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Introduction:

DR. MILTON GLICK
President of the University of Nevada, Reno

DR. WILLIAM ANTHOLIS
Managing Director, The Brookings Institution

Moderator:

JILL DERBY
Chairwoman of the Nevada Democratic Party

Panelists:

ERIK HERZIK
Chair of the Department of Political Science,
University of Nevada, Reno

PETER BERKOWITZ
Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution

AMY LIU
Co-founder and Deputy Director, Metropolitan Policy Program
The Brookings Institution

Guest Speakers:

JOSEPH BIDEN
U.S. Senator (D-Del)

BILL RICHARDSON
Governor, New Mexico

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ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
706 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

P R O C E E D I N G S

DR. GLICK: Thank you for being here today. I'm Milt Glick, president of the University of Nevada, Reno, and it's a beautiful day here and we appreciate your stepping inside instead of taking advantage of a beautiful, summer day in northern Nevada. We have some 3,000 students moving into dorms, and so it's a very exciting place today, and I'm glad you were able to park.

(Laughter)

Yes, well, but the students' parking was actually our top priority.

We want to thank The Brookings Institute for approaching us and making us part of this important Opportunity 08 project, but I also want to thank our co-sponsors, KOLO-TV, KOH-Radio, The Reno Gazette Journal, and especially the Associated Students of the University of Nevada.

There are information booths around the concourse, and we hope you will take advantage of those.

This is exactly the kind of event we think is important for the university to sponsor. It engages our students and campus life and activities. Part of going to a university is to really be challenged, to have your ideas challenged, to get to debate those ideas, to be part of a national dialog. It involves them in issues of importance to our state and nation. It makes them better voters, better citizens -- and it's part of our way to connect with the community.

This is a project of The Brookings Institute in partnership with ABC News, and the goal to help our presidential candidates and the public focus on critical issues, on the key policy issues, and to move beyond sound bites and

really allow for substantive discussion of these critical policy issues.

This is, as we're all aware, one of the most exciting policy elections perhaps in -- well, certainly in this century and for a larger part of the last century, so we're excited to be part of it, and today's program begins with a panel discussion on the topic of education and competitiveness. Following the panel, we will have two presidential candidates. Senator Joe Biden and Governor Bill Richardson will join us, and they will speak, and so it's my pleasure to welcome our panelists and the two candidates.

It's now my pleasure to introduce the moderator of these events today, a good friend of mine and of the State and a former Regent, Jill Derby. Jill is Chair of the State's Democratic Party, former member of the Board of Regents, knows the landscape of opportunities and challenges that particularly face higher education.

It's a pleasure to welcome you back to the campus, Jill, although you know you really never left and you're always a part of this campus.

And it's now my pleasure to turn it over to Dr. Derby.

DR. DERBY: Thank you, President Glick.

Well, thank you, and I want to add my words of welcome to those of the president to today's forum, and thank you for being the kind of citizens who engage in the process, are interested in the issues, care about the future of the nation, and really in fact what's at stake in Election 08 is the future of the world. So, thank you for being here, and we're looking forward to an energized and interesting discussion. We have a great panel, and we'll have a good discussion.

I want to just add a few words about Opportunity 08 today, because I think it's an extraordinary partnership that's been formed in order to highlight the issues of this election. You know, we have so many important issues before us, and it's critical that the public get engaged in the dialog around those issues and can make their choices around candidates based on the issues and their positions on issues.

Opportunity 08 aims to help presidential candidates and the public focus on the critical issues facing the nation by providing these policy forums and information on a broad range of domestic and foreign issues. It was launched in February of this year with a panel discussion that focused on a wide variety of policy topics. As the president said, today's topic is about education (inaudible).

Some of you may remember the very famous quote by Derek Bok, who was the president of Harvard, who said, "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance." And we know that the United States of American can't try ignorance, that in order for us to maintain our economic leadership in the world in a globalized economy we really have no choice but to focus on education. So, it's a very important topic that we take up today. And again, thanks to Opportunity 08, The Brookings Institute, and its partnership for this opportunity.

So, I'd like to begin by introducing our panelists and then giving each of them an opportunity to make an opening statement.

First, to my right, is Peter Berkowitz, who's a Fellow of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. Peter chairs the newly launched Hoover Task Force on National Security and Law, and he's an advisor to presidential candidate

Giuliani.

To Peter's right is Amy Liu, who is co-founder and deputy director of the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution. She also is collating a project -- and this is particularly interesting to us out here in Nevada -- collating a project to invite -- to identify issues facing the Intermountain West.

