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September 7, 2011

The Republican Debate at the Reagan Library

The following is a transcript of the 2012 Republican presidential debate on Sept. 7, 2011, in Simi Valley, Calif., as transcribed by Roll Call.

SPEAKERS: REP. RON PAUL, R-TEXAS, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

GOV. RICK PERRY, R-TEXAS, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

FORMER GOV. MITT ROMNEY, R-MASS., PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

REP. MICHELE BACHMANN, R-MINN., PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

HERMAN CAIN, REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

FORMER REP. NEWT GINGRICH, R-GA., PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

FORMER GOV. JON HUNTSMAN JR., R-UTAH, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

FORMER SEN. RICK SANTORUM, R-PA., PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

BRIAN WILLIAMS, POLITICO

JOHN HARRIS, POLITICO

JOSE DIAZ-BALART, MSNBC

WILLIAMS: Tonight, from the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Library, in a place dedicated to the memory of this Republican icon, in the 100th year after his birth, we will hear from the eight candidates who would like to claim his legacy. They're all here tonight ready to explain and defend their positions on job creation, on spending, debt, and taxes, on America's costly dual wars, and the toxic gridlock that is Washington, D.C.

ANNOUNCER: Live from the Reagan Library in Simi Valley, California, the Republican candidates debate. Here now are Brian Williams and John Harris.

(APPLAUSE)

WILLIAMS: Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Good evening, and welcome.

Thank you especially for joining us here in this spectacular space, this spectacular presidential library, where we are all gathered under the wings of Air Force One. We're going to get right to it tonight because we have a lot of candidates on stage, a lot of issues to talk about.

And for the next hour and 45 minutes, give or take, along with my colleague and friend, John Harris of the website Politico, we will be putting questions to the eight candidates on stage tonight. By agreement, they will have one minute to answer and then 30 seconds for follow-up or rebuttal, as they say, at the moderator's discretion. There will be no opening or closing statements during this debate tonight. With that out of the way, we're going to start with jobs and the economy. The numbers from our new NBC News-Wall Street Journal poll this week are, candidly, jaw-dropping. The country thinks the economy is going to get worse before it gets better. A majority of people in this country now believe the Republican policies of the first eight years of the past decade are responsible for the economic mess we're in. And we should quickly add, a majority also don't believe the current Democratic president has set the right policies to fix the fix we're in. Question is, really, who can?

Governor Perry, we're going to begin with you. You're the newcomer here on stage. You probably saw this coming a mile away. You have touted your state's low taxes, the lack of regulation, tough tort reform as the recipe for job growth in the Lone Star State, but Texas ranks last among those who have completed high school, there are only eight other states with more living in poverty, no other state has more working at or below the minimum wage. So is that the kind of answer all Americans are looking for?

PERRY: Actually, what Americans are looking for is someone who can get this country working again. And we put the model in place in the state of Texas. When you look at what we have done over the last decade, we created 1 million jobs in the state of Texas. At the same time, America lost 2.5 million.

So I will suggest to you that Americans are focused on the right issue, and that is, who on this stage can get America working? Because we know for a fact the resident of the White House cannot.

WILLIAMS: But you know by now the counterargument to that is the number of low-wage jobs and the fact that unemployment is better in over half the states of the union than it is right now in Texas.

PERRY: Well, the first part of that comment is incorrect, because 95 percent of all the jobs that we've created have been above minimum wage.

So I'm proud of what we've done in the state of Texas. And for the White House or anyone else to be criticizing creation of jobs now in America, I think is a little bit hypocritical.

You want to create jobs in America? You free the American entrepreneur to do what he or she does, which is risk their capital, and I'll guarantee you, the entrepreneur in America, the small businessman and woman, they're looking for a president that will say we're going to lower the tax burden on you and we're going to lower the regulation impact on you, and free them to do what they do best: create jobs.

WILLIAMS: Governor Romney, over to you. You've opened the door on this topic, at least where Governor Perry's concerned. Despite your own private-sector experience, as you know, Massachusetts ranked only 47th in job creation during your tenure as governor. As for your private-sector experience, as Governor Perry's strategist recently put it, consisted of being, quote, "a buyout specialist." Your response to that?

ROMNEY: Well, not terribly accurate, at least with regards to the latter. And our state -- I'm happy to take a look at the Massachusetts record, because when I came in as governor, we were in a real freefall. We were losing jobs every month. We had a budget that was way out of balance.

So I came into office, we went to work as a team, and we were able to turn around the job losses. And at the end of four years, we had our unemployment rate down to 4.7 percent. That's a record I think the president would like to see.

As a matter of fact, we created more jobs in Massachusetts than this president has created in the entire country. The policies that will get us working again as a nation are policies I understand having worked in the private sector.

Look, if I had spent my whole life in government, I wouldn't be running for president right now. My experience, having started enterprises, having helped other enterprises grow and thrive, is what gives me the experience to put together a plan to help restructure the basis of America's economic foundation so we can create jobs again, good jobs, and compete with anyone in the world.

This country has a bright future. Our president doesn't understand how the economy works. I do, because I've lived in it.

WILLIAMS: Time, Governor.

Let's get a little more specific. Bain Capital, a company you helped to form, among other things, often buys up companies, strips them down, gets them ready, resells them at a net job loss to American workers.

ROMNEY: You know, that might be how some people would like to characterize what we did, but in fact, we started business at Bain Capital, and when we acquired businesses, in each case we tried to make them bigger, make them more successful and grow. The idea that somehow you can strip

things down and it makes them more valuable is not a real effective investment strategy. We tried to make these businesses more successful.

By the way, they didn't all work. But when it was all said and done, and we looked at the record we had during the years I was there, we added tens of thousands of jobs to the businesses we helped support. That experience, succeeding, failing, competing around the world, is what gives me the capacity to help get this economy going again. WILLIAMS: Time.

I mentioned one more reference to being a career politician. Is it a disqualification to be in government all your career?

ROMNEY: It's a fine profession, and if someone were looking to say how can we restructure government, and which agency should report to which other agency, well, maybe that's the best background. If you're thinking about what it takes to reshape and update America's economy, and to allow us to compete with China and other nations around the world, understanding how the economy works fundamentally is a credential I think is critical.

WILLIAMS: Governor Perry, a 30-second rebuttal.

You spent your career in that fine profession of elected office. Your reaction to that?

PERRY: Well, Governor Romney left the private sector, and he did a great job of creating jobs in the private sector all around the world. But the fact is, when he moved that experience to government, he had one of the lowest job creation rates in the country. So the fact is, while he had a good private sector record, his public sector record did not match that. As a matter of fact, we created more jobs in the last three months in Texas than he created in four years in Massachusetts.

WILLIAMS: Well, let's widen this out and let's bring in Mr. Cain on one side --

ROMNEY: Wait a second.

WILLIAMS: Go ahead. I'll give you 30 seconds.

ROMNEY: Listen, wait a second.

WILLIAMS: We could do this all evening.

ROMNEY: States are different. Texas is a great state. Texas has zero income tax. Texas has a right to work state, a Republican legislature, a Republican Supreme Court. Texas has a lot of oil and gas in the ground.

Those are wonderful things, but Governor Perry doesn't believe that he created those things. If he tried to say that, well, it would be like Al Gore saying he invented the Internet.

(APPLAUSE)

ROMNEY: Look, the reality is, there are differences. There are differences between states.

I came into a state that was in real trouble -- a huge budget gap, losing jobs every month. We turned it around. Three out of four years, we had unemployment rate below the national average, we ended up with 4.7 percent unemployment rate. I'm proud of what we were able to do in a tough situation.

WILLIAMS: Time.

Governor Perry?

PERRY: I know back and forth -- Michael Dukakis created jobs three times faster than you did, Mitt.

ROMNEY: Well, as a matter of fact, George Bush and his predecessor created jobs at a faster rate than you did, Governor.

(LAUGHTER)

PERRY: That's not correct.

ROMNEY: Yes, that is correct.

WILLIAMS: Nice to see everybody came prepared for tonight's conversation.

(LAUGHTER)

WILLIAMS: As I said, I'd like to bring in both wings here, figuratively, of course, Senator Santorum and Mr. Cain.

Let's talk about this debate between public sector life's work and private sector life's work.

You've spent your life's work, Mr. Cain, in the private sector.

And Senator Santorum, most of yours in the public sector.

Weigh in on what you're hearing (ph).

SANTORUM: Yes, I think what people are looking for is someone to get something done. And that's what I have a track record of doing in Washington, D.C., across the board. Not just on economics, but on moral cultural issues, on national security issues, national defense issues.

I've done things. We've brought Democrat and Republicans together.

SANTORUM: I've put forward a plan because I think it's the best plan. But it's also the best plan of anybody here that actually can pass the Senate, which is probably going to have to have Democratic votes. And what I focussed on was a sector of the economy that can get Democratic votes.

We cut the corporate tax from 35 percent to zero, because we want to build the great middle of America again, get those jobs that were shipped overseas by companies that were looking too make a profit because they couldn't any longer do it here.³⁷⁵, and bring those jobs back to America.

We cut that corporate rate to zero. We've passed repatriation to get that resources that are seen overseas, \$1.2 trillion, and we bring them back here.

We'll create jobs, and I'll get Democratic votes to pass it. We'll bring things together, because those industrial state Democrats -- and I know, because I'm from an industrial state -- they will vote for this bill. You want to get something going, elect someone who knows how to get things done.

(UNKNOWN): Time, Senator.

Mr. Cain, same question.

