresswoman Bachmann, to you, Elvis or Johnny Cash?

BACHMANN: That's really tough. That's really -- both, both.

KING: Both?

BACHMANN: Yes.

KING: Both.

BACHMANN: I've "Christmas with Elvis" on my iPod.

(LAUGHTER)

KING: All right. Now we know what's on the congresswoman's iPod.

Let's get to John Distaso of the "Union Leader." He's down here in the audience and he has a question.

JOHN DISTASO, NEW HAMPSHIRE UNION LEADER SR. POLITICAL REPORTER: Thank you, John.

To federal -- Congressman Paul, this is for you. The federal government now assists many industries, green jobs, the auto industry, research and development, all get subsidies. Given the current state of the economy, what standards do you have, if any, for government assistance to private enterprise?

PAUL: There shouldn't be any government assistance to private enterprise. It's not morally correct, it's legal, it's bad economics. It's not part of the constitution. If you allow an economy to thrive, they'll decide how R&D works or where they invest their monies.

But when the politicians get in and direct things, you get the malinvestment. They do the dumb things. They might build too many houses. And they might not direct their research to the right places. So no, it's a fallacy to think that government and politicians and bureaucrats are smart enough to manage the economy, so it shouldn't happen.

KING: All right. These are the Republicans, the conservative candidates. Every time you applaud, I know you're happy with the answer. You take your time away, though.

We would expect to get an answer of less government is better. One of the questions we want to explore tonight is when -- when do you reach that extraordinary moment where the government might want to do something.

Mr. Cain, I want to ask you because you're a businessman who initially at least supported the TARP program. The former senator Judd Gregg of this great state of New Hampshire was one of the architects of that program during the late hours of the Bush administration. Then you said, quote, "We needed to do something drastic because we were facing a very drastic situation."

CAIN: I studied the financial meltdown and concluded on my own that we needed to do something drastic, yes. When the concept of TARP was first presented to the public, I was willing to go along with it. But then when the administration started to implement it on a discretionary basis, picking winners and losers and also directing funds to General Motors and others that had nothing to do with the financial system, that's where I totally disagreed.

We should -- the government should not be selecting winners and losers, and I don't believe in this concept of too big to fail. If they fail, the free market will figure out who's going to pick the up the pieces.

KING: Well, let's stay on this topic. Let's bring Tom Fahey back into the conversation. He has a question -- Tom.

FAHEY: Yes, thank you, John. I wanted to ask Governor Romney about the auto industry. General Motors and Chrysler have rebounded since the Obama administration bailed them up. Bankruptcy is no longer a threat.

Would you say the bailout program was a success?

ROMNEY: The bailout program was not a success because the bailout program wasted a lot of money. About \$17 billion was used unnecessarily.

When the CEOs of the auto companies went to Washington asking for money from Washington, I wrote an op-ed, and I said, look, the right process for these companies is not a bailout, not a big check from Washington, but instead letting these enterprises go through bankruptcy, re-emerge, getting rid of the unnecessary costs that they had, the excessive debt, re-emerge, and that would be the preferred way for them to be able to get on their feet again.

Instead, the Bush administration and the Obama administration wrote checks to the auto industry. Ultimately, they went through the very bankruptcy process that I suggested from the beginning.

But the big difference was \$17 billion was wasted. And then President Obama, given that money, was able to put his hands on the scales of justice and give the company to the UAW.

There is a perception in this country that government knows better than the private sector, that Washington and President Obama have a better view for how an industry ought to be run. Well, they're wrong. The right way for America to create jobs is to -- is to keep government in its place and to allow the private sector and the -- and the energy and passion of the American people create a brighter future for our kids and for ourselves.

KING: Let me read you, Governor, just a little bit of an op-ed piece you wrote back in November 2008.

(APPLAUSE)

"If General Motors, Ford and Chrysler get the bailout, you can kiss the American automotive industry goodbye." From a profit standpoint, they're doing pretty well right now. On that point, "kiss goodbye," I understand you disagree with the policy. Kiss the industry goodbye, were you wrong?

ROMNEY: No, I wasn't wrong, because if you read the rest of the op-ed piece, it says what they need to do is go through a bankruptcy process to shed unnecessary costs. If they just get paid checks after checks from the federal government, they're going to be locked in with high UAW costs, legacy costs. They'll never be able to get on their feet. They have to go through bankruptcy.

And it turned out that that's finally what they did. And the head of the UAW, he wrote an op-ed piece saying, Romney's wrong, the government has to step in and give them a check.

That's the wrong way to go. Use the process of law. Use the process of American ingenuity. Don't have government try and guide this economy.

KING: Anyone -- is there anyone here who, given that prospect, and President Bush started the program, given that prospect, anyone here who would have stepped in and said, "I don't want to do this, but this is the backbone of American manufacturing, I'll do something?"

SANTORUM: No, absolutely not. We should -- we should not have had a TARP. We should not have had the auto bailout. Governor Romney's right. They could have gone through a structured bankruptcy without the federal government.

All the federal government did was basically tip to the cronies, tip to the unions, gave the unions the company. If they'd have gone through the orderly bankruptcy process, gone through a structured bankruptcy, they'd have come out in the same place, only we would have kept the integrity of the bankruptcy process without the government putting its fingers into it.

KING: Quickly, please.

BACHMANN: John, I was in the middle of this debate. I was behind closed doors with Secretary Paulson when he came and made the extraordinary, never-before-made request to Congress: Give us a \$700 billion blank check with no strings attached.

And I fought behind closed doors against my own party on TARP. It was a wrong vote then. It's continued to be a wrong vote since then. Sometimes that's what you have to do. You have to take principle over your party.

KING: All right, let's continue the conversation, but we'll come back to this if we have to. Let's go to Jean Mackin in Hancock. She has a question.

MACKIN: Thanks, John. This question goes out to Speaker Gingrich. Next month, the space shuttle program is scheduled to retire after 30 years, and last year, President Obama effectively killed government-run space flight to the International Space Station and wants to turn it over to private companies. In the meantime, U.S. astronauts would ride Russian spacecraft at a cost of \$50 million to \$63 million a seat. What role should the government play in future space exploration?

GINGRICH: Well, sadly -- and I say this, sadly, because I'm a big fan of going into space and I actually worked to get the shuttle program to survive at one point -- NASA has become an absolute case study in why bureaucracy can't innovate.

If you take all the money we've spent at NASA since we landed on the moon and you had applied that money for incentives to the private sector, we would today probably have a permanent station on the moon, three or four permanent stations in space, a new generation of lift vehicles. And instead, what we've had is bureaucracy after bureaucracy after bureaucracy and failure after failure.

I think it's a tragedy, because younger Americans ought to have the excitement of thinking that they, too, could be part of reaching out to a new frontier.

You know, you'd asked earlier, John, about this idea of limits because we're a developed country. We're not a developed country. The scientific future is going to open up, and we're at the beginning of a whole new cycle of extraordinary opportunities. And, unfortunately, NASA is standing in the way of it, when NASA ought to be getting out of the way and encouraging the private sector.

KING: Is there any candidate who would step in and say, no, this is vital to America's identity, this is vital to America's innovation, I want the government to stay in the lead here when it comes to manned space flight? Nobody?

PAWLENTY: Yeah, I think the space program has played a vital role for the United States of America. I think in the context...

KING: But can we afford it going forward?

PAWLENTY: In the context of our budget challenges, it can be refocused and reprioritized, but I don't think we should be eliminating the space program. We can partner with private providers to get more economies of scale and scale it back, but I don't think we should eliminate the space program.

KING: In a sentence -- in a sentence or two?

(CROSSTALK)

GINGRICH: John, you mischaracterized me. I didn't say end the space program. We built the transcontinental railroads without a national department of railroads. I said you could get into space faster, better, more effectively, more creatively if you decentralized it, got it out of Washington, and cut out the bureaucracy. It's not about getting rid of the space program; it's about getting to a real space program that works.

ROMNEY: I think fundamentally there are some people -- and most of them are Democrats, but not all -- who really believe that the government knows how to do things better than the private sector.

KING: All right, let's go down to the...