And, finally, to my far right is somebody who you know, Erik Herzik, who's the chair of the Political Science Department at the University of Nevada, Reno. Erik's research focuses particularly on state and local policy.

That's our panel, and I'd like to begin by asking Peter Berkowitz to make his opening statement.

Peter?

PROF. BERKOWITZ: Well, thank you very much, and, more generally, thanks to Brookings and to the University of Nevada for the opportunity to come here and discuss higher education in Election 2008.

Well, the importance of higher education to the future of the nation can't be exaggerated. Economic growth, responsible political participation both depend upon a well-read, scientifically literate citizenry. Social mobility and higher incomes are closely tied to the acquisition of a college diploma and the communication skills and critical thinking that such an education provides. And for many, a liberal education enlarges sensibility and enlarges understanding, and it does this by introducing students to the many dimensions of their own civilization and the diversity of civilizations.

Our universities in the United States are strong in many ways. No

nation on earth can boast universities of greater overall quality or overall diversity. Yet, it's true today higher education faces formidable challenges, have increasingly expensive tuition, lack of accountability, ill-prepared students entering our colleges, declining enrollment in the maths and sciences, and far too few -- far too few students studying critical foreign languages.

It seems to me that the next President of the United States can take several steps to strengthen higher education -- first, to make college education more attainable for low-income students by simplifying the very cumbersome grants process and reducing the great inefficiency in the distribution of financial aid; second, the President can encourage universities that receive federal dollars to fashion responsible ways to measure student progress and reduce college costs; third (inaudible) federally funded fellowships (inaudible) after graduation to teach high school students for one to four years; and, finally, the next President can create a signature program of fellowships for critical foreign language study. This would support students studying such foreign languages as Arabic, Persian, Pashto, Turkish, Hindi, and Chinese.

Let me just briefly enlarge on this last recommendation. Initiatives to promote the study of critical foreign languages make sense whether one is a hawk or a dove, a Republican or a Democrat. Such initiative can and should become a signature program for whoever is our next President. Six years after 9/11, even highly educated Americans know little about the Arab Middle East. Our universities have made few changes to respond to the challenge. Our armed forces, our diplomatic corps lack Arabic speakers.

Now, during the Cold War, it was well understood that our security depended on acquiring knowledge of critical foreign languages, Russian especially. We spent billions of dollars in the '50s and the '60s. It seems to me we should do the same today. Moreover, those who prefer to emphasize America's commercial and diplomatic engagement in the world should also see critical foreign language study as a high priority for our colleges and universities. Why? Because the study of languages opens doors -- opens doors and windows on culture, history, and politics; it disciplines the mind; and it allows people to reach out to foreigners by showing them the respect that inheres in addressing them in their mother tongue. Knowledge of foreign language is an invaluable asset in an Arab globalization in which the U.S. must cooperate and compete in myriad ways and at many levels with nations around the world.

Now, the Bush Administration in January 2006 announced a new foreign language initiative. They earmarked \$114 million. They would draw upon the resources of the State Department, Defense Department, and the Education Department. But if you add it all up, that's .02 percent of the combined budgets of those three departments. I think the next President should triple the amount of money -- \$342 million, still a meager .06 percent of the combined budgets.

These fellowships should be targeted to students. The money shouldn't go to the universities. Students will find programs. If they maintain a B+ average, the students will continue on in the foreign language program. If they receive three or four years of aid, then they will give back one to three years

of service to the department -- Department of Education, Department of State, or Department of Defense -- that provides the funding. These programs have many advantages. They're more immune than most politicization; they can prepare students for a variety of careers; and they're entirely consistent with the highest ideals of a liberal education.

In sum, the truth is the Federal Government is quite limited in what it can do to support higher education. It's largely a task for local government, for state government. But within its limited domain, there are clear steps that the United States can take, that the next President can take to strengthen higher education in the United States.

Thanks.

DR. DERBY: Thank you very much, Peter.

I'd like to go next to political professor -- political science professor Erik Herzik.

PROF. HERZIK: Well, I can build on some points that Peter just made. There's a general agreement in America about the importance of education. It's linked to any number of what we would call positive indicators, whether that be economic attainment, but even such personal items as there's plenty of evidence to indicate that the more education you have, the more tolerant you are, the more likely you are to participate politically. As a political scientist, yeah, I guess I'm more attuned to that, and I think that's very important. But these are attitudes, attitudes that lead to more civic engagement, and so we have that.