CAIN: Let's cut to the chase, this is what business people do and politicians don't do. Here's how I would fix this economy, first, eliminate the current tax code. It is a drain on entrepreneurs, it is the biggest barrier that's holding this economy back, and what I would do is to propose a bold plan, which I have already released.

I call it my 9-9-9 economic growth plan. Throw out the current tax code, a 9 percent tax on corporate income, our 9 percent tax on personal income and a 9 percent national sales tax. If 10 percent is good enough for God, 9 percent ought to be good enough for the federal government. This will replace all federal income taxes. It'll replace all federal income taxes.

It will also replace the payroll tax, so everybody gets some skin in the game. And it replaces the capital gains tax.

This economy is on life support. We do not need a solution that just trims around the edges. This is a bold plan and a bold solution. Additionally, with something as simple as 9-9-9, it gives us a easy mechanism to go after -- help those cities that are the most blighted in terms of empowerment zones, and we can modify that very easily versus the current code.

(UNKNOWN): Mr. Cain, thank you.

Governor Huntsman, as you know, Governor Romney's new economic plan calls for the U.S. government to officially label China a currency manipulator, But "The Wall Street Journal" editorial page says such a move would cause a trade war, perhaps.

You're a former ambassador to China. You have served four U.S. presidents. In your view, what does Governor Romney not get about China?

HUNTSMAN: He doesn't get the part that what will fix the U.S.- China relationship, realistically, is fixing our core right here at home, because our core is weak, and it is broken, and we have no leverage at the negotiating table.

And I'd have to say, Mitt, now is not the time in a recession to enter a trade war. Ronald Reagan flew this plane. I was in China during the trip in 1984. He went on TV, he spoke to the Chinese people -- I'd love to do that too, in Chinese itself -- and he talked in optimistic, glowing terms.

And it reminds me about this, Ryan, we are the most blue sky, optimistic people on earth. We're going to find solutions, and I have an offer for the two great governors over here.

And I hate to rain on the parade of the Lone Star governor, but as governor of Utah, we were the number one job creator in this country during my years of service. That was 5.9 percent when you were creating jobs at 4.9 percent.

And to my good friend, Mitt, 47 just ain't going to cut it, my friend, not when you can be first. We've got to remember, that to beat President Obama, we have to have somebody who's been in the private sector, understands the fragility of the free market system, has been a successful governor as it relates to job creation, and knows something about this world.

I've lived overseas four times, I've been an ambassador to my country three times, I think I understand that.

(UNKNOWN): Governor Huntsman, time.

Congresswoman Bachmann, over to you. Of all of you on this stage, you've been very vocal about wanting less regulation in American life. Which current federal regulations have been prohibitive or damaging in terms of your own small business?

BACHMANN: Well, I think without a doubt, there's two that you look to. First of all are the new regulations that are just being put into place with ObamaCare. As I go across the country and speak to small business people, men and women, they tell me ObamaCare is leading them to not create jobs. I spent three weekends going to restaurants, and I talked to business owners, said I have 60 people on my payroll, I have to let 10 go. At the same time, a 17-year-old girl came in and said, I'd like a job application for the summer.

He said, I'm sorry, dear, I'm not hiring this summer, I'm actually letting people go. ObamaCare is killing jobs. We know that from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office. But I know it first-hand from speaking to people.

We see it this summer. There are 47 percent of African-American youth that are currently without jobs, 36 percent of Hispanic youth. I'm a mom. I've raised five biological kids and 23 foster kids in my home. One thing I know is that kids need jobs. And ObamaCare is clearly leading to job-killing regulations, not job-creating regulations.

(UNKNOWN): (Inaudible), thank you.

Over to Congressman Paul, you're known as the absolutist in the bunch, someone who has consistently opposed federal government from having any role -- and I think by your definition -- that isn't explicitly laid out in the Constitution.

So this makes people curious: Is there a line with you? Where do you draw it? Does this include things like making cars safe, making medicine safe, air traffic control controlling the jets above our heads?

PAUL: I think in theory, if you understood the free market in a free society, you don't need government to do that. We live in a society where we have been adapted to this, and you can't just drop it all at once, but you can transition away from it.

On regulations, no, I don't believe in any of these federal regulations, but that doesn't mean I don't believe in regulations. The regulation of the marketplace takes care of it. Just think if we had the regulations on the market that dealt with the bankruptcies? They'd have had to go bankrupt. We wouldn't have been able to bail out the big banks and the big corporations and dump onto poor people.

So the market would dictate it. You can't commit fraud. If you need detailed regulations, you can do it at the state level. But the federal government is not authorized to nitpick every little transaction. The way they use the interstate commerce clause is outrageous, as far as I'm concerned.

WILLIAMS: Well, 30 seconds more for devil's advocate here, because would you then put it on the drug companies to say, "No, we're bringing this to market, trust us, it's a fantastic drug"? All the pilots in the sky, to add to their responsibilities, their own air traffic control, in an organic way?

PAUL: What I said is, theoretically, you could -- it could be privatized, but who ends up doing the regulations on the drugs? They do as much harm as good. They don't take good care of us. Who gets -- who gets to write the regulations? The bureaucrats write the regulations, but who writes the laws? The lobbyists have control, so lobbyists from the drug industry has control of writing the regulations, so you turn it over to the bureaucracy.

But you would have private institutions that could become credible. And, I mean, do we need the federal government to tell us whether we buy a safe car? I say the consumers of America are smart

enough to decide what kind of car they can buy and whether it's safe or not, and they don't need the federal government hounding them and putting so much regulations on that our car industry has gone overseas.

WILLIAMS: Congressman, thank you.

Over to Speaker Gingrich.

(APPLAUSE)

Mr. Speaker, as you remember, you wrote the foreword to Rick Perry's most recent book called "Fed Up," and you called him, quote, "uniquely qualified to explain what's taking place with the economy." Does that mean, in terms of job creation credentials, he has your proxy at a gathering like this?

GINGRICH: No, but it means that, if he wants to write another book, I'll write another foreword.

(LAUGHTER)

As he himself -- look, he's said himself, that was an interesting book of ideas by somebody who's not proposing a manifesto for president. And I think to go back and try to take that apart is silly.

But let me just use my time for a second, if I might, Brian. I served during the Reagan campaign with people like Jack Kemp and Art Laffer. We had an idea for job creation. I served as a freshman -- or as a sophomore helping pass the Reagan's jobs program. At newt.org, I put out last Friday the response to the Obama stagnation.

The fact is, if you took the peak of the Reagan unemployment, which he inherited from Carter, by last Friday, going month by month, under Ronald Reagan, we'd have 3,700,000 more Americans working.

When I was speaker, we added 11 million jobs, in a bipartisan effort, including welfare reform, the largest capital gains tax cut in history. We balanced the budget for four straight years.

The fact that President Obama doesn't come to the Reagan Library to try to figure out how to create jobs, doesn't talk to any of these three governors to learn how to create jobs, doesn't talk to Herman Cain to learn how to create jobs tells you that this is a president so committed to class warfare and so committed to bureaucratic socialism that he can't possibly be effective in jobs.

WILLIAMS: Mr. Speaker, thank you. (APPLAUSE)

The questioning -- the questioning continues with John Harris.

HARRIS: Thank you. Thank you, Brian.

It didn't take you folks long to mix it up on the question of jobs. I'd like to turn to another subject that's been dominating this campaign. It's health care. Governor Romney, four years ago on this same stage, you had this to say about your record in Massachusetts.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ROMNEY: ... great opportunity for the entire country.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

WILLIAMS: Well, he had a lot more to say than that, didn't he?

(LAUGHTER)

(CROSSTALK)

HARRIS: I'm sorry. We had a little bit of a glitch right there, but, Governor, you said that what you did in Massachusetts was a great opportunity for the country. I'm going to get to you in just a minute.

What I'd first like to do is ask if anyone else on this stage agrees that the Massachusetts example was a great opportunity for the rest of the country.

(UNKNOWN): No.

(UNKNOWN): No.

PERRY: It was a great opportunity for us as a people to see what will not work, and that is an individual mandate in this country.

HARRIS: Got it. That actually, Governor Romney, leads to my question. I've heard you on this many times before. You said some things about the Massachusetts law worked; other things didn't work as well. Let's go to what Governor Perry mentioned, the individual mandate, the government saying that people have to buy health insurance. Was that one of the things that worked in Massachusetts?

ROMNEY: Let's step back and make sure I make something very clear from the very outset. I understand health care pretty darn well, having been through what I went through as a governor. And one thing I'd do on day one if I'm elected president is direct my secretary of health and human services to put out an executive order granting a waiver from Obamacare to all 50 states. It is bad law, it will not work, and I'll get that done in day one.

(APPLAUSE) Now, number two, what we face in our state is different than what other states face. What we had is a lot of people who found that they could simply stop getting insurance, go to the

hospital, and get free care paid for by the people, paid for by taxpayers. We were spending hundreds of millions of dollars in our state giving care to people who in some cases could afford to take care of themselves.

And we said, you know what? You've either got to get insurance, if you can afford it, or you're going to have to help pay the cost of providing that care to your -- to you. And that was the approach that we took.

It's a model that lets other states take a look at it. Some parts of it have been copied by other states; some haven't. One thing I know, and that is that what President Obama put in place is not going to work. It's massively expensive. In our state, our plan covered 8 percent of the people, the uninsured.

HARRIS: Governor, time.

ROMNEY: His plan is taking over 100 percent of the people, and the American people don't like it and should vote it down.

HARRIS: Thank you, Governor.

Governor Perry, you clearly don't like the Massachusetts plan as an example for other states, but Massachusetts has nearly universal health insurance. It's first in the country. In Texas, about a quarter of the people don't have health insurance. That's 50 out of 50, dead last. Sir, it's pretty hard to defend dead last.