ROMNEY: And they happen to be wrong. And... (CROSSTALK)

KING: All right, the role of government -- we'll continue on the role of government. I'm sorry -- Josh, please.

MCELVEEN: Thanks very much, John. And, Governor Pawlenty, I'd like to go back to you. Let's talk about housing. Roughly right now, there are about a million -- a million homes in the -- in the hands of banks and lenders, millions of more homeowners are upside-down,

meaning they owe more than their home is worth. What would you or your administration do to try to right the housing ship?

PAWLENTY: Well, the first thing we need to do is get the government out of crony capitalism. We have this alliance between big government, big unions, and certain big bailout businesses. And as Congressman Paul said a few minutes ago, we had politicians in Congress trying to micromanage the housing market, and they created a bubble and they created the mess. And now we have all these innocent bystanders, the good people of the United States of America, many middle-income and modest-income people, who've been devastated by this.

And so the market is going to have to adjust. The programs that President Obama has put forward haven't really worked. They've been a failure. They've been slow. They haven't really solved the problem.

But the best thing that we can do is get the economy moving again. And it's not going to happen by growing government. His way failed. We've got to get the private sector going. We have to have people starting businesses, growing businesses, building things, starting places of employment. This is how we're going to get money back in people's pockets and get them financially stable.

KING: So, Congressman, come into the conversation. As you do, don't make it just about foreclosures. This is -- this is an interesting topic of discussion, especially -- especially when money is scarce and you've got to start cutting. It's a question of priorities. What should the government be doing? And maybe what should the government be doing in a better economy that it can't do now that has to go?

So talk about foreclosures a bit, but then tell me something, if you were president and you were dealing with it in your first few weeks, and you said, "I might like to do this, but I can't afford to do this," be as specific as you can, what goes?

PAUL: Well, I -- I would want to do much less, much sooner. The government shouldn't be involved. You take the bankruptcies, we've been doing a whole lot. We've been propping them up. We've had the Federal Reserve buy all the illiquid assets, which were worthless, stick it with the taxpayers. The people who've made the money when the bubble was being blown up, they're the ones who got bailed out.

But you want the correction. Corrections are good. The mal- investment in the bubbles are caused by the Federal Reserve and the government, and we keep propping it up. And that's why this is going -- it was predictable it would come. It's predictable it's lasted three years. And it's predictable, as long as we do what we're doing in Washington, it's going to last another 10 years.

We're doing what we did in the depression. We're doing what the Japanese have done. You need to get the prices of houses down to clear the market, but they're trying to keep the prices up. They actually have programs in Washington which stimulating housing. You need to clear the -- clear the market and then we can all go back to work. But what we're doing now is absolutely wrong.

KING: Well, let me give you another topic that people say the government is too involved in. That's food safety. You worked in the business.

CAIN: Yes.

KING: You see the E. coli scare that's going on in Europe right now. You're trying to cut money. The FDA, other agencies that get involved in that are in front of you. What do you do?

CAIN: You look inside the FDA and determine whether or not it needs to be streamlined, and maybe it does.

KING: But should the federal government be doing food safety inspections?

CAIN: The federal government should be doing food safety, yes. But I want to go back to this point about what we need to do to help the housing market.

We don't just have one problem; we have a crisis of the three E's. We've got the economy, entitlement spending, and energy. We've got to simultaneously work on all of those so we can put 13 million to 14 million people back to work. That's what we've got to do. So it's not just a single issue. It is the multiplicity and the compounding effect of those three critical problems.

KING: What else, Governor Romney? You've been a chief executive of a state. I was just in Joplin, Missouri. I've been in Mississippi and Louisiana and Tennessee and other communities dealing with whether it's the tornadoes, the flooding, and worse. FEMA is about to run out of money, and there are some people who say do it on a case-by-case basis and some people who say, you know, maybe we're learning a lesson here that the states should take on more of this role. How do you deal with something like that?

ROMNEY: Absolutely. Every time you have an occasion to take something from the federal government and send it back to the states, that's the right direction. And if you can go even further and send it back to the private sector, that's even better.

Instead of thinking in the federal budget, what we should cut -- we should ask ourselves the opposite question. What should we keep? We should take all of what we're doing at the federal level and say, what are the things we're doing that we don't have to do? And those things we've got to stop doing, because we're borrowing \$1.6 trillion more this year than we're taking in. We cannot...

KING: Including disaster relief, though?

ROMNEY: We cannot -- we cannot afford to do those things without jeopardizing the future for our kids. It is simply immoral, in my view, for us to continue to rack up larger and larger debts and pass them on to our kids, knowing full well that we'll all be dead and gone before it's paid off. It makes no sense at all.

KING: All right, we need to work in another break. I know all the candidates want to get in on these issues and other issues. We will get back to them, I promise you that.

As we go to break, remember at home, if you have a question on Facebook, send it to us. If you have a question on Twitter, send it to us. You also can use your smartphone to get some exclusive information.

We're playing a little bit of an exercise called "This or That" to learn more about our candidates. It was Conan or Leno. It was Elvis or Johnny Cash.

Mr. Speaker, "Dancing with the Stars" or "American Idol"?

GINGRICH: "American Idol."

KING: "American Idol" it is.

Our candidates continue their debate in just a moment. Stay with us.

(APPLAUSE)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: Welcome back to our Republican debate here in the first- in-the-nation primary state of New Hampshire. Seven candidates up on stage as they try to impress the voters of New Hampshire and the voters of the country tonight. We've become, we are told, a trending topic on Twitter.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want you to look up there just a bit, and we'll get to some of these questions, because they're good questions, privatization there, improving relationships with the Middle East, what industries do you think can reinvent America. All good suggestions from concerned citizens across the country watching this debate unfold.

Before we go and out of every break, we're doing an exercise called "This or That" to learn more about our candidates. The speaker had no hesitation at all: "American Idol" over "Dancing with the Stars."

Congressman Paul, BlackBerry or iPhone?

PAUL: BlackBerry. KING: BlackBerry it is.

All right. We're going to continue our conversation now. We want to bring up a very important issue I know all of you will want to weigh in on, and that is the debate about entitlements -- Mr. Cain mentioned those -- and specifically -- specifically Medicare. Right now, I want to go down to our audience. We've got Josh McElveen with a question.

MCELVEEN: Thanks very much, John. And I have Dr. Paul Collins who -- you've been running a family practice in Manchester for how long?

QUESTION: Twenty-seven years.

MCELVEEN: Nice work. So not surprising your question is related to health care. What's your question, sir?

QUESTION: Yes, sir. As a member of the Baby Boomer generation, I've been contributing to Medicare through payroll taxes for over 30 years. How do you propose to keep Medicare financially solvent for the next 50 years and beyond?

KING: Let's start with Dr. Paul on this one.

PAUL: Well, under these conditions, it's not solvent and won't be solvent. You know, if you're -- if you're an average couple and you paid your entire amount into -- into Medicare, you would have put \$140,000 into it. And in your lifetime, you will take out more than three times that much.

So a little bit of arithmetic tells you it's not solvent, so we're up against the wall on that, so it can't be made solvent. It has to change. We have to have more competition in medicine.

And I would think that if we don't want to cut any of the medical benefits for children or the elderly, because we have drawn so many in and got them so dependent on the government, if you want to work a transition, you have to cut a lot of money.

And that's why I argue the case that this money ought to be cut out of foreign welfare, and foreign militarism, and corporate welfare, and the military industrial complex. Then we might have enough money to tide people over.

But some revamping has to occur. What we need is competition. We need to get a chance for the people to opt out of the system. Just -- you talk about opting out of Obamacare? Why can't we opt out of the whole system and take care of ourselves?

(APPLAUSE)

KING: All right, let's -- let's continue the conversation. Governor Pawlenty, Congressman Paul says opt out. Congressman Ryan says squeeze a lot of savings across the federal budget, including a lot out of Medicare to turn it into a -- he doesn't like this word -- but it turns essentially into a voucher program. Instead of having the federal program, the government would give you some money and you'd go out in the marketplace and shop for it. Is that the right way to do it?

PAWLENTY: Let me first address the doctor. Doctor, you said in your question that you've paid in your whole life, and we respect that. People have made plans, particularly people who are on the program now or close to eligibility. We should keep our word to people that we've made promises to.