There's also an agreement that education is linked to economic

development, and I don't think many people argue with that. However, once we get past these most general levels of agreement, that's when consensus breaks down. If I were to ask is education good, all hands go up; should we have more of it, yes; should it be more accessible, cheaper, whatever, everybody raises their hands until we start adding very specific policy prescriptions to it, and then consensus breaks down. And this is particularly true at the federal level. I'll talk in a minute about why that is. But there are a couple of parameters that really structure the context of education in the United States, and the first one is just the diversity and size of the nation.

Americans, and particularly critics of education, will highlight that we do not perform well versus, say, country X, Y, or Z. Our test taking is lower, our graduation rates are lower. What's often lost in these international comparisons is that the United States has a very diverse population and a very egalitarian model towards education. We emphasize access; we emphasize college-going rates and not some sort of competitive national exam that is designed, really, to keep people out of college, and so that's a factor in America that you don't find in many foreign nations.

The other is a point that Peter ended with. The federal government role in education is quite limited. It's about 10 percent of total financing of K through 12 education and maybe about 30 percent at the federal level. The federal role, thus, is really secondary -- no pun intended -- to education efforts as opposed to being the lead horse. This has been true throughout our history, and it is an item that actually addresses that first point I made of the diversity, because

there is a diverse population, and state education systems will deal with different types of student bodies and different types of student needs across state boundaries.

Okay, having said all that, that doesn't mean that the federal government hasn't jumped in and played, I would say, an uneven role in the history of education reform. The federal government has scored some key successes when they have recognized that they are, in a sense, perhaps goal setters and their key role is to guarantee that access, and you see that, for instance, both financially and legally.

The financial -- one of the most successful federal programs we've ever seen in education -- this was higher education -- was the GI bill. The GI bill was not prescriptive in terms of you must go to college X, take this course, what not. It was, instead, we want to promote education, we will provide the funding; and the GIs took advantage of this and used existing resources. It was an efficient way, and in a sense it was a nonintrusive way of the individual choosing what they wanted to study or where they wanted to study, and that included not just college as the ultimate goal but also trade schools, community colleges. It wasn't a one-size-fits-all model. Remember that line.

The other were various titles of the Education Act, whether title I through IX, IX perhaps being the one that most people know about. These basically guarantee access. It's not the federal government mandating you must do a certain thing. It's more telling schools that these are the goals and we cannot discriminate -- you know, basic constitutional guarantees. When the federal

government has played this role, they've been very successful.

The federal government has far less success when they become very prescriptive, and Peter and I might disagree a little bit on this, although not too much. We talked a little beforehand. When you look at these major policy statements by the federal government, and they happen about every 20 years, those tend to be far less successful. They do not engender consensus among the American people, and they often don't work very well. We could -- I could go back to actually some pushes to improve higher education following World War II, the 57 through 63 Education Acts in response to Sputnik, and that's a key point. These major reforms are often linked to some sort of external threat, like the Soviets or 1983, a nation at risk. It was fear of Americans falling behind economically. It was a very scathing report that essentially turned out to be wrong.

And then we have No Child -- 20 years later we have No Child Left Behind, a very prescriptive item that in my opinion, while it has some good points, leaves a lot to be desired, and the next President of either party is going to have to deal with some of the shortcomings of No Child Left Behind, and I think, depending on which party gains office, you will see either more or less tinkering with that model.

And then most recently the Spellings Report, which addresses higher education, which -- I won't dwell on it -- I just think is a complete disaster. It's designed by folks from, in a sense, business with a model that we know what's right; education should run like a business. It really shows a rather

complete lack of understanding of how education is delivered in the United States, how it has been delivered, and how it's financed. In fact, they say that more money will actually be provided by efficiency; they will not provide more money.

So, the federal efforts really have been uneven. When the federal government has launched broader initiatives that, say, empower students to make choices, empower institutions, and fully fund them, then progress is made. When they become more prescriptive, what happens is that symbols start to take over substance, and actually both parties run into this.

Peter gave some prescriptions. I will just mention a couple of less specific items. Education in the United States right now is facing problems, and one of the major problems is they are tasked with doing too many things with too few dollars. Both parties are responsible for this. Oftentimes education is tasked not with basic goals -- as an educator this is what I am supposed to teach. I'm also involved with immigration issues, ethical issues in terms of treatment of animals, access issues that are linked not so much with education but with broader socioeconomic concerns. Education can ignore these items, but in a sense education is an item that addresses them and we have to deal with a preexisting kind of economic base rather than solve it first and foremost. We -- in a sense, they walk through our doors. We cannot go out and fix it per se. And so there are different items.