PERRY: Well, I'll tell you what the people in the state of Texas don't want: They don't want a health care plan like what Governor Romney put in place in Massachusetts. What they would like to see is the federal government get out of their business.

For Medicaid, for instance -- as a matter of fact, I bet Mitt and Jon would both agree -- and I know Newt would, as well -- Medicaid needs to be block-granted back to the states so that we can use the innovation in the states, come up with the best ways to deliver health care.

My wife is a nurse. And I'll promise you, we understand that if we can get the federal government out of our business in the states when it comes to health care, we'll come up with ways to deliver more health care to more people cheaper than what the federal government is mandating today with their strings attached, here's how you do it, one-size-fits-all effort out of Washington, D.C.

That's got to stop. And I'll promise you: On day one, as the president of the United States, that executive order will be signed and Obamacare will be wiped out as much as it can be.

HARRIS: Governor, quick follow-up. Why are so many people in Texas uninsured? PERRY: Well, bottom line is that we would not have that many people uninsured in the state of Texas if you

didn't have the federal government. We've had requests in for years at the Health and Human Services agencies to have that type of flexibility where we could have menus, where we could have co-pays, and the federal government refuses to give us that flexibility.

We know for a fact that, given that freedom, the states can do a better job of delivering health care. And you'll see substantially more people not just in Texas, but all across the country have access to better health care.

BACHMANN: John? John?

HARRIS: Thank you. Just one minute. I'd like to go to Governor Huntsman, if I could, because at the heart of this is this argument about the individual mandate. Is it ever appropriate for government at any level -- federal or state -- to force people to buy health insurance?

HUNTSMAN: Absolutely not. You know, at some point, we're going to get around to talking about individual and personal responsibility. And I'm raising seven kids. I've got a couple of them here. The most important thing we can do in this health care debate -- right, Rick -- is talk about individual responsibility, personal responsibility.

But I've got another solution for you, with these two great governors over there, both of whom I like and admire. And I hate to tell you that the situation in Utah is pretty darn good, but I want to draw you to another example there. We embarked upon health care reform. We did better than Rick, in terms of covering the uninsured, and we don't have a mandate. It allows the free market to create a marketplace of choices and options for people.

I believe that once Obamacare is repealed -- and it will be -- the question will then be, what do we do now? And I'm here to tell you that what we did in Utah is going to be a perfect example of what we do now.

We approach cost-cutting, cost overruns, harmonizing medical records, which doctors will tell you is a hugely consequential deal, and expanding the marketplace for choices and options for individuals to choose from, without a heavy-handed and expensive mandate that has caused...

HARRIS: Thank you.

HUNTSMAN: ... for the average family in Massachusetts \$2,500 bucks to go up.

HARRIS: Thanks. Thanks, Governor.

Congresswoman Bachmann, let's turn to you. Is Governor Romney's support of an individual mandate...

HARRIS: OK, Governor. Time.

Congresswoman Bachmann, why don't we hear from you on that? It's your plan.

BACHMANN: Energy is one of the greatest opportunities for job creation that we have in the United States. We just learned today that if the federal government would pull back on all of the regulatory restrictions on American energy production, we could see 1.2 million jobs created in the United States.

We could also see created over 50 percent more American energy production. And we could also see \$800 billion more revenue coming into the United States government.

Don't forget the day that President Obama took office, gasoline was \$1.79 a gallon. It's entirely possible for us to get back to inexpensive energy.

The problem is, energy is too high. Let's have a goal of bringing it down, because every time gasoline increases 10 cents a gallon, that's \$14 billion in economic activity that every American has taken out of their pockets. This is a great solution, and this is the place to start with American job creation.

(UNKNOWN): John?

HARRIS: Governor Huntsman, everybody would like \$2 gas, but is it realistic for a president to promise that?

HUNTSMAN: Of course not. We live in -- we live in the free- market economy. I'm not sure that dictating prices is going to get you anywhere.

But let's face the reality of where we are. This is a perfect example of where presidential leadership matters. To have a president who would actually walk out from behind the TelePrompTer, get out of the way, speak from your heart and soul, just tell us about...

(APPLAUSE)

... just tell us about where you want this country to go, in terms of what we have in such great abundance, tell us where we think we can find that which we have and convert it into jobs and expanding our industrial base, and reminding the American people that they're not paying \$4 per gallon for gas. When you add up the cost of troop deployments, when you add up the cost of keeping the sea lanes open for the importation of imported oil, the bulk and distribution and terminaling costs (ph), it's \$13 a gallon, so says the Milken Institute. And I say the American people have had enough. We need a president who's going to provide a little bit of leadership in getting us some direction and opening up the opportunities.

(UNKNOWN): We don't...

HARRIS: Thank you. Congressman Paul, another question from a Politico reader. Do you advocate getting rid of the minimum wage? Would that create more jobs?

PAUL: Absolutely. And it would help the poor, the people who need a job. The minimum wage is a mandate. We're against mandates, so why should we have it? No, it would be very beneficial.

But I was trying to get your attention a little while ago. There's eight of us up here. I'm a physician, but you sure weren't going to ask me any medical question. But I would like to address that just a little bit.

First off, you know, the governor of Texas criticized the governor of Massachusetts for Romneycare, but he wrote a really fancy letter supporting Hillarycare. So we probably ought to ask him about that.

But mandates, that's what the whole society is about. That's what we do all the time. That's what government does: mandate, mandate, mandate. And what we -- we talk so much about the Obama mandate, which is very important, but what about Medicare? Isn't that a mandate? Everything we do is a mandate. So this is why you have to look at this at the cause of liberty. We don't need the government running our lives.

And I -- I do want to address the subject of \$2 oil or gasoline, because I can do it much better than that. I can get you a gallon of gasoline for a dime.

HARRIS: Time. Time. Thank you, Congressman.

PAUL: Well, I've got to finish the sentence. You didn't give me time before.

(CROSSTALK)

HARRIS: These are rules that all of you agreed to that Brian...

ROMNEY: Let's hear that.

(CROSSTALK)

HARRIS: Finish the sentence, or you're all done?

PAUL: OK, I'm going to finish the sentence then. HARRIS: Quickly, please.

PAUL: OK, you can buy a gallon of gasoline today for a silver dime. A silver dime is worth \$3.50. It's all about inflation and too many regulations.

HARRIS: Good. Thank you, sir.

Now, Governor Perry, I saw you nod your head.

(APPLAUSE)

I saw you nod your head, Governor Perry, at the answer on the minimum wage that would create jobs. Do you agree with that?

PERRY: I actually was nodding my head when he said that I wrote a letter to Hillary and we were hoping...

(CROSSTALK)

PERRY: ... that she would be able to come up with something that would not leave the agriculture men and women -- because I was the agriculture commissioner at that particular point in time. We had no idea it was going to be the monstrosity that's known as Hillarycare.

Speaking of letters, I was more interested in the one that you wrote to Ronald Reagan back and said I'm going to quit the party because of the things you believe in.

PAUL: Oh, I need an answer on that.

(LAUGHTER)

(CROSSTALK)

HARRIS: You've got a 30-second rebuttal, Congressman.

(CROSSTALK)

PAUL: I strongly supported Ronald Reagan. I was one of four in Texas -- one of four members of Congress that supported Reagan in '76. And I supported him all along, and I supported his -- his -- all his issues and all his programs.

But in the 1980s, we spent too much, we taxed too much, we built up our deficits, and it was a bad scene. Therefore, I support the message of Ronald Reagan. The message was great. But the consequence, we have to be honest with ourselves. It was not all that great. Huge deficits during the 1980s, and that is what my criticism was for, not for Ronald Reagan's message. His message is a great message.

WILLIAMS: Funny thing about the mail. It kind of tends to live on forever.

To all of you, thank you. We're going to hold in place, take a quick break. Our coverage of the debate from the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California, will continue right after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

WILLIAMS: And we are back. Our live coverage continues of the GOP debate here tonight, Simi Valley, California, at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, beneath the huge Air Force One Boeing 707.

I'm with John Harris of the website Politico, and we would be remiss, of course, any gathering in this space would, without a mention, perhaps a short tribute, to one of the most important people here tonight.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

WILLIAMS (voice-over): The legacy represented here at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Library is impressive: over 1 million photos, 60 million pages of documents, tens of thousands of audio and videotapes encompassing the life and work of the late president.

R. REAGAN: Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.

(APPLAUSE)

WILLIAMS: But even this great place can't evoke the full magnitude and spirit of Ronald Reagan's life like his partner.

N. REAGAN: I was very blessed to find him.

WILLIAMS: Mrs. Reagan has always said her life started when she met Ronald Wilson Reagan. And from that point onward, they tackled everything together.

RONALD WILSON REAGAN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: I, Ronald Reagan, do solemnly swear --

WILLIAMS: All along, Mrs. Reagan was his advisor and champion- in-chief. Their love for one another was an enduring image at the White House. That bond would sustain them through the unthinkable.

Though forever shaken, the work of the nation went on. Mrs. Reagan decided to dedicate herself to the Just Say No campaign.

N. REAGAN: If you're ever offered drugs, please, please, just say no.

WILLIAMS: It was with great dignity and grace that President Reagan announced in 1994 he'd been diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

N. REAGAN: Each day brings another reminder of this very long good-bye.

WILLIAMS: Since saying farewell to her companion of over 50 years back in 2004, Mrs. Reagan

has stayed active in public life, advocating for stem-cell research, and devoting herself to the celebration of her husband's life and his lasting legacy.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

(APPLAUSE)

WILLIAMS: And so, Ladies and Gentlemen, Mrs. Nancy Reagan.