So under my proposal, if you're on the program or near the program, we'll keep our word. But we also have to recognize what Congressman Paul just said. There was a recent report out that the premiums for Medicare and the payroll withholdings are only paying about half the program. So it is not financially solvent. We have to fix it; we have to reform it.

I'm going to have my own plan, John, that will feature some differences from Congressman Ryan's plan. It will feature performance pay rather than just volume pay to hospitals and clinics and providers. It will allow Medicare to continue as an option, but it'll be priced against various other options that we're going to offer people, as well, and some other things.

And I also said, if it was a choice between Barack Obama's plan and doing nothing (ph), we have a president of the United States got one of the worst crises financially in the history of the country, and you can't find him on these issues. He's missing. I'll lead on this issue.

KING: All right, Governor.

Mr. Speaker, I want to bring you into this conversation, because I'm looking down -- I want to get the words just right -- your initial reaction to the Ryan plan? It's radical right-wing social engineering. Then you backtracked. Why?

GINGRICH: Well, first of all, it was a very narrow question, which said, should Republicans impose an unpopular bill on the American people? Now, I supported the Ryan budget as a general proposal. I actually wrote a newsletter supporting the Ryan budget. And those words were taken totally out of context.

I'm happy to repeat them. If you're dealing with something as big as Medicare and you can't have a conversation with the country where the country thinks what you're doing is the right thing, you better slow down.

Remember, we all got mad at Obama because he ran over us when we said don't do it. Well, the Republicans ought to follow the same ground rule. If you can't convince the American people it's a good idea, maybe it's not a good idea. So let me start there.

Second, there are certain things I would do different than Paul Ryan on Medicare. I agree strongly with him on Medicaid, and I think it could be done. But let me just say two quick things. KING: Quickly.

GINGRICH: Congressman Tom Price has a very good bill in that would allow private contracting so those people who want to voluntarily could contract with their doctor or their hospital in addition to Medicare, and it would be outside the current system and it would relieve the pricing pressure on the current system. We did a study called "Stop Paying the Crooks." We think you can save \$70 billion to \$120 billion in Medicare and Medicaid annually by not paying crooks...

KING: All right. We have to -- we have to save time.

GINGRICH: ... two examples.

KING: We have to save time. Let me start with the senator first. Should the Republicans slow down?

SANTORUM: No. We have a \$1.4 trillion deficit, and it isn't getting any better anytime soon. We have to deal with this problem now. And what Paul Ryan has suggested, which I wholeheartedly support, is to use a program that is identical to what seniors already have. It's called Medicare Part D.

They have a program right now which seniors like. It is a program that's called a premium support program. We give seniors -- depending on income -- a certain amount of money so they can go out and they can purchase health care that they want that helps them -- and this is the key, John -- we need to include seniors in controlling costs.

What President Obama -- let me finish, please -- what President Obama has done is he put in, in the Obamacare bill, the Independent Payment Advisory Board. Ladies and gentlemen, seniors, Medicare is going to be cut, starting in 2014, by the federal government, and it's going to be rationing of care from the top down.

What Paul Ryan and Rick Santorum want to do, which is not radical, which is take a program, Medicare prescription drugs, that is 41 percent under budget, because seniors are involved in controlling costs, and apply it all to Medicare. It is the right approach for Medicare.

KING: The speaker's point -- the speaker's point, Mr. Cain, was that if you've lost the American people, if they're not following you, you have to slow down until you can get them with you. Is that a fair point?

CAIN: We don't need to slow down. I hate to tell you -- I hate to be the one to give you the bad news, Doctor. You're not going to get most of the money you put into Medicare if we don't restructure it.

The reason we're in the situation we are today with Medicare and Social Security is because the problem hasn't been solved. We can no longer rearrange it. We've got to restructure those programs. And the Paul Ryan approach I totally support.

And he has been very courageous in taking the lead on this.

And you know that commercial where they have demagogued the whole thing with medi-scare and having grandma tossed off the bridge? If we don't fix this problem, it's going to be our grandkids in that wheelchair that they were going to be throwing off the bridge. We have got to fix the problem.

KING: Let's continue the conversation on entitlements. I know Congresswoman Bachmann wants to get in and others want to get in.

Let's get on John Distaso on the floor.

DISTASO: Thank you, John.

Mr. Cain, back to you. And while you're fired up there, let's turn to Social Security. Can you be specific regarding ages and income levels? Everyone talks about reform. What is your specific Social Security reform plan in regards to raising the retirement age, at what ages, cutting benefits and what income level means testing kicking in?

Thank you.

CAIN: Let's fix the problem and that is to restructure Social Security. I support a personal retirement account option in order to phase out the current system. We know that this works. It worked in the small country of Chile when they did it 30 years.

That payroll tax had gotten up to 27 percent for every dollar that the worker made. I believe we can do the same thing. That break point would approximately 40 years of age.

Now, young people realize they still got to contribute to the current system for those people that are on Social Security, that are near Social Security.

DISTASO: Are you going to raise the retirement age as president of the United States?

CAIN: I don't have to raise the retirement age, because that by itself isn't going to solve the problem. If Congress decides to do that, that's a different matter.

Here's -- let me give you one another example where this approach has worked. The city of Galveston, they opted out of the Social Security system way back in the '70s. And now, they retire with a whole lot more money. Why? For a real simple reason -- they have an account with their money on it.

What I'm simply saying is we've got to restructure the program using a personal retirement account option in order to eventually make it solvent.

KING: All right. We're going to keep the conversation move. I know people want to weigh in. You'll get a chance to weigh in.

Let's move now. Jennifer Vaughn is on the floor with a question.

VAUGHN: John, thank you very much.

Governor Romney, I'd like to ask this to you first, please.

The Treasury Department says the United States will hit its credit limit on August the 2nd. Do you believe we will ultimately have to raise the debt ceiling?

ROMNEY: I believe we will not raise the debt ceiling unless the president finally, finally is willing to be a leader on issues that the American people care about. And the number one issue that relates to that debt ceiling is whether the government is going to keep on spending money they don't have.

And the American people and Congress and every person elected in Washington has to understand we want to see a president finally lay out plans for reining in the excesses of government.

You've heard on here a whole series of ideas about entitlements. And that's about 60 percent of federal spends. That's a big piece. That's a big chunk. Ideas from all these people up here.

Where are the president's ideas?

Each person has different ideas here. We can try them and try different ideas in different states and different programs at the federal level.

But why isn't the president leading? He isn't leading on balancing our budget and he's not leading on jobs. He's failed the American people both in job creation and the scale the government.

VAUGHN: Governor --

ROMNEY: And that's why he's not going to be reelected.

VAUGHN: Governor, what happens if you don't raise it? What happens then? Is it OK not to?

ROMNEY: Well, what happens if we continue to spend time and time again, year and year again more money than we take in?

What we say to America is: at some point, you hit a wall. At some point, people around the world say, "I'm not going to keep loaning money to America to pay these massive deficits pay for them because America can't pay them back and the dollar is not worth anything anymore." In that circumstance, we saddled our future -- the future of our kids in a way that is just unacceptable.

And so, you're going to see Republicans stand up and say, "Mr. President, lay down plans to balance this budget." If he does so, if we gets Democrats to come at that time table and honestly deal with the challenges we have, with the entitlement challenges, with the spending and discretionary accounts, with our jobs issues, and finally say you know what? We really can't afford another trillion dollars of Obamacare.

KING: OK.

ROMNEY: If he'll be honest about these things, then I think you'll see the kind of progress you'd hope to see.

KING: Congresswoman Bachmann, you'll get a vote on this issue. What Governor Romney outlined is the goal of Republicans, who's got a big deal to balance the budget. If you can't get that on the short term and this date approaches, those negotiations are continuing, what is your price tag -- what is your price tag in at least a first wave of cuts? And if you don't get it, would you say to the House Republicans, "No, let the government go into default, that's where we need to stand"?

BACHMANN: I've already voted no on raising the debt ceiling in the past. And unless there are serious cuts, I can't.