So, you need to fund the education that you've got. You need to pick your priorities and, again, fund those and pursue those rather than the

smorgasbord of here's the current idea of the day, and that has dictated too much of education policy, particularly as major and prescriptive policy items, and No Child Left Behind is an example, I would say, of that. Limit your crosscutting demands on education -- and I've got some others but I'll stop here -- and I would say end the unfunded mandates and look at how we actually address education rather than these other items in such things as No Child Left Behind.

Thank you.

DR. DERBY: Thank you.

MS. LIU: (Inaudible) -- of manufacturing jobs and services jobs are a small portion of the jobs that are going abroad. But no matter, we still are expecting about 10 percent of our service jobs, like customer service jobs, being outsourced to other nations.

Now, the structure of our economy is radically changing. We all know that. We're moving away from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-based economy.

The shame of that is that manufacturing jobs pay really well, and they offer really good benefits, and they remain -- and manufacturing remains one of the most productive sectors of the U.S. economy. But now as we move away and we're shedding manufacturing jobs, what we're finding is that the service economy is highly bifurcated.

We're generating a lot of high-end jobs in manufacturing, in high tech, in business services -- and then a lot of low-wage jobs in food services, leisure, and hospitality and not much in between. And a result of that changing in

the job structure in part reflects the really wide income inequalities that we're starting to see in this country, and what we're finding is, particularly in this recent job growth, low-income workers, middle-class. Despite working long hours, despite working sometimes double jobs, they are seeing their wages basically stagnate since the 1970s, and meanwhile folks at the top 1 percent of the income bracket are enjoying most of the income growth. And so when you think about stagnant incomes for the average worker and enormous wealth accumulation at the very top, it's not a surprise that today the income disparities in this country are the widest we have seen in 50 years.

So, again, part of that is because of some of our policies, but some of it is a reflection of the way the economy is now going and the way the jobs are structured.

The importance of income opportunity, the importance of upward mobility is even harder for minorities and people of color. They have a much harder time reaching the middle-class status. They have a much harder time -- and once they get there, they have a hard time staying there. They tend to fall out of the middle-class status more often than the rest of us, and this should be a concern for us because many of you know we are a rapidly diversifying country. African-Americans and Hispanics are projected to make up about a third of the future work force by 2020, and I know in -- a lot of the communities in the interior west are really trying to grapple with the rapid growth of immigrants and trying to figure out again how we ensure that the future educated work force are skilled and English speaking.

Finally, I want to just close with one other challenge that we face, and that is with the rise of developing countries and the rapid growth of the population here at home -- and many of you guys know this, because Nevada is the second fastest growing state in the Union -- we are stressing our environment and our natural resources. A rapid consumption of oil in developing countries is certainly increasing gas prices in a way that we feel them, and at the same time because of all this growth we are concerned about how to curb consumption.

Here in Nevada and in many states, economic growth smacks into environmental sustainability all the time. You can't disentangle the two. When you think about the vexing water supply issues, when you think about how to preserve your natural amenities -- which are also your economic growth centers, like Lake Tahoe -- how do you protect them from too much development? So, all of these are economic challenges facing the country.

So, what do we need the candidates to do? One of things -- I just want to say real quickly -- is that when we hear the issues of the economy, we tend to hear folks talk about the need to cut taxes; but the reality is cutting taxes doesn't make jobs naturally appear, and a lot of academic literature really talks about the fact that tax incentives are a very small part of what firms look at when they expand or open or locate in a new location.

So, what matters in the economy? These things are -- just four things that really matter today, and this is, again, the issues that most people at the local and state levels talk about all the time:

- It is about the fact they need to have access to firms and similar

firms.

- It's about access to a quality work force. In fact, this tends to be the number one issue for many firms about whether they stay or locate or expand.

And the quality of work force matters to workers as well, because young professionals want to be near other young, educated professionals.

- Access to quality infrastructure. This includes digital technology.

- But this is also about transportation, we know this. Is there a good airport nearby for global business travel and for all the tourists that are coming into the area? Is there a sufficient mix of roads and public transit to help workers get to jobs and reduce the traffic congestion that is undermining our productivity and destroying our quality of life?

- And then, lastly, quality of place matters. When you think about where CEOs and educated workers go, they care about doing business in places that have vibrant downtowns, rich amenities, and affordable housing for the workers.