The questioning continues -- John Harris.

HARRIS: Governor Perry, you said you wrote the book "Fed Up" to start a conversation. Congratulations. It's certainly done that in recent weeks.

In the book, you call Social Security the best example of a program that "violently tossed aside any respect for states' rights." We understand your position that it's got funding problems now. I'd like you to explain your view that Social Security was wrong right from the beginning.

PERRY: Well, I think any of us that want to go back and change 70 years of what's been going on in this country is probably going to have a difficult time. And rather than spending a lot of time talking about what those folks were doing back in the '30s and the '40s, it's a nice intellectual conversation, but the fact is we have got to be focussed on how we're going to change this program.

And people who are on Social Security today, men and women who are receiving those benefits today, are individuals at my age that are in line pretty quick to get them, they don't need to worry about anything. But I think the Republican candidates are talking about ways to transition this program, and it is a monstrous lie.

It is a Ponzi scheme to tell our kids that are 25 or 30 years old today, you're paying into a program that's going to be there. Anybody that's for the status quo with Social Security today is involved with a monstrous lie to our kids, and it's not right.

HARRIS: OK. Thank you, sir.

Let me follow on that. You mentioned the phrase "Ponzi scheme."

Just this morning, your former political adviser, Karl Rove, said that type of language could be "toxic," as he put it, in a general election. Vice President Cheney gave an interview today to ABC News, when he said it's not a Ponzi scheme, "It's a program that a great many people depend on."

My understanding is you're standing by every word you've written in that book. Is that right?

PERRY: Yes, sir. You know, Karl has been over the top for a long time in some of his remarks. So I'm not responsible for Karl anymore. But the fact is --

HARRIS: Vice President Cheney though said it's not a Ponzi scheme. You say it is.

PERRY: Absolutely. If Vice President Cheney or anyone else says that the program that we have in place today, and young people who are paying into that, expect that program to be sound, and for them to receive benefits when they reach retirement age, that is just a lie. And I don't care what anyone says. We know that, the American people know that, but more importantly, those 25-and-30-year-olds know that.

HARRIS: Governor, time. Thank you. Governor, time.

(APPLAUSE) HARRIS: Governor Romney, let's be blunt. Let's be blunt. Democrats are itching to use that kind of provocative language against Republicans, yet you acknowledge yourself that Social Security has funding problems.

How do you have a candid question about Social Security without scaring seniors?

ROMNEY: Well, the issue is not the funding of Social Security. We all agree and have for years that the funding program of Social Security is not working, and Congress has been raiding the dollars from Social Security to pay for annual government expenditures. That's wrong. The funding, however, is not the issue.

The issue in the book "Fed Up," Governor, is you say that by any measure, Social Security is a failure. You can't say that to tens of millions of Americans who live on Social Security and those who have lived on it.

The governor says look, states ought to be able to opt out of Social Security. Our nominee has to be someone who isn't committed to abolishing Social Security, but who is committed to saving Social Security.

We have always had, at the heart of our party, a recognition that we want to care for those in need, and our seniors have the need of Social Security. I will make sure that we keep the program and we make it financially secure. We save Social Security.

And under no circumstances would I ever say by any measure it's a failure. It is working for millions of Americans, and I'll keep it working for millions of Americans. And we've got to do that as a party.

(APPLAUSE)

HARRIS: Thank you, Governor.

Governor Perry, a 30-second rebuttal. Governor Romney said Vice President Cheney is right and you're wrong about Ponzi schemes.

PERRY: Well, here's -- again, we're not trying to pick fights here.

HARRIS: Understood.

PERRY: We're about fixing things. You can either have reasons or you can have results. And the American people expect us to put results in place.

You cannot keep the status quo in place and not call it anything other than a Ponzi scheme. It is. That is what it is. Americans know that, and regardless of what anyone says, oh, it's not -- and that's provocative language -- maybe it's time to have some provocative language in this country and say things like, let's get America working again and do whatever it takes to make that happen. (APPLAUSE)

CAIN: John, I think the American people would like to hear a solution.

HARRIS: OK.

CAIN: Do you want to hear some more rhetoric or do you want to hear a solution?

I happen to believe that yes, Social Security, it needs fixing, not continuing to talk about it. I believe in the Chilean model, where you give a personal retirement account option so we can move this society from an entitlement society to an empowerment society.

Chile had a broken system the way we did. Thirty years ago, a worker was paying 28 cents on a dollar into a broken system. They finally awakened and put in a system where the younger workers could have a choice. A novel idea.

Give them a choice with an account with their name on it, and over time we would eliminate the current broken system that we have. That is a solution to the problem. Rather than continuing to talk about how broken it is, let's just fix it using the Chilean model.

(APPLAUSE)

HARRIS: Thank you.

Congressman Paul, we've been talking just now about Governor Perry's rhetoric, but let's talk about his record.

Just this morning, your campaign put out a statement accusing him of pushing for bailout money, supporting welfare for illegal immigrants, and trying to forcibly vaccinate 12-year-old girls against sexually transmitted diseases.

He's your home state governor. Is he less conservative than meets the eye?

PAUL: Much more so, yes.

Just take the HPV. Forcing 12-year-old girls to take an inoculation to prevent this sexually transmitted disease, this is not good medicine, I do not believe. I think it's social misfit.

It's not good social policy. And therefore, I think this is very bad to do this. But one of the worst parts about that was the way it was done.

You know, the governorship in Texas traditionally is supposed to be a weak governorship. I didn't even know they could pass laws by writing an executive order. He did it with an executive order, passed it.

The state was furious, and the legislature, overwhelmingly, probably 90 percent -- I don't know exactly -- overwhelmingly repealed this. But I think it's the way it was passed, which was so bad.

I think it's a bad piece of legislation. But I don't like the idea of executive orders. I, as president, will not use the executive order to write laws.

HARRIS: Time. Thank you, Congressman.

Governor Perry, we'll get to you.

But, Congresswoman Bachmann, this is an issue you have also talked about, HPV.

BACHMANN: Well, what I'm very concerned about is the issue of parental rights. I think when it comes to dealing with children, it's the parents who need to make that decision. It is wrong for government, whether it's state or federal government, to impose on parents what they must do to inoculate their children. This is very serious, and I think that it's very important, again, that parents have the right.

Educational reform is another area. That's where I cut my teeth in politics, was being involved in educational reform, because the problem you see is one of framing.

It's the idea, should the federal government control these areas, or should parents and localities control these areas? We have the best results when we have the private sector and when we have the family involved. We have the worst results when the federal government gets involved, and especially by dictate to impose something like an inoculation on an innocent 12-year-old girl.

I would certainly oppose that.

HARRIS: Thank you.

Governor Perry, we've had candidates talking about you. Let's hear from you.

PERRY: I kind of feel like the pinata here at the party, so...

HARRIS: Welcome.

PERRY: But here's the facts of that issue. There was an opt-out in that piece of -- it wasn't legislation. It was an executive order.

I hate cancer. We passed a \$3 billion cancer initiative that same legislative session of which we're trying to find over the next 10 years cures to cancers. Cervical cancer is caused by HPV. We wanted to bring that to the attention of these thousands of -- of -- of -- tens of thousands of young people in our state. We allowed for an opt-out.

I don't know what's more strong for parental rights than having that opt-out. There's a long list of diseases that cost our state and cost our country. It was on that list.

Now, did we handle it right? Should we have talked to the legislature first before we did it? Probably so. But at the end of the day, I will always err on the side of saving lives.

(APPLAUSE)

HARRIS: Senator Santorum, one final note on this book, "Fed Up." Governor Perry says in his book that it was, quote, "unprincipled" for Republicans to vote in favor of creating the Department of Homeland Security. You were one of those Republicans who voted yes. Respond.

SANTORUM: We created the Department of Homeland Security because there was a complete mess in the internal -- in protecting our country. We had all sorts of agencies that had conflicting authority. We had no information sharing that was going on. This was right after 9/11. We saw the problems created as a result of 9/11. And we put together a plan to try to make sure that there was better coordination.

I want to get back to this Gardasil issue. You know, we have -- Governor Perry's out there and -- and claiming about state's rights and state's rights. How about parental rights being more important than state's rights? How about having, instead of an opt-out, an opt-in?

If you really cared, you could make the case, instead of forcing me, as a parent -- and I have seven children, too, the wide receivers here have -- have -- on the ends here have -- have -- have seven children each -- but I am offended that -- that the government would tell me -- and by an executive order, without even going through the process of letting the people have any kind of input. I would expect this from President Obama; I would not expect this from someone who's calling himself a conservative governor.

HARRIS: Time.

Governor Romney, you've been listening to this exchange. Who's got the better end of it?

ROMNEY: You know, I believe in parental rights and parental responsibility for our kids. My guess is that Governor Perry would like to do it a different way second time through. We've each get -- we've each taken a mulligan or two. And -- and my guess is that that's something you'd probably do a little differently the second time. He just said he'd rather do it through legislation second time through.

And I recognize he wanted very badly to provide better health care to his kids and to prevent the spread of cancer. I agree with -- with those who said he went about it in the wrong way, but I think his heart was in the right place.

Right now, we have people who on this stage care very deeply about this country. We love America. America is in crisis. We have some differences between us, but we agree that this president's got to go. This president is a nice guy. He doesn't have a clue how to get this country working again. And -- and...

(APPLAUSE) GINGRICH: Brian?

WILLIAMS: Speaker Gingrich, 30 seconds. I have another line of questioning. Go ahead.