But I want -- I want to speak to someone that's far more eloquent than I. Someone who said just dealing with the issue of raising the debt ceiling is a failure of leadership. That person was then Senator Barack Obama. He refused to raise the debt ceiling because he said President Bush had failed in leadership.

Clearly, President Obama has failed in leadership. Under his watch, in two and a half years, we've increased the federal debt 35 percent just in that amount of time.

So, what we need to do both, from the Congress and president, he needs to direct his treasury secretary: pay the interest on the debt first, then we won't have a failure of our full faith and credit from their prioritized spending. We have to have serious spending cuts.

KING: OK. Appreciate that again. I want to ask the candidates a little shorter on those answers so we can keep the voters involved.

Let's go down to Josh on the floor.

MCELVEEN: Thank you, John.

And I'm joined by Mr. Jerry Kitty (ph) who runs a juvenile institution out of Massachusetts.

And I'm told that has nothing to do with your question.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Correct.

I'm just wondering what your definition of the separation of church and state is and how it will affect your decision-making.

KING: Governor Pawlenty, I want you to take that one first.

PAWLENTY: Well, the protections between the separation of church and state were designed to protect people of faith from government, not government from people of faith. This is a country that in our founding documents says we're a nation that's founded under God, and the privileges and blessings at that we have are from our creator. They're not from our member of Congress. They're not from our county commissioner.

And 39 of the 50 states have in the very early phrases of their constitutions language like Minnesota has in its preamble. It says this, "We the people of Minnesota, grateful to God for our civil and religious liberties," and so the Founding Fathers understood that the blessings that we have as a nation come from our creator and we should stop and say thanks and express gratitude for that. I embrace that.

(CHEERS AND APPLAUSE)

KING: Let's spend a little time talking. Let's spend a little bit of time talking about it.

Senator, let's start with you. Just what role does faith play in your political life? Are there decisions, certain issues where some might you just, let's meet with my advisers, what does my gut say, and others where you might retreat and have a moment of private prayer?

SANTORUM: I'm some who believes that you approach issues using faith and reason. And if your faith is pure and your reason is right, they'll end up in the same place.

I think the key to the success of this country, how we all live together, because we are a very diverse country -- Madison called it the perfect remedy -- which was to allow everybody, people of faith and no faith, to come in and make their claims in the public square, to be heard, have those arguments, and not to say because you're not a person of faith, you need to stay out, because you have strong faith convictions, your opinion is invalid. Just the opposite -- we get along because we know that we -- all of our ideas are allowed in and tolerated. That's what makes America work.

KING: Congressman Paul, does faith have a role in these public issues, the public square, or is it a personal issue at your home and in your church?

PAUL: I think faith has something to do with the character of the people that represent us, and law should have a moral fiber to it and our leaders should. We shouldn't expect us to try to change morality. You can't teach people how to be moral.

But the Constitution addresses this by saying -- literally, it says no theocracy. But it doesn't talk about church and state. The most important thing is the First Amendment. Congress shall write no laws -- which means Congress should never prohibit the expression of your Christian faith in a public place.

KING: OK. Great. Let's go down to Josh McElveen, and let's continue the conversation.

(CHEERS AND APPLAUSE)

MCELVEEN: Thank you.

While we're on the topic of faith and religion, the next question goes to Mr. Cain. You recently said you would not appoint a Muslim to your cabinet and you kind of back off that a little bit and said you would first want to know if they're committed to the Constitution. You expressed concern that, quote, "a lot of Muslims are not totally dedicated to this country."

Are American-Muslims as a group less committed to the Constitution than, say, Christian or Jews?

CAIN: First, the statement was would I be comfortable with a Muslim in my administration, not that I wouldn't appoint one. That's the exact transcript.

And I would not be comfortable because you have peaceful Muslims and then you have militant Muslims, those that are trying to kill us.

And so, when I said I wouldn't be comfortable, I was thinking about the ones that are trying to kill us, number one.

Secondly, yes, I do not believe in Sharia law in American courts. I believe in American laws in American courts, period. There have been instances -

(CHEERS AND APPLAUSE)

CAIN: There have been instances in New Jersey -- there was an instance in Oklahoma where Muslims did try to influence court decisions with Sharia law. I was simply saying very emphatically, American laws in American courts.

KING: So, on that point, Governor Romney let me come to you on this.

What Mr. Cain is saying that he would have -- my term, not his -- a purity test or a loyalty test. He would want to ask a Muslim a few question or a few questions before he hired them, but he wouldn't ask those questions of a Christian or Jew.

CAIN: Sorry. No, you are restating something I did not say, OK? If I may, OK?

KING: Please let's make it clear.

CAIN: When you interview a person for a job, you look at their -- you look at their work record, you look at their resume, and then you have a one-on-one personal interview. During that personal interview, like in the business world and anywhere else, you are able to get a feeling for how committed that person is to the Constitution, how committed they are to the mission of the organization --

KING: When I asked -- I asked this question the other night, though, you said you want to ask a Muslim those questions but you didn't you have to ask them to a Christian or a Jew? CAIN: I would ask certain questions, John. And it's not a litmus test. It is simply trying to make sure that we have people committed to the Constitution first in order for them to work effectively in the administration.

KING: Should one segment, Governor -- I mean, one segment of Americans, in this case, religion, but in any case, should one segment be singled out and treated differently?

ROMNEY: Well, first of all, of course, we're not going to have Sharia law applied in U.S. courts. That's never going to happen. We have a Constitution and we follow the law.

No, I think we recognize that the people of all faiths are welcome in this country. Our nation was founded on a principal of religious tolerance. That's in fact why some of the early patriots came to this country and we treat people with respect regardless of their religious persuasion.

Obviously, anybody who would come into my administration would be someone who I knew, who I was comfortable with, and who I believed would honor as their highest oath -- their oath to defend and protect the Constitution of the United States.

KING: Mr. Speaker, go ahead.

GINGRICH: I just want to comment for a second. The Pakistani who emigrated to the U.S. became a citizen, built a car bomb which luckily failed to go off in Times Square was asked by the federal judge, how could he have done that when he signed -- when he swore an oath to the United States. And he looked at the judge and said, "You're my enemy. I lied."

Now, I just want to go out on a limb here. I'm in favor of saying to people, if you're not prepared to be loyal to the United States, you will not serve in my administration, period.

(APPLAUSE)

GINGRICH: We did this -- we did this in dealing with the Nazis and we did this in dealing with the communists. And it was controversial both times, and both times we discovered after a while, you know, there are some genuinely bad people who would like to infiltrate our country. And we have got to have the guts to stand up and say no.

KING: We're going to work in another break.

Still a lot more ground to cover with our seven Republican candidates for president tonight. Voters here in New Hampshire are asking the questions. You can help us at home on Facebook and on Twitter. Please send in your suggestions.

In and out of every break, we're asking a candidate a personal question, this or that, to make a choice.

Mr. Cain, deep dish or thin crust?

(LAUGHTER)

CAIN: Deep dish.

KING: Deep dish, it is. Our seven candidates for the Republican presidential nomination will be right back.

(CHEERS AND APPLAUSE)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(CHEERS AND APPLAUSE)

KING: Seven Republican candidates for president here on the campus of St. Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire. Let's continue our conversation.

But, first, let's continue to know our candidates a little better.

Deep dish emphatically from Mr. Cain before the break.

Governor Romney, to you now. Imagine you're getting to the barbecue joint. Maybe it's here in New Hampshire, maybe it's South Carolina ordering some wings. Spicy or mild?

ROMNEY: Oh, spicy. Absolutely.

And, by the way, Bruins are up 4-0.

(CHEERS AND APPLAUSE)

KING: All right. All right. There you go. There you go. I think -- I think that's an audience pleaser.

Let's continue our questions. Let's get right down on the floor with John Distaso of the "Union Leader."

DISTASO: Thank you, John.

Congresswoman Bachmann, let's turn to a serious subject.

New Hampshire is one of five states where individuals who happen to be gay can marry legally. This is a question of conflicting interest. I know you're opposed to same-sex marriage.

As president, would you try to overturn -- what influence would you use from the White House to try to overturn these state laws despite your own personal belief that states should handle their own affairs whenever possible and in many circumstances?

BACHMANN: Well, I do believe in the 10th Amendment and I do believe in self-determination for the states.