And, so, again, access to firms, quality work force, infrastructure, quality of places -- all of these things matter to the economy, and these are the things that drive our productivity, and these things tend to be absent from our debate.

I'm just going to close by saying there's a couple of things that the feds can do to really ensure that these assets, which are rooted in where we live, in the places where eight out of ten Americans live -- which is in places like Reno

and Vegas and Phoenix and Seattle -- there are a couple of things they can do to help state and local leaders really, you know, pull these assets together, and I would just say -- just mention two things real quick:

- Transportation issues. Folks really wonder a lot of times what the federal role should be on some of these issues. On transportation, again brought up by the bridge collapsing in the Twin Cities, feds spent \$300 billion a year on transportation. It's the largest federal investment on the discretionary side outside of the defense budget, but there is no vision or set of priorities that govern our transportation dollars. We don't prioritize maintaining and fixing up these critical infrastructures and we actually make it really difficult to do transit versus roads, and the transit, as we're finding, is one of the biggest growth infrastructures here in the west. Dallas, Salt Lake, Denver all are trying to provide light rail for all the businesses and workers in their community.

- And then I would say on innovation, here is another place where the federal government really undermines what state and local leaders are trying to around innovation. Dollars are spread across lots of different federal agencies - - whether it's NIH, NSF, Energy, Commerce, DoD -- and makes it really cumbersome for local leaders and business leaders to find these innovation dollars, and then also because they're spread out in so many different agencies these dollars are not maximized. They're not leveraged to the goals that we're trying to create at the state and local level. And the other thing on innovation is we tend to favor high-end R&D and innovation at the high end, but we know that we need innovation in all our firms and all our sectors. So, there's a real

opportunity for feds to do something right for what state and local leaders
(inaudible) in these areas.

So, in closing, all I want to mention here is that many of the candidates that we're going to hear from today come from local places, and we want to make sure that they speak from their local experience. You know, we have Governor Richardson, who really understands the needs of big economies and economic centers like Albuquerque and Santa Fe; we have -- you know, Senator Biden lives in Wilmington, Delaware, which is a huge financial center. We've got -- and further beyond that we've got Barack from Chicago; we've got Giuliani from New York. We've got folks who, as they go to Washington and think about the economy, need to again talk from where they come from, because in the end that is exactly how most business leaders, local leaders, state leaders -- how they experience the economy and how they are trying to build growth and opportunity in their communities at home.

DR. DERBY: Amy, thank you.

You've had a chance to hear from our three panelists and the different perspectives they bring to our issue of education and competitiveness. Now I'd like to give you all a chance. I'm sure you have some questions after listening. We're looking forward to your questions. If you could step forward and bring a question to our panelists, you're invited to ask a particular panelist or if you want to address it to all the panelists we're glad to hear. Who would like to be the first to ask a question?

Use the microphone, Cheryl.

CHERYL: (Inaudible) president of the University of Nevada. I think it's (inaudible). Given that (inaudible).

DR. GLICK: Part of the office is seen as being part of State's rights, and yet they increasingly are saying they (inaudible) familiar with, say, American social science and kind of American culture. They again on the same test held to the same standard as upper-income kids in the rich suburbs of Dallas. In the school, it is, in a sense, targeted with "you are not performing," even though the students in, say, the border towns (inaudible) -- they've made tremendous gain. Oh, no, their school is nonperforming. Meanwhile, the Dallas school is perhaps coasting. What No Child Left Behind has done -- what I would tell the President is you have the core of a good idea of, in a sense, stressing certain items, but you've two things. You've said oh, there's always diversity, but our ultimate is one size fits all in terms of our evaluation, and I think that's a mistake. You also do not take into consideration English as a second language and the students (inaudible). And schools are penalized for that, and this actually leads to a perverse incentive. If kids there decide to drop out and you're a school administrator: My school will actually perform better if kids drop out -- which is a terrible message to be sending. And most administrators will never do that. In fact, No Child Left Behind has a specific provision saying we will help students who drop out. The budget for that is zero dollars. And that's a disgrace. And that's what the President needs to address. They need to recognize the diversity of education -- yes, we need to -- hey, my school district -- there are rich kids in Dallas, so to speak. Their congressman will do everything he can to get it

earmarked to help their school as much as, say, the border town in Texas. The federal government and the President need to step up and say we have to prioritize the dollars that we have.