GINGRICH: Yeah, I just want to go back, frankly, to the homeland security question, because it's important for us to confront this. I helped develop the model for homeland security. It hasn't been executed well.

The fact is, we have enemies who want to use weapons against us that will lead to disasters on an enormous scale. And the original goal was to have a Homeland Security Department that could help us withstand up to three nuclear events in one morning.

And we need to understand, there are people out there who want to kill us. And if they have an ability to sneak in weapons of mass destruction, they're going to use them. We need to overhaul and reform the department, but we need some capacity to respond to massive events that could kill hundreds of thousands of Americans in one morning.

WILLIAMS: Congressman Paul, this same line. You want to demolish the TSA. What would exist in its place?

PAUL: With the airlines that are responsible for carrying their cargo and their passengers. I mean, why -- why should we assume that a bureaucracy can do better? And look at the monstrosity we have at the airports. These TSA agents are abusive. Sometimes they're accused of all kinds of sexual activities on the way they maul people at the airport. So the airlines could do that.

WILLIAMS: I'll give them your best at LAX tonight.

PAUL: The -- you know, I would -- I would think the airlines should treat passengers as well as a company that hauls money around, and they -- they protect their money. They have private guards. And -- and they could do it.

Just remember, 9/11 came about because there was too much government. Government was more or less in charge. They told the pilots they couldn't have guns, and they were told never to resist. They set up the stage for all this. So, no, private -- private markets do a good job in protecting -- much better than this bureaucracy called the TSA, let me tell you.

WILLIAMS: Well, let me ask you about something else. It's related in a way, has to do with Mother Nature. Before the broadcast, Senator Santorum's got flooding today in Pennsylvania, Governor Perry is just back from the wildfires, out east, a Category 1 laid waste to entire areas. There's standing water tonight in Paterson, New Jersey, many of the towns around where I live, eight days without power. We had people eating in outdoor and public parks because the supermarkets were closed down.

The question is, federal aid, something like FEMA, if you object to what its become, how it's run, your position is to -- is to remove it, take it away, abolish it. What happens in its absence?

PAUL: Well, what happened before 1979? We didn't have FEMA. And that -- FEMA just conditioned people to build where they shouldn't be building. We lose the market effect of that.

But, yeah, my position is, we should have never had it. There's a much better way of doing it. I mean, this whole idea that the federal government can deal with weather and anything in the world, just got to throw a government there -- FEMA's broke. They're \$20 billion in debt.

But I'm not for saying tomorrow close it down. A lot of people pay the insurance. I work real hard to make it work, and I did that in my district, too.

But I'll tell you how we should do it. We're spending -- believe it or not, this blew my mind when I read this -- \$20 billion a year for air conditioning in Afghanistan and Iraq in the tents over there and all the air conditioning. Cut that \$20 billion out, bring in -- take \$10 off the debt, and put \$10 into FEMA or whoever else needs it, child health care or whatever. But I'll tell you what, if we did that and took the air conditioning out of the Green Zone, our troops would come home, and that would make me happy.

(APPLAUSE)

WILLIAMS: Mr. Cain, along these same lines, Majority Leader Eric Cantor has said that federal disaster aid -- this has been a big discussion of late -- shouldn't be given out unless there are kind of concurrent spending cuts to offset the cost. Do you join in on that?

CAIN: I believe that there's enough money to go around. And I believe that, yes, you can find the

concurrent spending cuts in order to be able to do that. No, don't eliminate FEMA. Let's fix FEMA. Let's fix Homeland Security.

There's a responsible way for the federal government to do the things that it should do. Running organizations like the TSA, I would agree with Representative Paul, no. Having the federal government responsible for trying to micromanage Medicare, no, trying to micromanage education, no. The federal government is not good at micromanaging anything. This is why I believe in empowering the states to do more and limit what the federal government does with regard to those kinds of program.

WILLIAMS: Governor Huntsman, you know, the upside to this is, I guess, you could fly with your shoes on. The downside is, who does the job the next day?

HUNTSMAN: Let me just say, while this is an important discussion that we're having, we've spent about 15 minutes now on homeland security. The greatest gift we could give this country on the 10th year anniversary, Rick, is a Homeland Security Department that really works, that doesn't give people a sense when they walk through they're going to get shaken down, a department that doesn't make us all feel like there's a fortress security mentality that is not American. And I've got to say there's something wrong with that.

But I'm guessing there are a whole lot of people tuned in around this country who are saying, why are we spending all this time talking about the smaller issues? We've got 14 million people unemployed. We've got millions more in this country who are so dispirited they've quit looking. This is a human tragedy that we're talking about, moms and dads and families that completely go without.

And all I would ask the people here and the people tuning in around this country, look at where we stand in terms of how we are going to get this country back on its feet.

And I just want to point out that we have offered -- based on where I've been and what I have done -- as governor of a state where we became number one in job creation, where we fixed the economy, made it the best economy for business in this entire country. We've got to get back on our feet.

This is a crisis situation. While all these other issues are important, let's not lose sight, folks, of the bottom line here. We've got to get back in the game as a country. We've got to make this economy work.

MORE99

WILLIAMS: Governor Perry, you can't have much of a workforce without a basis of education. As you know, your state ranks among the worst in the country in high school graduation rates, as we

established, yet you recently signed a budget cut for millions in education funding. You pushed for greater cuts than were in the budget that the legislature passed. You've said that education is a top priority, but explain cutting it the way you did, please.

PERRY: Well, I think the reductions that we made were thoughtful reductions, and the fact of the matter is, Texas has made great progress in the 10 years that I've been governor, from the standpoint of our graduation rates now are up to 84 percent, higher than they've been during any period of time before that.

We're seeing the type of commitment. Our 4th and 8th grader African-American and Hispanics on the NACH (ph) test, they were some of the highest in the country. We're making progress. When you share the border with Mexico, and when you have as many individuals that we have coming into the state of Texas, we have a unique situation in our state.

But the fact is, I stand by a record from what we've done with the resources that we've had, and I think that the reductions that we put in place were absorbed by our schools, and we will continue to have one of the finest workforces made available. When Caterpillar and Toyota and eBay and Facebook move to your state, it's not because you've got a workforce that's not capable.

WILLIAMS: Time, Governor.

Speaker Gingrich, this reminds of "Race to the Top," the Obama administration education program. You supported it, Governor Perry opted out, some people don't like it. What did you like about it?

GINGRICH: I liked very much the fact that it talked about charter schools. It's the one place I found to agree with President Obama. If every parent in America had a choice of the school their child went to, if that school had to report its scores, if there was a real opportunity, you'd have a dramatic improvement.

I visited schools where, three years earlier, there were fights, there were dropouts, there was no hope. They were taken over by a charter school in downtown Philadelphia, and all of a sudden the kids didn't fight anymore, because they were disciplined. They were all asked every day, what college are you going to? Not are you going to go to college, what college are you going. And so I would -- I am very much in favor of school choice.

My personal preference would be to have a Pell Grant for K-12 so that every parent could pick, with their child, any school they wanted to send them to, public or private, and enable them to have the choice.

I don't think you're ever going to reform the current bureaucracies. And the president, I thought, was showing some courage in taking on the teacher's union to some extent and offering charter

schools, and I wanted, frankly, to encourage more development towards choice.

WILLIAMS: I want to introduce another line of questioning by introducing yet another colleague of ours, Jose Diaz-Balart, from our sister network Telemundo.

Hey, my friend, how are you?

DIAZ-BALART: Good evening. Nice to see you all. Nice to see you all.

I want to talk about a subject that was very dear to the heart of President Reagan, which is immigration reform.

As you know, he was the last U.S. President to sign immigration reform in 1986. All of you, I think, have said that you don't think immigration reform should be discussed until the border is secure.

And, Governor, I'd like to ask you, border state governor, what specifically, in your mind, would make the border secure?

PERRY: Well, the first thing you need to do is have boots on the ground. We've had a request in to this administration since June -- or January of 2009 for 1,000 border patrol agents or National Guard troops, and working towards 3,000 border patrol. That's just on the Texas border.

There's another 50 percent more for the entire Mexican border. So you can secure the border, but it requires a commitment of the federal government of putting those boots on the ground, the aviation assets in the air.

We think predator drones could be flown, that real-time information coming down to the local and the state and the federal law enforcement. And you can secure the border. And at that particular point in time, then you can have an intellectually appropriate discussion about immigration reform.

For the President of the United States to go to El Paso, Texas, and say that the border is safer than it's ever been, either he has some of the poorest intel of a president in the history of this country, or he was an abject liar to the American people. It is not safe on that border.

DIAZ-BALART: Governor, specifically, do you agree or disagree with some of the issues that the governor of Texas says, as far as what you would consider enough to be able to declare the border safe?

ROMNEY: Well, first, we ought to have a fence. Secondly...

DIAZ-BALART: The whole fence, 2,600 miles?

ROMNEY: Yes. We got to -- we got to have a fence, or the technologically approved system to make

sure that we know who's coming into the country, number one.

Number two, we ought to have enough agents to secure that fence and to make sure that people are coming over are caught.

But the third thing, and I learned this when I was with border patrol agents in San Diego, and they said, look, they can always get a ladder to go over the fence. And people will always run to the country. The reason they come in such great numbers is because we've left the magnet on.

And I said, what do you mean, the magnet? And they said, when employers are willing to hire people who are here illegally, that's a magnet, and it draws them in. And we went in and talked about sanctuary cities, giving tuition breaks to the kids of illegal aliens, employers that, employers that knowingly hire people who are here illegally. Those things also have to be stopped.

If we want to secure the border, we have to make sure we have a fence, technologically, determining where people are, enough agents to oversee it, and turn off that magnet. We can't talk about amnesty, we cannot give amnesty to those who have come here illegally.