I also believe that marriage is between a man and a woman. I carried that legislation when I was a senator in Minnesota, and I believe that for children, the best possible way to raise children is to have a mother and father in their life.

Now, I didn't come from a perfect background. My parents were divorced. And I was raised by a single mother. There's a lot of single families and families with troubled situations. That's why my husband and I have broken hearts for at-risk kids and it's why we took 23 foster children into our home.

DISTASO: What would a President Bachmann do to initiate or facilitate a repeal law on the state level? Anything at all from the White House? Would you come into the state of New Hampshire, for instance, and campaign on behalf of a repeal law?

BACHMANN: I'm running for the presidency of the United States. And I don't see that it's the role of a president to go into states and interfere with their state laws.

(CHEERS AND APPLAUSE)

KING: On that point -- on that point, to voters out there for whom this is an important issue, let's try to quickly go through it. Let me start at this end, we'll just go right through. I'll describe it this way. Are you a George W. Bush Republican, meaning a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, or a Dick Cheney who, like I believe, the congresswoman just said, this should be made -- this decision, same sex marriage, should be a state's decision?

CAIN: State's decision.

QUESTION: Yes.

PAWLENTY: I support a constitutional amendment to define marriage between a man and woman. I was the co-author of the state -- a

law in Minnesota to define it and now we have courts jumping over this.

KING: OK. Let's just go through this.

PAUL: The federal government shouldn't be involved. I wouldn't support an amendment. But let me suggest -- one of the ways to solve this ongoing debate about marriage, look up in the dictionary. We know what marriage is all about.

But then, get the government out of it. Why doesn't it go to the church? And why doesn't it go to the individuals? I don't think government should give us a license to get married. It should be in the church.

KING: Governor Romney, constitutional amendment or state decision?

ROMNEY: Constitutional.

KING: Mr. Speaker? GINGRICH: Well, I helped author the Defense of Marriage Act which the Obama administration should be frankly protecting in court. I think if that fails, at that point, you have no choice except to (ph) constitutional amendment.

KING: We heard the congresswoman's answer, Senator.

SANTORUM: Constitutional amendment. Look, the constitutional amendment includes the states. Three-quarters of the states have to -- have to ratify it. So the states will be involved in this process. We should have one law in the country with respect to marriage. There needs to be consistency on something as foundational as what marriage is.

KING: Very quickly?

BACHMANN: John, I do support a constitutional amendment on -- on marriage between a man and a woman, but I would not be going into the states to overturn their state law.

KING: All right, let me ask you another question. The Obama administration is in the process -- and Leon Panetta, who's the new defense secretary, will implement -- essentially, the repeal of "don't ask/don't tell" so gays will be allowed to serve openly in the military. I want to ask each of you -- and, again, if we can be quickly, because then we want to get to the voters question -- if you were president -- if you become president of the United States, now gays are allowed to serve openly in the military, would you leave that policy in place or would you try to change it, go back to "don't ask/don't tell," or something else?

CAIN: If I had my druthers, I never would have overturned "don't ask/don't tell" in the first place. Now that they have changed it, I wouldn't create a distraction trying to turn it over as president. Our men and women have too many other things to be concerned about rather than have to deal with that as a distraction.

KING: Leave it in place if you inherit the new Obama administration policy or try to overturn it?

PAWLENTY: John, we're a nation in two wars. I think we need to pay deference to our military commanders, particularly our combatant commanders, and in this case, I would take my cues from them as to how this affects the military going forward. I know they expressed concerns -- many of the combatant commanders did -- when this was originally repealed by the Obama administration.

KING: Congressman?

PAUL: I would not work to overthrow it. We have to remember, rights don't come in groups. We shouldn't have gay rights. Rights come as individuals. If we would (ph) have this major debate going on, it would be behavior that would count, not the person who belongs to which group.

(APPLAUSE) KING: Leave it in place, what you inherit from the Obama administration or overturn it?

ROMNEY: Well, one, we ought to be talking about the economy and jobs. But given the fact you're insistent, the -- the answer is, I believe that "don't ask/don't tell" should have been kept in place until conflict was over.

KING: Mr. Speaker?

GINGRICH: Well, I think it's very powerful that both the Army and the Marines overwhelmingly opposed changing it, that their recommendation was against changing it. And if as president -- I've met with them and they said, you know, it isn't working, it is dangerous, it's disrupting unit morale, and we should go back, I would listen to the commanders whose lives are at risk about the young men and women that they are, in fact, trying to protect.

KING: Congresswoman?

BACHMANN: I would -- I would keep the "don't ask/don't tell" policy.

KING: So you would -- whatever the Obama administration does now, you would go -- try to go back? You'd try to reverse what they're doing?

BACHMANN: I would, after, again, following much what the speaker just said, I would want to confer with our commanders-in-chief and with -- also with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, because I'd want to know how it was being implemented and if it has -- had had the detrimental effects that have been suggested that will come.

KING: All right. Last word on this issue, Senator?

SANTORUM: The job of the United States military is to protect and defend the people of this country. It is not for social experimentation. It should be repealed. And the commanders should have a system of discipline in place, as Ron Paul said, that punishes -- that punishes bad behavior.

KING: Let's go back down to the floor here. Jennifer Vaughn has a question.

VAUGHN: Thanks, John.

Senator Santorum, staying with you for a moment, if I may, you are staunchly pro-life. Governor Romney used to support abortion rights until he changed his position on this a few years ago. This has been thoroughly discussed. But do you believe he genuinely changed his mind, or was that a political calculation? Should this be an issue in this primary campaign?

SANTORUM: I think -- I think an issue should be -- in looking at any candidate is looking at the authenticity of that candidate and looking at their -- at their record over time and what they fought for. And I think that's -- that a factor that -- that should be determined.

You can look at my record. Not only have I been consistently pro-life, but I've taken the -- you know, I've not just taken the pledge, I've taken the bullets to go out there and fight for this and lead on those issues. And I think that's a factor that people should consider when you -- when you look, well, what is this president going to do when he comes to office?

A lot of folks run for president as pro-life and then that issue gets shoved to the back burner. I will tell you that the issue of pro-life, the sanctity and dignity of every human life, not just at birth, not just on the issue of abortion, but with respect to the entire life, which I mentioned welfare reform and -- and the dignity of people at the end of life, those issues will be top priority issues for me to make sure that all life is respected and held with dignity.

(APPLAUSE)

KING: Governor Romney, let me give you -- take -- take 20 or 30 seconds, if there's a Republican out there for whom this important, who questions your authenticity on the issue?

ROMNEY: People have had a chance to look at my record and look what I've said as -- as I've been through that last campaign. I believe people understand that I'm firmly pro-life. I will support justices who believe in following the Constitution and not legislating from the bench. And I believe in the sanctity of life from the very beginning until the very end.

KING: Is there anybody here who believes that that's an issue in the campaign, or is it case closed?

(UNKNOWN): Case closed.

KING: Case closed it is. All right. Let's move on to the questions.

Tom Foreman is standing by up in Rochester.

FOREMAN: Hi, John. Representative Bachmann, I have a question for you. Governor Pawlenty says he opposes abortion rights except in cases of rape, incest, or when the mother's life is at stake. Do you have any problem with that position? And if so, why?

BACHMANN: I am 100 percent pro-life. I've given birth to five babies, and I've taken 23 foster children into my home. I believe in the dignity of life from conception until natural death. I believe in the sanctity of human life.

And I think the most eloquent words ever written were those in our Declaration of Independence that said it's a creator who endowed us with inalienable rights given to us from God, not from government. And the beauty of that is that government cannot take those rights away. Only God can give, and only God can take.

And the first of those rights is life. And I stand for that right. I stand for the right to life. The very few cases that deal with those exceptions are the very tiniest of fraction of cases, and yet they get all the attention. Where all of the firepower is and where the real battle is, is on the general -- genuine issue of taking an innocent human life. I stand for life from conception until natural death.

(APPLAUSE)

KING: All right. Governor Pawlenty, it was your position that was brought into the question. We'll give you a few seconds.

PAWLENTY: Well, this is a great example where we can look at our records. The National Review Online, which is a conservative publication, said based on results -- not just based on words -- I was probably the most pro-life candidate in this race.