SPEAKER: It seems to me the President can -- whoever he or she is -- use the bully pulpit to educate people of the country to understand just how important the role is of family, community, local government, and state government in education exhorting these different groups to live up to their responsibility, because as your question suggests, without good education in K through 12, reform in higher education is not going to go very far.

DR. DERBY: Amy.

MS. LIU: I have one more thing to -- is that the No Child Left Behind law has also taken our eye off the ball in terms of the entire education system that's really needed to create quality workers today. A lot of the studies talk about the fact that pre-K really matters, that how well you're learning between the ages of 3 and 5 will predict how well you do in school, so we need to talk about investments or attention on pre-K.

The other thing is we have a lot more nontraditional students today. There are -- today there are -- almost 50 percent of our students are in community colleges, and we need to make sure that the folks who go to community college have the ability to continue through a four-year education, and that pipeline between high school, community college, and then a four-year degree is not solidified yet.

DR. DERBY: Thank you.

Another question from our audience. Yes, we have one over here. Go ahead and then we'll take one over here.

SPEAKER: Amy talked about innovation as one of our key drivers. Information technology is actually underneath every single type of organization today, yet the truth is that most of our companies are shipping our jobs to India -- in particular into India. How do -- in this country, what we see is a complete drop in enrollment in information technology programs. What can the federal government and a new President do to at least entice people to come into this kind of an educational role?

MS. LIU: Well, there are, again, a percentage of jobs that are moving abroad, but I do want to remind folks that it still is a small percentage, and I think one of the things that I would say is when we talk about the economy we need to invest here at home. We need to make sure that firms and workers stay here, and we've put so much of our sites about, you know, leveling the wage competition abroad and in other countries, but we're not investing in the very assets that we need here at home to keep our workers, to keep our firms, get our firms to expand here, to strengthen their work here; and when we talk to state and local leaders, chambers of commerce, nonprofits, businesses, and firms, this is what they're struggling with every day. They do have a temptation to move abroad at times, but that is because we're not focusing on their need here at home. So, I would say it again goes back to the combination of do we have the skilled workers for those firms so they can expand? In so many places -- and I know we're not talking about a (inaudible) economy here, but in those places they're

worried about the fact that they're losing young people and they're losing talent. So, for them to stay here or stay in Scranton, Pennsylvania, it is about the quality of life and other amenities that keep young people and talent near those jobs. But the other thing you're talking about is about modernizing our existing firms so that they can compete, and those innovation dollars, again, need to be broadened to allow them to do that. Again, we have a lot -- we put a lot of our emphasis on innovation technology at the very high end. And, like you said, we -- all firms at all sectors of the economy need to be more technology oriented, they need to be modernized, so, again, I think we need to pay more attention on what are we going to do for the firms in the communities here at home?

DR. DERBY: Thanks, Amy. We have time for one more question. I think there was one over here. Please.

SPEAKER: I have a question about the role of the federal government in financing of higher education. I grew up at the time of the GI Bill, but unfortunately I didn't qualify for the GI Bill. However, I was able to attend the University of California starting with the semester fees at \$35 when I started, 105 when I graduated, and after I graduated I was not stuck with 30 to \$50,000 dollars in debt. Now, I understand that that's a state issue, financing of schools, but given the importance of education, doesn't the federal government have a role in doing something about tuition?

DR. DERBY: Peter, do you want to take that?

PROF. BERKOWITZ: I'll make just an opening remark but I know Erik knows a lot about this subject.

Here's one difficulty with the federal government stepping in to deal with that problem, especially the elite colleges where -- and universities -- where tuition is extremely high, where a year might cost a parent \$50,000 between tuition, room, and board. Of these universities are savvy, and the federal government -- to the extent that the federal government increases aid available to students, universities may very well increase tuition. So, this presents a difficulty -- difficulty for federal involvement.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible)

DR. DERBY: Erik?

PROF. HERZIK: You're absolutely right about the increase in tuition. When I went to U.C. it was \$209 a quarter. I looked at it for one of my children and out of state it would be \$25,000. They're not going there.

(Laughter)

PROF. HERZIK: In terms of providing the funds -- Peter's right -- is that you do get this kind of case where if the money's there it will be used, and the benefit may not go in terms of keeping tuition down. There are ways, though, of kind of with the GI Bill approach of putting dollars into the hands of the student, and I think Peter mentioned that as, you know, a key recommendation he would make, not necessarily to the university, but that's portability for the students as well.