We've got 4.7 million people waiting in line legally. Let those people come in first, and those that are here illegally, they shouldn't have a special deal.

(APPLAUSE)

HARRIS: Speaker Gingrich, your perception on immigration reform? And you've been, I think, in some ways, a little different on your initial positions.

GINGRICH: I think we have to find a way to get to a country in which everybody who's here is here legally. But you started by referencing President Reagan.

In 1986, I voted for the Simpson-Mazzoli Act, which in fact did grant some amnesty in return for promises. President Reagan wrote in his diary that year that he signed the act because we were going to control the border and we were going to have an employer program where it was a legal guest worker program. That's in his diary.

I'm with President Reagan. We ought to control the border, we ought to have a legal guest worker program. We ought to outsource it, frankly, to American Express, Visa, and MasterCard, so there's no counterfeiting, which there will be with the federal government. We should be very tough on employers once you have that legal program.

We should make English the official language of government. We should insist --

(APPLAUSE)

GINGRICH: We should insist that first-generation immigrants who come here learn American

history in order to become citizens. We should also insist that American children learn American history.

And then find a way to deal with folks who are already here, some of whom, frankly, have been here 25 years, are married with kids, live in our local neighborhood, go to our church. It's got to be done in a much more humane way than thinking that to automatically deport millions of people.

HARRIS: Senator, your solution?

SANTORUM: Well, my solution is very similar to Newt Gingrich's.

Look, I'm the son of an Italian immigrant. I think immigration is one of the great things that has made this country the dynamic country that it continues to be, people who are drawn because of the ideals of this country. And so we should not have a debate talking about how we don't want people to come to this country, but we want them to come here like my grandfather and my father came here.

They made sacrifices. They came in the 1920s. There were no promises. There were no government benefits.

They came because they wanted to be free and they wanted to be good law-abiding citizens. So we have to have a program in place that sets that parameter that says, you're going to come to this country, come here according to the rules. It's a very good first step that the first thing you do here is a legal act, not an illegal act.

HARRIS: A quick follow-up, 30 seconds.

So there are 11 million people that -- fait accompli. They're here. What do you do with them if you are able to secure the border?

SANTORUM: Well, I think we can have the discussion, that whether what we do with people, how long they've been here, whether they had other types of records. But to have that discussion right now and pull the same trick that was pulled in 1986 -- we said, well, we'll promise to do this if you do that -- no more. We are going to secure the border first, and that's the most important thing to do, then we'll have the discussion afterwards.

HARRIS: Congresswoman, you said the fence -- that you believe the fence is fundamental as an integral part of controlling the border. Let's say that in 2012 or 2013, there's a fence, the border is secure, gasoline is \$2 a gallon.

What do you do then with 11 million people, as the Speaker says, many of whom have U.S.-born children here? What do you do?

BACHMANN: Well, again, understand the context and the problem that we're dealing with.

In Mexico right now, we're dealing with narco terrorists. This is a very serious problem. To not build a border or a fence on every part of that border would be, in effect, to yield United States sovereignty not only to our nation anymore, but to yield it to another nation. That we cannot do.

One thing that the American people have said to me over and over again -- and I was just last week down in Miami. I was visiting the Bay of Pigs Museum with Cuban-Americans. I was down at the Versailles Cafe. I met with a number of people, and it's very interesting. The Hispanic-American community wants us to stop giving taxpayer-subsidized benefits to illegal aliens and benefits, and they want us to stop giving taxpayer-subsidized benefits to their children as well.

HARRIS: A quick 30-second rebuttal on the specific question.

The fence is built, the border is under control. What do you do with 11.5 million people who are here without documents and with U.S.-born children?

BACHMANN: Well, that's right. And again, it is sequential, and it depends upon where they live, how long they have been here, if they have a criminal record. All of those things have to be taken into place.

But one thing that we do know, our immigration law worked beautifully back in the 1950s, up until the early 1960s, when people had to demonstrate that they had money in their pocket, they had no contagious diseases, they weren't a felon. They had to agree to learn to speak the English language, they had to learn American history and the Constitution.

And the one thing they had to promise is that they would not become a burden on the American taxpayer. That's what we have to enforce.

HARRIS: Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

HARRIS: Mr. Cain?

CAIN: Let's make sure -- let's solve all of the problems. It's not one problem.

I do believe we can secure the border with a combination of boots on the ground, technology, and a fence, but we've got three other problems. And to get to it, we've got to secure the border.

Secondly, let's promote the path to citizenship that's already there. We don't need a new one, we just need to clean up the bureaucracy that's slowing the process down and discouraging people.

The third thing we need to do, enforce the laws that are there, and the way we do it, empower the

states. I believe that the people closest to the problem are the best ones to be able to solve that problem. Empower the states to do what the federal government hasn't done, can't do, and won't do. This is how we solve the entire problem.

HARRIS: Thank you.

Governor?

HUNTSMAN: I would just have to say that I agree with so much of what has been said here today.

President Reagan, when he made his decision back in 1987, he saw this as a human issue. And I hope that all of us, as we deal with this immigration issue, will always see it as an issue that resolves around real human beings.

Yes, they came here in an illegal fashion. And yes, they should be punished in some form or fashion.

I have two daughters that came to this country, one from China, one from India, legally. I see this issue through their eyes.

We can find a solution. If President Reagan were here, he would speak to the American people and he would lay out in hopeful, optimistic terms how we can get there, remembering full well that we're dealing with human beings here. We have to agree.

But let me just say one thing about legal immigration. Let's not lose sight of the fact that our legal immigration system is broken. And if we want to do something about attracting brain power to this country, if we want to lift real estate values.

For example, why is it that Vancouver is the fastest-growing real estate market in the world today? They allow immigrants in legally, and it lifts all votes (ph). And we need to focus as much on legal immigration.

HARRIS: Congressman, your thoughts?

PAUL: Obviously, it's a very big problem. I think we need to remove the incentive -- easy road to citizenship. Nobody has mentioned the fact that they qualify for benefits as well, you know, the welfare benefits. We shouldn't have to give -- the state of Texas shouldn't be forced to provide free health care and free education.

But there is a mess down there, and it's a big mess. And it's the drug war that's going on there. And our drug laws are driving this. So now we're killing thousands and thousands of people. That makes it much more complicated. But the people who want big fences and guns, sure, we can secure the borders -- a barbed-wire fence with machine guns, that would do the trick.

I don't believe that's what America is all about. I just really don't.

We can enforce our law. If we had a healthy economy, this wouldn't be such a bad deal. People are worrying about jobs. But every time you think about this toughness on the border and I.D. cards and real ideas, think that it's a penalty against the American people, too.

I think this fence business is designed and may well be used against us and keep us in. In economic turmoil, the people want to lead (ph) with their capital. And there's capital controls and there's people control. So, every time you think of fence keeping all those bad people out, think about those fences maybe being used against us, keeping us in.

HARRIS: Thank you.

WILLIAMS: To my colleague, Jose Diaz-Balart. Thank you. Thank you very much.

HARRIS: Thank you.

WILLIAMS: This is -- we're going to take our final break now.

When we come back, the final portion of our debate from the Reagan Presidential Library, right after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

WILLIAMS: We are back. And as we said, this is the final portion of our debate. The campaigns have told us they wish not to have anything called anything close to a lightning round, but let's just say we'd like the frequency and velocity of the questions to quicken in this segment. We'll try to move it along and fit a lot in.

Starting with you, Governor Romney, are you a member of the Tea Party?

ROMNEY: I don't think you carry cards in the Tea Party. I believe in a lot of what the Tea Party believes in. The Tea Party believes that government's too big, taxing too much, and that we ought to get -- get to the work of getting Americans to work.

So I put together a plan with a whole series of points of how we can get America's economy going again. Tea Party people like that. So if the Tea Party is for keeping government small and spending down, and helping us create jobs, then, hey, I'm for the Tea Party.

WILLIAMS: Governor Perry, you missed this at the last debate. At the previous debate, everyone on stage raised their hand to say they would -- I want to get this exactly right -- not have accepted a debt deal that included \$10 in spending cuts for every \$1 in tax increases. We've been anxious to get you on the record now that you have jumped into this. Would you take that deal?

PERRY: I join my fellow participants here. What we should have been looking at is a way to get the spending under control and capping it, cutting it, and getting a balanced budget amendment. When you get a balanced budget amendment in Washington, D.C., you will finally start getting the snake's head cut off. I mean, the fact of the matter is, until you get a balanced budget amendment -- I don't care whether Democrats or Republicans are going to be in control in Washington, D.C. -- balanced budget amendment, and then the American people can go to sleep at night with a little more comfort that they're going to wake up and not be broke in the morning.

WILLIAMS: Did anyone else who had their hand up at that last debate want to amend your comment or vote since then? Congresswoman Bachmann?

BACHMANN: Well, I wanted to say is, there's someone else who would join us in that agreement, and that would be Ronald Reagan, because Ronald Reagan made a deal where he took \$3 in -- in spending cuts for \$1 in tax increases. And, in fact, what happened is that there ended up being \$3 in tax increases and \$1 in tax cuts.

That's the problem with Washington, D.C. I've seen it all the time. That's why I've been leading on this issue for the last five years and why we can't trust the status quo in Washington, D.C.

We have to have a president with a core sense of conviction that's going to fight on these issues and recognize. And so we would -- we would welcome the former president to this club.

WILLIAMS: Governor Huntsman, you've said some interesting things about pledges. Everyone up here has taken a pledge not to raise taxes. Dangerous business to you?