As governor of the state of Minnesota, I appointed to the Supreme Court a conservative court for the first time in the modern history of my state. We passed the most pro-life legislation anytime in the modern history of the state, which I proposed and signed, including women's right to know, including positive alternatives to abortion legislation, and many others.

I'm solidly pro-life. The main pro-life organization in Minnesota gives me very, very high marks. And I haven't just talked about these things; I've done it.

KING: All right, Governor, thank you for that. Let's go back up to -- now up to Plymouth, New Hampshire. Thomas Fahey is standing by with a voter and a question.

FAHEY: Yes, thanks, John. I'm here with Lydia Cumbee. She lives in Franconia, and she is a naturalized citizen who moved to New Hampshire several years ago from Minnesota, of all places. And she's got a question about immigration.

QUESTION: As a naturalized American citizen who came here legally, I would like to know how you, as America -- as president, plan to prevent illegal immigrants from using our health care, educational, or welfare systems?

KING: Senator Santorum, why don't you lead off on that one?

SANTORUM: Well, I'm the son of a legal immigrant in this country and -- and believe in legal immigration. That is a great wellspring of -- of strength for our country.

But we cannot continue to provide -- the federal government should not require states to provide government services. And I have consistently voted against that and believe that we are, unfortunately -- my grandfather came to this country -- I announced in Somerset County. He didn't come here because he was guaranteed a government benefit. He came here because he wanted freedom.

And I think most people who come to this country -- certainly all people who come here legally -- want it because they wanted the opportunities of this country. And that's what we should be offering. We should not be offering to people -- particularly those who broke the law to come here or overstayed their visa -- we should not be offering government benefits.

KING: And so, Dr. Paul, to you on this one, the question comes up, though, once they're in the country illegally, you have -- compassion sometimes bumps up against enforcing the law and state budget crises. A 5-year-old child of an illegal immigrant walks into an emergency room. Does the child get care?

PAUL: Well, first off, we shouldn't have the mandates. We bankrupted the hospitals and the schools in Texas and other states. We shouldn't give them easy citizenship.

We should think about protecting our borders, rather than the borders between Iraq and Afghanistan. That doesn't make any sense to

me.

(APPLAUSE)

But on -- on coming in, you know, there was a time when government wasn't -- we didn't depend on government for everything. There was a time when the Catholic Church actually looked after...

KING: But should they get care? Should they get care? Should taxpayers have to pay for that care?

PAUL: No, they should not be forced to, but we wouldn't -- we shouldn't be penalizing the Catholic Church, because they're trying to fulfill a role. And some of the anti-immigrants want to come down hard on the Catholic Church, and that is wrong.

If we believed in our free society -- as a matter of fact, this whole immigration problem is related to the economy. People aren't coming over as much now because it's weak. When we had a healthy economy, some of our people didn't work (ph) and people flowed over here getting jobs. So there is an economic issue here, as well.

But, no, if you have an understanding and -- and you want to believe in freedom, freedom has solved these kind of problems before. You don't have to say, oh, you're not going to have care or there won't be any care and everybody is going to starve to death and -- and die on the streets without medical care. That's the implication of the question. That's just not true, and you shouldn't accept it.

KING: Mr. Cain, another issue that's come up in recent years...

(APPLAUSE)

... as this debate has bubbled up is the whole question of birthright citizenship. If there are two illegal immigrants, two adults who came into this country illegally, and they have a child, should that child be considered a citizen of the United States?

CAIN: I don't believe so. But let's -- let's look at solving the real problem, OK? Immigration is full of problems, not one. This is why we keep kicking the can down the road. Secure the borders. Get serious about securing our borders.

Number two, enforce the laws that are already there.

Number three, promote the path to citizenship, like this lady did, by getting -- cleaning up the bureaucracy.

And here's how we deal with the illegals that are already here. Empower the states to do what the federal government hasn't done, won't do, and can't do. Then we won't be getting into the problem that was raised.

We are a compassionate nation. Of course they're going to get care. But let's fix the problem.

KING: Well, to empower the states, Mr. Cain says, Governor Pawlenty, do you support, then -- Arizona has its version, parts of it -- parts of it, employee enforcement law, have been upheld. The big SB 1070 making its way to the Supreme Court. Alabama just has a new bill. Would you want to be president of the United States in which each state can decide what it does? Or would you make the point, look, this is a federal purview, period?

PAWLENTY: I'm a strong supporter of state rights, but if the federal government won't do its job -- in this case, protecting and securing our border -- then let the states do it. And they will. And...

(APPLAUSE)

... when President Bush asked governors to volunteer their National Guard to go to the border to help reinforce, through Operation Jump Start, our border, I was one of the few governors who did it. I sent Minnesota National Guard there to reinforce the border, and it works. And that's what we need to do.

And, by the way, this issue of birthright citizenship again brings up the importance of appointing conservative justices. That result is because a U.S. Supreme Court determined that that right exists, notwithstanding language in the Constitution. I'm the only one up here -- I believe I'm the only one up here -- who's appointed solidly, reliably conservative appointees to the -- to the court.

KING: I want to do one more on this issue. President Bush and Senator McCain spent a lot of time on this, Mr. Speaker. I want your view. There are an estimated maybe 20 million illegal immigrants in this country. People have different numbers. If you were going to round them all up -- Congressman Tom Tancredo on this stage four years ago would have said round them up and kick them up, they broke the law, they shouldn't be here. I don't know where the money would come from in this environment.

So I want you sense. Do you -- is that what the states should be doing, the federal government should be spending money and resources on? Or -- or like President Bush and like Senator McCain, at least in the McCain-Kennedy days, should we have some path to status for those who are willing to step up and admit where they are and come out of the shadows?

GINGRICH: One of the reasons this country is in so much trouble is that we are determined among our political elites to draw up catastrophic alternatives. You either have to ship 20 people out of America or legalize all of them.

That's nonsense. There's not -- we're never going to pass a comprehensive bill. Obama proved that in the last two years. He couldn't get a comprehensive bill through with Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid, and he didn't even try, because he knew he couldn't do it.

You break this down. Herman Cain's essentially right, you break it down. First of all, you control the border. We can ask the National Guard to go to Iraq. We ask the National Guard to go to Kuwait. We ask the National Guard to go to Afghanistan. Somehow we would have done more for American security if we had had the National Guard on the border.

But if you don't want to use the National Guard, I'm...

(APPLAUSE)

Just one last example. If you don't want to use the National Guard, take -- take half of the current Department of Homeland Security bureaucracy in Washington, transplant it to Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico. You'll have more than enough people to control the border.

(APPLAUSE)

KING: All right. Let's...

GINGRICH: No, but let me say this, John. No serious citizen who's concerned about solving this problem should get trapped into a yes/no answer in which you're either for totally selling out protecting America or you're for totally kicking out 20 million people in a heartless way. There are -- there are humane, practical steps to solve this problem, if we can get the politicians and the news media to just deal with it honestly.

KING: All right.

John Distaso down on the floor has a question.

DISTASO: Thank you, John.

Congressman Paul, this is for you. John, if you don't mind, I'd also like to hear from Governor Romney and a couple of the candidates, because it relates to a specific New Hampshire issue with a national question.

Here in New Hampshire, there is a popular bill that is being considered by our state legislature that would restrict the state's power to seize private land to build a power plant or a transmission facility. Should governments at any level be able to use eminent domain for major projects that will reduce America's dependence on foreign oil?

PAUL: No. We -- we shouldn't have that power given to the government where they can take private land and transfer it to a private industry. The eminent domain laws are going to vary in different states, but we have the national eminent domain laws. It was never meant to take it from some people, private owners, and then take it and give it to a corporation because it's going to help that locality.

And this goes back to the basic understanding of property rights. Property and free society should be owned by the people, and it shouldn't be regulated to death by the governments, whether it's Washington, D.C., or local governments.

Right now, we really don't own our land. We just pay rent on our land and we listen to all these regulations. So I would say that courts should get out of the way, too. They should not have this right to take land from individuals to provide privileges for another group.