You have a number of other issues. It's not just the federal government. State government -- the share of state government money to all institutions, and U&R being one of them, has dropped dramatically. I mean, Joe

Crowley used to make the joke of we were state supported, now we're state assisted, and pretty soon we're just going to be state located. And you see that across the board. That forces universities, in order to maintain, you know, high-tech labs for their students to really keep up, that we have to go out and increasingly just beg for money, kind of a private endowment. We have to increasingly rely upon research grants, and that takes you in directions that the university doesn't dictate but it's where the donor or where the research dollar necessarily is.

So, I think it's a combination of federal government helping student loan programs, and Peter mentioned a couple. You could also have some consolidation, making that process easier, which is actually one of the few good things that came out of the Spellings report.

But state government has to step up as well and recognize that if they're going to have "their flagship institution," well you have to pay for at least part of the sale.

DR. DERBY: Thank you, Erik.

I wish we had time for more questions, but we need to go ahead and take a break and go onto the second part of our program. But I hope our panelists have given you some food for thought about one of the most critical issues that's on the table in this presidential election, and that's education in the United States and what it has to do with our future. So, press those candidates, ask those questions, think about this important topic, and thank you for caring about the issues that will really determine the future of the country. Please help

me thank our panelists for the job they did.

(Applause)

DR. DERBY: We're going to now take a 10-minute break and then we'll come back and we'll have our candidates. Thank you.

(Recess)

DR. ANTHOLIS: Bill Antholis. I'm the managing director of The Brookings Institution. I want to welcome you -- those who have been here already for the panel that we've just had and those who are here now for Senator Biden's remarks -- welcome you to Opportunity 08, which is a partnership between The Brookings Institution and ABC News, as well as partners across the country, and we're delighted to be here at the University of Nevada, Reno, where we've had a terrific partnership this week with them. Earlier this week we had a discussion with conservative foreign policy analysts on the foreign policy issues facing the country, and today we've had a panel discussion on education policy, and we'll have two addresses by presidential candidates.

It's particularly delightful for me to be here in a university setting, particularly with our first candidate speaker today who I'm just reminded I met 21 years ago when I was an undergraduate in college, and I think this is a great opportunity for us at Brookings to be here to meet people across the country.

I'd like to introduce Jill Derby, who's going to introduce the senator. Jill spent -- in addition to being an academic spent 18 years on the Nevada System Higher Education Board of Regents and three terms, an unprecedented three terms, as chair. She's also really perfect for this project,

because she's the state chair of the Democratic Party here in Nevada. We're delighted to work with the university but also with the parties, both the Republican Party and the Democratic Party, in the state and I'll turn over the program to Jill.

(Applause)

DR. DERBY: Thank you. Well, this is exciting, isn't it? And thank you all for being here and, again, just being the kind of citizens that care about the issues in this campaign, understand what's at stake in the 2008 presidential election -- not only the future of the country but clearly the future of the world as well. So, thanks for being here.

It's my great pleasure to introduce to you Joseph Biden. Senator Joseph Biden is a Democratic senator representing the State of Delaware. Senator Biden was first elected to the United States Senate in 1972 and has been reelected five successive times. He is the Ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

He is married to the former Jill Jacobs, who just happens to be a school teacher, which fits into our theme of education that we heard about earlier.

Senator Biden believes we need to expect more of our children and is working towards the day when every American child has 16 years of public education. Investing in education, investing in the education system, is one of Senator Biden's highest priorities. He's been a long-time proponent of meaningful education reform and believes that our country's dedication to an investment in education must be comprehensive. Senator Biden believes that strengthening our

education system includes expanded early education opportunities for preschoolers, increased accountability, and funding for our public schools, and accessible and affordable higher education for all families.

Please join me in welcoming Senator Joseph Biden.

(Applause)

SENATOR BIDEN: Thank you very much. Thank you very much, folks. Madame Chair, thank you very, very much for that kind introduction.

And to our host, I want to point out that when I met him at the University of Virginia -- he didn't have to point out he was a student and I was a senator. But at any rate, when I met him at the University of Virginia, I had my sons with me who were looking at colleges.

And any of your parents who don't have a child in college yet, don't make the mistake I made. I said I will help you get to any university you can get into. Don't do that. My son, instead of picking a state university, like the University of Virginia, which is a great institution or the University of Nevada at Reno or the University of Delaware, my alma mater, which I'm proud to have graduated from and my wife just received her doctorate from, I said whatever university you want to go to.