HUNTSMAN: I'd love to get everybody to sign a pledge to take no pledges. I -- I have a pledge to my wife, and I pledge allegiance to my country, but beyond that, no pledges. I think it diminishes the political discussion. I think it jeopardizes your ability to lead once you get there.

And I started when I approached, when I first ran for governor in 2004, as someone who wanted to pin me down on taxes, I said, no thanks, I'm not going to sign it. I didn't raise taxes. We had historic tax cuts in our state. So look at somebody's record. That's always a pretty good indicator and barometer of where they're likely to go.

WILLIAMS: I want to go back to your comments on 9/11 to ask kind of an obvious follow-up. Do you think we're safer today?

HUNTSMAN: I think we've lost our confidence as a country. I think we have had our innocence shattered. I think, 10 years later, we look at the situation and we say, we have 100,000 troops in Afghanistan. This is not about nation-building in Afghanistan. This is about nation-building at home.

Our core is broken. We are weak. We have got to strengthen ourselves. I say we've got to bring

those troops home.

(APPLAUSE) In Afghanistan -- in Afghanistan, the reality is it is an asymmetrical counterterror effort. We need intelligence. We need special forces. And we need some training on the ground.

But I think one way to commemorate our 10-year anniversary of 9/11, remembering the 3,000-plus people who died in New York and in Pennsylvania and in Washington, is to say it's time for this country to set a goal for ourselves: We're going to get our core fixed. We're going to do some nation-building right here at home.

WILLIAMS: Time, Governor.

Governor Romney, would you agree that there's a crisis of confidence in the United States right now?

ROMNEY: Oh, absolutely. People are convinced that we're going to go into another recession. I sure hope we don't. People are worried about whether they can make their bills at the end of the month. A lot of folks have stopped looking for work. People who have jobs are worried they might lose their jobs.

Look, we have -- we have a crisis in confidence in part because we have an absence of leadership. We selected as a president a guy who had never worked in the private sector, a person who'd never been a leader, who'd never been able to get anything moving, and -- and we said, let's let this guy run the country, and he's -- he's just over his head, and right now, he's flailing about. We'll see his plan tomorrow; it will be more like the plans in the past.

We need to have an individual lead this country who not only loves America, but has the experience to get us back on track of being competitive globally. That's -- I put together -- I want to make it very clear -- I put together an outline of what it takes to get America back on the right track. It's a whole series of changes that have to occur, from energy policy, to tax policy, regulatory policy, changes in our trade policies.

We've got to change the way we're -- we're structured economically if we want to get people back to work in this country and keep America as we've always been, this extraordinary job machine. We can be the best place in the world to be in the middle class again, with jobs plentiful for our kids and for each one of us that are looking for those jobs today. I know how to do that. And that's why I'm in this race.

WILLIAMS: Time, Governor.

To John Harris.

HARRIS: Governor Perry, as we approach the 9/11 anniversary, I'd like to stick with national

security for a moment. You recently said, quote, "I do not believe that America should fall subject to a foreign policy of military adventurism." Looking back, do you think President George W. Bush was too quick to launch military intervention without thinking through the risks?

PERRY: I was making a comment about a philosophy; I don't think America needs to be in the business of adventurism.

But let me just say something about the president of the United States. And I know he's -- he's taken lots of slings and arrows here today. But one thing that I want to say that he did do that I agree with is that he maintained the -- the chase and -- and we took out a very bad man in the form of bin Laden, and I -- and I tip my hat to him.

I give more props to those Navy SEALs that did the job, but -- and the other thing this president's done, he has proven for once and for all that government spending will not create one job. Keynesian policy and Keynesian theory is now done. We'll never have to have that experiment on America again.

And I might add that he kept Gitmo open against the will of his base, and I'm glad he did that. America's safer for it.

(APPLAUSE)

HARRIS: Sir, just if I could quickly follow on that, you said you were making a philosophical comment, but it's hard to understand philosophy without understanding specifics. Where are some of the places where you think we've seen military adventurism?

PERRY: As I said, that is -- that was a philosophical statement that Americans don't want to see their young men and women going into foreign countries without a clear reason that American interests are at stake. And they want to see not only a clear entrance; they want to see a clear exit strategy, as well.

We should never put our young men and women's lives at risk when American interests are not clearly defined by the president of the United States, and that's one of the problems this president is doing today.

HARRIS: Congresswoman Bachmann, on the same theme, you opposed the U.S. intervention in Libya. If President Obama had taken the same view, Gadhafi would, in all likelihood, still be in power today.

To be clear, are you advocating a shift away from the George W. Bush freedom agenda with its emphasis on removing dictators from power and promoting human rights?

BACHMANN: Well, I want to say, as devastating as our economy is with the policies of Barack

Obama, I think that he has actually weakened us militarily and with the United States presence globally. We have, for many years, maintained global order in the world with our United States military. We have the finest military. But in this last debt ceiling debate, one of the alternatives that came forward that we're going to be looking at with this new super committee of 12 different members of Congress is to see that our military could be hit with a huge reduction in resources.

The president has not done what he needs to do to keep the United States safe. If you look at the biggest issue in the Middle East, it's a nuclear Iran, and the president has taken his eyes off that prize.

As a matter of fact, what he's done is he's said, in fact, to Israel that, they need to shrink back to their indefensible 1967 borders. I sit on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. We deal with the nation's classified secrets. And I firmly believe that the president of the United States has weakened us militarily and put us more at risk than at any time.

HARRIS: Congresswoman, time. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

HARRIS: I just want to follow up on that. The Arab Spring is a big, big issues in the world. And the question is, what role does the U.S. have, including militarily, to promote democracy and topple dictators? I didn't hear your answer with respect to Libya.

BACHMANN: Well, I believe that it was wrong for the president to go into Libya. Number one, his own secretary of defense, Gates, said that there was no American vital interest in Libya. If there is no vital interest, that doesn't even meet the threshold of the first test for military involvement.

The other thing is, we didn't know who the rebel forces were in Libya. Take a look at where we're at in Libya today.

Take a look at the oil revenues. We don't know if they will get in the hands of people who will have designs on radical Islam and the implication of a global caliphate. These are very serious issues, and I think it was wrong for the president of the United States to go into Libya.

(APPLAUSE)

WILLIAMS: Senator Santorum, your reaction to Congresswoman Bachmann's stand on what we're watching take place in Libya right up until tonight.

SANTORUM: Well, we're in the Reagan Library, and I'm hearing from at least a couple of people on this panel a very isolationist view of where the Republican Party should be headed about pulling troops out with Governor Huntsman and with Ron Paul.

The bottom line is, Ronald Reagan was committed to America being a force for good around the world. We were a society that believed in ourselves and believed that we can spread our vision to the rest of the world and make this country a safer country as a result of it.

We didn't have missions where we put exit strategies saying this date is when we're going to leave. We didn't say that we are the problem and the cause of the problems that confront us around the world.

We were -- we are a source for good. We could have been a source for good from the very get-go in Libya, but this president was indecisive and confused from the very beginning. He only went along with the Libyan mission because the United Nations told him to, which is something that Ronald Reagan would have melted like the old Wicked Witch of the West before he would have allowed that to happen.

WILLIAMS: Senator, time.

SANTORUM: This is a very important issue for our party. Are we going to stand in the Reagan tradition, or are we going to go the isolationist view that some in this party are advocating?

WILLIAMS: Time.

HARRIS: Governor Huntsman, I'd like to get to you. I've got a question. Your chief political adviser has been quoted very prominently as describing the Republican Party as "a bunch of cranks," and said your opponents on the stage "make a buffet of crazy and inane comments." I'm sure that's insulting to some of these people up here.

We're now here face to face. Tell us which one of these people are saying crazy or inane things.

HUNTSMAN: Well, I'm sure you have John Weaver's telephone number. You can go ahead and give him a call.

HARRIS: OK.

HUNTSMAN: But let me just say --

HARRIS: Well -- hand on. Let's follow up on that, because you speak for yourself.

You yourself have said the party is in danger of becoming anti- science. Who on this stage is anti-science?

HUNTSMAN: Listen, when you make comments that fly in the face of what 98 out of 100 climate scientists have said, when you call into question the science of evolution, all I'm saying is that, in order for the Republican Party to win, we can't run from science. We can't run from mainstream conservative philosophy. We've got to win voters.

We've got to do what I did as governor, when I was re-elected. We reached out and we brought in independents. I got independents. I got conservative Democrats. If we're going to win in 2012, we've got to make sure that we have somebody who can win based upon numbers of the math that will get us there. And by making comments that basically don't reflect the reality of the situation, we turn people off.

Number two, we've got to have somebody who can lead. This president was successful in getting elected. He can't lead this country. He can't even lead his own party.

I'm here to tell you: I can get elected. I can bring the numbers together to make this successful in 2012. And I can lead based upon where I've been as governor.

HARRIS: Governor Perry -- Governor Perry, Governor Huntsman were not specific about names, but the two of you do have a difference of opinion about climate change. Just recently in New Hampshire, you said that weekly and even daily scientists are coming forward to question the idea that human activity is behind climate change. Which scientists have you found most credible on this subject?

PERRY: Well, I do agree that there is -- the science is -- is not settled on this. The idea that we would put Americans' economy at -- at -- at jeopardy based on scientific theory that's not settled yet, to me, is just -- is nonsense. I mean, it -- I mean -- and I tell somebody, I said, just because you have a group of scientists that have stood up and said here is the fact, Galileo got outvoted for a spell.

But the fact is, to put America's economic future in jeopardy, asking us to cut back in areas that would have monstrous economic impact on this country is not good economics and I will suggest to you is not necessarily good science. Find out what the science truly is before you start putting the American economy in jeopardy.