(APPLAUSE)

DISTASO: Governor Romney, you're a property owner in New Hampshire. You are a New Hampshire property owner, but you also are for reducing our dependence on foreign oil. There are a lot of people in the state who are concerned about this project, but they also want to have energy independence. How do you feel about that?

ROMNEY: Well, I don't believe that land should be taken -- the power of government to give to a private corporation. And so the right of eminent domain is a right which is used to foster a public purpose and public ownership for a road, highways, and so forth. And so my view is, if land is going to be taken for purposes of a private enterprise, that's the wrong way to go.

Now, the right answer for us to have energy independence is to start developing our own energy in this country, and we're not doing that. We -- we have a huge find with natural gas; 100 years of new natural gas has been found. More drilling for oil, natural gas, clean coal. We have coal in great abundance, nuclear power ultimately, and all the renewables. But it's time for us to have a president who really cares about finally getting America on track for energy security.

KING: And so let's stay on this issue, because it is a very important issue. Josh McElveen down on the floor.

MCELVEEN: Thanks very much, John. Timely issue. Question for Senator Santorum. The Senate tomorrow is going to be voting on possibly abolishing the ethanol tax, effective July 1st (inaudible) major impact on our friends in another early voting state in Iowa. They grow corn. This is a move that would basically remove tax credits worth \$6 billion. Question to you is, do you support abolishing?

SANTORUM: Yeah, I actually had proposed that we can phase out the ethanol subsidy, which is the blender's credit, over a five-year period of time. I also proposed, as part of helping him in that transition -- one other thing. I also phase out the tariff on ethanol coming into this country over that five-year period of time.

One of the issues for the ethanol industry is distribution networks. So I would take half of that credit every year, 4.5 cents, and use it to help expand distribution for E-85 in other areas of the country. And that all would be shut down in five years.

And I say that because I think the ethanol industry -- I voted against ethanol subsidies my entire time in Congress. But I will tell you, the ethanol industry has matured greatly, and I think they are actually capable of surviving and doing quite well going forward under that -- under that plan.

KING: All right. I want to -- got to work in one more break before we go. We've got a lot more ground to cover. Believe it or not, our candidates -- we're running out of time here.

Into and out of every break we're having a little experiment called "This or That." "Spicy" from Governor Romney was the last one.

Governor Pawlenty, to you, Coke or Pepsi?

PAWLENTY: Coke.

KING: Coke it is, a good, swift answer there.

We've got to work in one more break. Before we go to break, though, I just want to show you. We're asking you on Twitter to show us what you think. What are the candidates' opinions on whether or not to withdraw troops from Afghanistan? That and a number of foreign policy questions when we return here to the campus of Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire, seven Republicans who want to be your next president debating. Stay right here.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: Welcome back. Seven Republican candidates for president debating on the campus of St. Anselm Congress in beautiful Manchester, New Hampshire -- St. Anselm College, excuse me. We want to turn to foreign policy now.

I want to move up to Hancock and Jean Mackin, and she's got a question.

MACKIN: I'm here with John Brown from Swanzey, New Hampshire. He's retired from the U.S. Navy, 25 years of service. Right now, he has three sons serving in the Navy. So you can imagine he has a very important question. What would you like to ask tonight, John?

JOHN BROWN, VOTER: Osama bin Laden is dead. We've been in Afghanistan for ten years. Isn't it time to bring our combat troops

home from Afghanistan?

KING: Governor Romney, take the lead on that one. ROMNEY: It's time for us to bring our troops home as soon as we possibly can, consistent with the word that comes to our generals that we can hand the country over to the Taliban military in a way that they're able to defend themselves. Excuse me, the Afghan military to defend themselves from the Taliban. That's an important distinction.

I want to say, first of all, thank you to you for the sacrifice of your family and your sons in defending the liberty that we have and our friends around the world. Thank you for what you've done.

KING: Congressman Paul?

ROMNEY: Let me -- let me continue. That is I think we've learned some important lessons in our experience in Afghanistan. I want those troops to come home based upon not politics, not based upon economics, but instead based upon the conditions on the ground determined by the generals.

But I also think we've learned that our troops shouldn't go off and try and fight a war of independence for another nation. Only the Afghans can win Afghanistan's independence from the Taliban. Thank you.

KING: Congressman Paul, do you agree with that decision?

PAUL: Not quite. I served five years in the military. I've had a little experience. I've spent a little time over in the Pakistan/Afghanistan area, as well as Iran. But I wouldn't wait for my generals. I'm the commander in chief.

I make the decisions. I tell the generals what to do. I'd bring them home as quickly as possible. And I would get them out of Iraq as well. And I wouldn't start a war in Libya. I'd quit bombing Yemen. And I'd quit bombing Pakistan.

I'd start taking care of people here at home because we could save hundreds of billions of dollars.

Our national security is not enhanced by our presence over there. We have no purpose there. We should learn the lessons of history. The longer we're there, the worse things are and the more danger we're in as well, because our presence there is not making friends let me tell you.

KING: Governor Pawlenty, a growing number of Republicans are more skeptical of these foreign involvements. But I want you to take what Congressman Paul just said there. Let's focus on one.

He said no bombing in Yemen. The strikes in Yemen have been targeted at al Qaeda leaders, at al Qaeda operatives, who the president of the United States, who happens to be a Democrat in his case, views as serious threats against this nation. Do you agree with Congressman Paul there or do you agree with President Obama and the strikes?

PAWLENTY: Let me first say to John, thank you for your family's commitment to our nation, to your service, to the sacrifices that you made and to the burdens that you bear. I know I speak for everyone in this room and all across this country when we say we're grateful to you. We wouldn't have the country without people like you and your sons. Thank you very much.

Beyond that, John, I start with this perspective. On September 11th, 2001, individuals and groups killed 3,000 or so of our fellow Americans. They would have killed not 3,000, but 30,000 or 300,000 or 30 million if they could have. If they had the capability to do that in their hands -- and as soon as they get it, they'll try.

The first duty of the president of the United States, as the leader of this nation and commander in chief, is to make sure the nation is safe. You bet. If there are individuals I have intelligence on, or groups in Yemen that present a threat to our security interests in that region or the United States of America, you can bet they will hear from me and we'll continue the bombings.

KING: Let's stay on foreign policy. I want to move the questioning. Tom Foreman up in Rochester. Tom. We lost him.

(CROSSTALK)

QUESTION: I'd like to know your opinion on your involvement with Libya.

KING: Congresswoman Bachmann, should the president have supported and jointed more U.S. presence, but now a NATO operation? Was that the right thing to do? Is that in the vital national interest of the United States of America?

BACHMANN: No, I don't believe so it is. That isn't just my opinion. That was the opinion of our defense secretary, Gates, when he came before the United States Congress. He could not identify a vital national American interest in Libya.

Our policy in Libya is substantially flawed. It's interesting. President Obama's own people said that he was leading from behind. The United States doesn't lead from behind. As commander in chief, I would not lead from behind.

We are the head. We are not the tail. The president was wrong. All we have to know is the president deferred leadership in Libya to France. That's all we need to know. The president was not leading when it came to Libya.

First of all, we were not attacked. We were not threatened with attack. There was no vital national interest. I sit on the House Select Committee on Intelligence. We deal with the nation's vital classified secrets.

We to this day don't yet know who the rebel forces are that we're helping. There are some reports that they may contain al Qaeda of North Africa. What possible vital American interests could we have to empower al Qaeda of North Africa and Libya? The president was absolutely wrong in his decision on Libya. KING: Mr. Speaker, address the same question. Was it in the vital national interest of the United States? As you do so, I had a conversation with a soon-to-be candidate who is not here tonight, Governor Huntsman, recently, who said he didn't think when it came to vital national interest. And he also said we can't afford it right now.

Should the price tag be a factor when you're the commander in chief of the United States?

GINGRICH: Sure. The price tag is always a factor, because, as General Eisenhower once he was president pointed out, as Abraham Lincoln understood, as George Washington understood, that's part of the decision.

But I think what Congresswoman Bachmann just said ought to really sober everybody about how much trouble we're in. Ten years after 9/11, our intelligence is so inadequate that we have no idea what percent of the Libyan rebels are, in fact, al Qaeda. Libya was the second largest producer of people who wanted to kill Americans in Iraq.

I think that we need to think fundamentally about reassessing our entire strategy in the region. I think that we should say to the generals we would like to figure out to get out as rapid as possible with the safety of the troops involved. And we had better find new and very different strategies because this is too big a problem for us to deal with the American ground forces in direct combat.

We have got to have a totally new strategy for the region, because we don't today have the kind of intelligence we need to know even what we're doing.

KING: Mr. Cain, take 30 seconds, please. People might say he's a businessman. He has no experience in government. How would you look at your responsibilities, draw that line, vital U.S. national interests as commander in chief?

CAIN: It starts with making sure we understand the problem, which I don't think we did. We didn't have the intelligence. Number two, is it in the vital interest of the United States of America? If the answer is no, then we don't go any further. If it's not in the vital interest of America, To paraphrase my grandmother, with the situation in Libya and many of these other situations, they're not simple situations. It's a mess. It's just an absolute mess.

And there's more that we don't know than we do know, so it will be very difficult to know exactly what we do until, like others have said, we learn from the commanders in the field.

KING: Let's stay on how you would all focus as a commander in chief. Let's move down. Jennifer has a voter with a question.

VAUGHN: Staying on this topic, John, thank you. I'd like you to meet Greg Salts, who lives here in Manchester, New Hampshire. What's your question tonight for the candidates? GREG SALTS, TRUCK DRIVER: Well, I support the U.S. military. But frankly, we're in debt up to our eyeballs. We have nation building going on around the world. We're the world's police force. World War II is over. The Korean War is over. But we still have military bases all over Europe, all over Asia.

We have something like 900 military bases all around the world. I want to know if there's a candidate on the stage who is willing to shut down the bulk -- not the bulk of these bases, but the bases that aren't vital to our national security, and take that money to pay off our national debt?

KING: Senator Santorum, why don't I start with you on this one?

SANTORUM: We have actually closed down a lot of bases overseas. Look, what we're dealing with is a failure of leadership on this administration's part to actually put together a strategy where we can confront our enemies. And our enemies are asymmetric threats: terrorism.

That means that they are not just the positioned in the Middle East, but around the world. That means we have to have the ability to confront those threats from around the world, which means we need basing around the world.

So number one, we do need that basing. We do need to be able to be nimble and to be able to attack where we're attacked because it's not just a threat. We don't need to build bases in Germany for a threat from the Soviet Union.

Its much broader threat, number one. So we have to engage our allies and have our allies know that we have their back. The president has not done that. He's done everything he can, whether it's Israel or Honduras or whether it's Colombia or whether it's Czechs, the Poles -- he has turned his back on American allies and he has embraced our enemies.

Our enemies no longer respect us. Our friends no longer trust us. And we have a foreign policy that unfortunately now we're probably going to need more of a presence, because we've created such a vacuum. Thus, all the contingency operations you're seeing here as a result of America's fecklessness in dealing with the threats that confront us.

KING: I need to step in on time here. We have to take our last break of the evening. I know a lot of you have a lot of things to say. We'll get to more issues.

As we do some, if you take a look up here, you'll see the conversation on Facebook and Twitter. A lot of good questions. Would you have released the bin Laden photos? Would you support Israel at any cost if they're attacked by surrounding hostile countries.

Good questions from our viewers there. We're here on the campus of St. Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire. Seven Republican candidates for president. We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL: BREAK)

KING: We're in the closing moments of our Republican presidential debate here on the St. Anselm College campus, Manchester, New Hampshire. Time flies when you're having fun. One last segment with the candidates.

Let's kick off by going down on to the floor, WMUR's Jennifer Vaughn.

VAUGHN: Hi, Mr. Cain. This one is for you. Public opinion polls consistently result in low approval ratings for Congress as a whole. And early polls show a lack of enthusiasm for this field of candidates. Most of you will say that you don't watch polls, but shouldn't you pay attention to public sentiment? And aren't these polls a direct reflection of what voters are and are not looking for?

CAIN: Yes. I happen to believe that the polls do represent a barometer, because it's way too early. Secondly, probably a lot of the people don't know us yet, because it's still real early in the process.

So as people get to know us more and more, I think they're going to find that this really is a good field of candidates, at least in my opinion. But the people that know the most about everybody up here, they don't see this as a weak field, and neither do I.

KING: All right. It is likely that the Republican nominee for president is standing on the stage tonight. If you win the nomination, you'll have to make the choice that a nominee makes, and that is picking a running mate.

Governor Pawlenty to you, look back on 2008 and the process. President Obama made a pick. Senator McCain made a pick. Who made the best choice?

PAWLENTY: Senator Biden has been wrong about every major strategic decision in the modern history of the international conflict and military. Look at his judgment about partitioning Iraq, for example. Now we have Iraq being probably one of the shining example of success in the Middle East.

If Vice President Biden would have had his way, we would have had a partitioned Iraq and probably more mayhem in the Middle East. I think Governor Palin is a remarkable leader. I think she's qualified to be president of the United States.

I think she's equally as qualified or more qualified, and would have been as strong of a president as Joe Biden. He's wrong on everything.

KING: Go ahead, Governor.

ROMNEY: John, any one of the people on this stage would be a better president than President Obama. He has failed in job one, which was to get this economy going again. He failed in job two, which was to restrain the growth of the government. And he failed in job three, which is to have a coherent, consistent foreign policy.

We've had presidents in the past that had bad foreign policies. This is the first time we've had a president that doesn't have a foreign policy. And this hit or miss approach has meant a couple of successes, like getting Osama bin Laden -- congratulations -- but a lot of misses, like throwing our friends under the bus. And that's why any of these people who gets better known by the American people will serve as president with distinction over the future.

KING: If that is you, if there is a President Bachmann, and you're only allowed to hire one of the candidates on the stage, which one would it be and why?

ROMNEY: Don't choose the old guys.

BACHMANN: Well, maybe we'll have to have an "American Idol" contest and go from there. We'll let the audience decide.

KING: Let the audience decide. Congressman Paul, if you were the president of the United States and you could pick one, but just one of these gentlemen and the lady, to join your administration, who would it be and why?

PAUL: Join the administration?

KING: Yes.

PAUL: I would think everybody would qualify.

KING: You only get to pick one. It's about choices.

PAUL: I have to pick one? Hum? Let me look -- let me look them over. I would have to do a bit more quizzing. I would have to -- they haven't even told me how they feel about the Federal Reserve yet. They haven't told me about the foreign policy. So I have to do some more quizzing.

KING: We're down to our last minute. I want to try to get to everybody. I want to start with you, Senator Santorum. What have you learned in the last two hours.

SANTORUM: I think what Hermann said. We have a great field of candidates. I was very impressed by what I heard. I hope everybody else was. These are folks that answered the questions that were asked of them.

KING: Congresswoman?

BACHMANN: In the last two hours, I've learned more about the goodness of the American people -- from the question from John, his three sons that are serving in the Navy, his wonderful service. Everyone who asked a question has talked to me about --

KING: Don't mean to interrupt you.

GINGRICH: I think once again, New Hampshire is proving why it's first in the nation as the primary, because the questions are so good.

KING: Governor?

ROMNEY: And New Hampshire is proving that the issue people care most about is getting this economy growing again, so that we can have rising housing prices again. People can have the kind of incomes they deserve. They don't have to wonder whether the future is brighter than the past. People in New Hampshire love the future.

PAUL: I've learned with the group here that disagrees on some issues, we can talk about it and be civil to each other.

KING: Governor?

PAWLENTY: I learned that if you trust the people, our future is bright and I learned that the Boston Bruins have more heart than the Vancouver Canucks.

KING: Mr. Cain?

CAIN: What I've learned is that all of these candidates up here share one thing in common. And that is, it's not about us. It's about the children and the grandchildren. We're not that far apart on all of the big issues.

KING: I want to thank all seven of our candidates tonight. I want to thank "The Union Leader," WMUR and St. Anselm College for having us. We have a feisty campaign to come. Please pay attention at home.

I want to thank everybody here. I'm John King. I'll see you tomorrow on "JOHN KING USA." Anderson Cooper continues our coverage. Post-debate analysis right now.

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