HARRIS: Just to follow up quickly. Tell us how you've done that.

(APPLAUSE)

Are there specific -- specific scientists or specific theories that you've found especially compelling, as you...

(CROSSTALK)

PERRY: Let me tell you what I find compelling, is what we've done in the state of Texas, using our ability to regulate our clean air. We cleaned up our air in the state of Texas, more than any other state in the nation during the decade. Nitrous oxide levels, down by 57 percent. Ozone levels down by 27 percent.

That's the way you need to do it, not by some scientist somewhere saying, "Here is what we think is happening out there." The fact of the matter is, the science is not settled on whether or not the climate change is being impacted by man to the point where we're going to put America's economics in jeopardy.

WILLIAMS: Governor, time.

Congresswoman Bachmann, a question about energy, back to that subject for a moment. Were you quoted correctly -- and do you stand by it -- as wanting to drill in the Everglades in Florida?

BACHMANN: The question was asked of me about that. And what I said is we have American energy resources all across this nation. And, of course, we would do it responsibly. That was my response at the time.

And on this issue on human -- human activity as being the cause of climate change, I think it's important to note that the president recognized how devastating the EPA has been in their rulemaking, so much so that the president had to suspend current EPA rules that would have led to the shutting down of potentially 20 percent of all of America's coal plants.

Coal is the source that brings 45 percent of America's electricity. What we're seeing is that a political agenda is being advanced instead of a scientific agenda. And this is leading to the -- to massive numbers of jobs being lost.

The president told us he wanted to be like Spain when it came to green job creation, and yet Spain has one of the highest levels of unemployment. The president is bringing that here in the United States. And I think tomorrow night, when the nation tunes in to the president, I'm afraid that we won't be seeing permanent solution. I'm afraid what we'll be seeing are temporary gimmicks and more of the same that he's given before.

WILLIAMS: Congresswoman, time.

Speaker Gingrich, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke, will come to the end of his term in 2014. Would you reappoint Ben Bernanke?

GINGRICH: I would fire him tomorrow.

WILLIAMS: Why?

GINGRICH: I think he's been the most inflationary, dangerous, and power-centered chairman of the Fed in the history of the Fed. I think the Fed should be audited. I think the amount of money that he has shifted around in secret, with no responsibility, no -- no -- no accountability, no transparency, is absolutely antithetical to a free society. And I think his policies have deepened the depression, lengthened the problems, increased the cost of gasoline, and been a disaster.

I want to take the rest of my time, Brian, to go back to a question you asked that was very important. We were asked the wrong question at the last debate. The question isn't, would we favor a tax increase? The question is, how would we generate revenue?

There are three good ways. The Ronald Reagan technique put 3,700,000 more people back to work as of last Friday. You reduce government spending. You raise government revenues enormously. The committee of 12 ought to be looking at, how do you create more revenue, not how do you raise taxes.

Second, you go to energy, exactly as Michele Bachmann has said. You open up American energy, \$500 billion a year here at home, enormous increase in federal revenue.

Third, we own -- with all due respect, Governor -- we own 69 percent of Alaska. That's one-and-a-half Texases. Now, let's set half of Texas -- let's set a half Texas aside for national parks. We could liberate an area the size of Texas for minerals and other development. That would raise even more revenue, not the normal Washington viewpoint.

WILLIAMS: Mr. Speaker, time. Governor Romney...

(APPLAUSE)

... you -- you often here this figure, 47 percent of Americans pay no federal income tax, and -- and the promised effort underway soon, at least, in Washington to correct that. Isn't some of this argument semantics? And won't the effort to correct that be a de facto tax increase? ROMNEY: You know, I must admit, I have a bit of a hard time with the idea that there are people who don't feel like they're supporting our troops by contributing tax revenue through -- through the income tax or through other tax vehicles.

I don't want to raise taxes on the American people, but I think everybody ought to feel that they're part of this effort and that they're providing for our military, providing for our roads, providing for our schools. That ought to be part of what -- what every American experiences.

But right now, the question is not the people at the -- that are not paying taxes at the low end. The question is not the people who are very, very rich. The question is, how about middle-income Americans?

Who are the people most hurt by the Obama economy? And the answer is the middle class. The great majority of Americans are having a very, very difficult time. And our effort has to be to find ways to reduce to burden on those people.

And that's why I've proposed that anybody who's earning \$200,000 a year and less ought to be able to save their money tax-free, no tax on interest, dividends, or capital gains. Let people save their money, invest in America, and not have to give more money to the government. The middle

class needs our help.

(APPLAUSE)

WILLIAMS: Would Ben Bernanke have a job in your administration?

ROMNEY: No, I'd be looking for somebody new. I'm -- I think Ben Bernanke has -- has over-inflated the amount of currency that he's created. QE2 did not work. It did not get Americans back to work. It did not get the economy going again. We're still seeing declining numbers in prior quarter estimates as to what the -- the growth would be. We're growing now at 1 percent to 1.5 percent.

The plan I put forward just two days ago in Nevada will grow our economy at 4 percent per year for four years and add -- add -- 11.5 million jobs. That's a very different approach than Ben Bernanke's taken, and it's a demonstrably different approach than Barack Obama has taken, and that's in part because we have very different life experiences.

WILLIAMS: Governor Perry, a question about Texas. Your state has executed 234 death row inmates, more than any other governor in modern times. Have you...

(APPLAUSE)

Have you struggled to sleep at night with the idea that any one of those might have been innocent?

PERRY: No, sir. I've never struggled with that at all. The state of Texas has a very thoughtful, a very clear process in place of which -- when someone commits the most heinous of crimes against our citizens, they get a fair hearing, they go through an appellate process, they go up to the Supreme Court of the United States, if that's required.

But in the state of Texas, if you come into our state and you kill one of our children, you kill a police officer, you're involved with another crime and you kill one of our citizens, you will face the ultimate justice in the state of Texas, and that is, you will be executed.

WILLIAMS: What do you make of...

(APPLAUSE)

What do you make of that dynamic that just happened here, the mention of the execution of 234 people drew applause?

PERRY: I think Americans understand justice. I think Americans are clearly, in the vast majority of -- of cases, supportive of capital punishment. When you have committed heinous crimes against our citizens -- and it's a state-by-state issue, but in the state of Texas, our citizens have made that decision, and they made it clear, and they don't want you to commit those crimes against our

citizens. And if you do, you will face the ultimate justice.

HARRIS: Mr. Cain, Mr. Cain, I'd like to get you into this tax discussion we've had recently.

CAIN: Yes.

HARRIS: The General Electric Corporation last year -- this is a prominent case -- made \$14.2 billion in profits worldwide, but paid no U.S. taxes. Perfectly legal, but does it strike you as fair?

CAIN: This is why I proposed my 9-9-9 plan. The government needs to get out of the business of picking winners and losers. The government needs to get out of the business of trying to figure out who gets a tax break here, who gets a tax break there.

When you go to 9-9-9, it levels the playing field for all businesses. What a novel idea. And the government won't be in the business of trying to determine who's going to be able to make more money and pay no taxes and vice versa.

Secondly, this recession is the worst recession since the Great Depression. If the recovery that this administration claims would just tie for last place, we would have another 6 million jobs. If it would tie for the recovery that took place in the '80s under President Reagan, we'd have 12 million more jobs out there, which would be music to the ears of the 14 million people looking for jobs. The president simply does not understand that the business sector is the engine for economic growth.

WILLIAMS: Congressman Paul, a long time ago...

(APPLAUSE) A long time ago, a fellow Texan of yours, a young student teacher in Cotulla, Texas, was horrified to see young kids coming into the classroom hungry, some of them with distended bellies because of hunger. He made a vow that if he ever had anything to do about it, the government would provide meals, hot meals at best, in schools. The young student teacher, of course, was -- later went on to be President Lyndon Johnson. Do you think that is any more -- providing nutrition at schools for children -- a role of the federal government?

PAUL: Well, I'm sure, when he did that, he did it with local government, and there's no rules against that. That'd be fine. So that doesn't imply that you want to endorse the entire welfare state. You imply (ph) I'd endorse all welfare (ph). Any time I challenge it, you're going to challenge the whole welfare system.

No. It isn't authorized in the Constitution for us to run a welfare state. And it doesn't work. All it's filled up with is mandates. And the mandates are what we're objecting to. I want to repeal all the mandates.

But, yes, if there are poor people in Texas, we have a responsibility -- I'd like to see it voluntary as possible -- but under our Constitution, our states have that right -- if they feel the obligation, they

have a perfect right to.

So don't always try to turn around and say that we who believe in liberty, we lack compassion, because we who believe in liberty and understand the market, we're the only ones that really understand how people are taken care of, how they are fed, and how people have jobs. It's the market. It's never the government that does it.

So this whole idea that there's something wrong with people who don't lavish out free stuff from the federal government somehow aren't compassionate enough. I resist those accusations.

(APPLAUSE)

WILLIAMS: Congressman, thank you.

Somewhat -- somewhat hard to believe. The campaigns have notified us we're actually a few minutes over the time we were allotted for tonight, and so our questioning will have to come to an end, with hearty thanks to so many people, most notably the candidates here on stage, but to the good folks here at the Reagan Library, the Reagan Foundation, notably, Mrs. Reagan.

To our partners in all of this, Politico, my partner in the questioning, John here, thank you very much. Terrific.

And thank you all for watching. Our coverage will continue. One of the few things you can count on, we'll be back at this. There will be many more of these discussions. That wraps up our live coverage of this portion of the debate from Southern California.

(APPLAUSE)