When we left you, and I blame you for this, my three children went for -- went to Penn, \$42,000 a year, Georgetown, \$42,000 a year, Yale, \$42,000 a year, Syracuse, \$42,000 a year, Tulane, \$42,000 a year, and now back to Penn for graduate school. Ladies and gentlemen, don't do it, don't do it.

I'm proud of the institutions they went to, but I want to tell you I know our time is short, but I didn't plan on saying this, I am listed as consistently as one of the four poorest men in Congress. It's true. That's the reason.

And I -- they just had -- you know, you probably in all of your state papers, you saw our financial disclosure statements that they were in the statewide papers the last month, those of us in Congress. We have a delegation of three. There's only five other states like us, two senators, one House member. They listed the net worth with pictures of each of my other two colleagues who come from ordinary circumstance like I do. Their net worth ranged from two million to nine million. When they put my picture in on the front page, it said Joseph R. Biden, Jr., United States Senator, Delaware, net worth \$70,000 to \$150,000 -- true story.

I came back from mass, walked in, my wife was at the kitchen table, she looked at me as if I'd cheated on her and said, "Is this true?" So, it's all about college, folks. So, you'll understand my fervor for affordable college education in just a minute.

Look folks, I -- it's my fault, I got the wrong information. I thought I was supposed to speak to you for 20 minutes or so and take questions for 25. I'm told they'd like me to do it in 10 minutes. I'm happy to do that. But if it's a little bit disjointed, cutting it back off the top of my head to 10 minutes, then I apologize.

First of all, I want to thank Brookings for focusing on a single subject for the better part of an hour and a half or at least close to an hour. The

problem with the debates we've had thus far is it's hard to measure the substance of any of our positions because we have -- they're all good people I'm running with, but the fact of the matter is to have nationally televised debates on the critical subjects of today when you have one minute to answer, although none of the candidates stick to one minute, it is not particularly enlightening in my view.

We should have a 90 minute debate on nothing -- nationally televised -- on nothing but Iraq. We should have a 90 minute debate on nothing but education, a 90 minute debate on nothing but care, a 90 minute debate on nothing but global warming and the environment in order to really inform the American public.

But I don't know why they're unwilling to do that. I think in part because the other candidates aren't willing to participate. And I mean that sincerely. Brookings offered to sponsor a 90 minute debate in Washington, D.C. on Iraq. I was the only one willing to show up to debate, and I think it's a shame. I think we're cheating the American people. But having said that, let me move on.

The subject matter that I was asked to speak to was this notion of education and competitiveness. Ladies and gentlemen, I know I sound like a broken record to many of you the last six years speaking so much about Iraq. If you're a Sunday morning junkie, you had to hear me almost every Sunday morning.

But Iraq sort of is a like a big boulder sitting in the middle of the road there. Until we settle Iraq, we're not going to regain our credibility to be

able to lead the world. We are more isolated in the world than we have been in the entire -- I would argue in the history of the United States. We are more isolated today than we ever have been.

And in terms of restoring our flexibility to deal with the very subject we're talking about here today, education and competitiveness, we must deal with Iraq. We are spending 120 billion dollars this year. We have committed the generation of young students here to a cost of over 1.4 trillion dollars if you count, pray to God, we keep our sacred commitment to those women and men we're bringing home who will need healthcare in dramatic fashion for 20 and 30 and 40 years of their life from this point on and pray to God we keep that commitment, although we're not keeping it now.

And so, ladies and gentlemen, it is -- it is a major, major impediment in being able to deal with our domestic concerns and our domestic agenda. And education for me -- I know everyone says that the single most important issue facing America domestically is healthcare. And it is a gigantic issue. But for me, if I could waive a wand and change anything, it would be the education system, because it is the key. It is the key that unlocks our competitiveness, unlocks opportunity for people trapped in minority circumstances. It is the key. It is the ladder. And the ladder is being blocked or shortened and has been for some time now.

My dad used to say, God love him, a man who never had a college education, from the time we were kids--I'm the oldest of four--he'd say you're going to college. And we wondered why it was so important to him that we go to

college. And he used to say something that is -- that sounds strange. I'd say, "Dad, why is it so important?" He said, "They can take away your job, they can take away your pension, they can never take away your education." And we used to wonder what good is that if they take away those other things. But the truth is - - the truth is there is a value, an inherent value unrelated, unrelated in a civilized society, unrelated to the economic enumeration that flows from an education. But it does flow from an education.

My wife has been teaching for 30 years. My deceased wife, who was killed shortly after I was elected to Senate, she taught for 10 years. I used to kid -- I'm not allowed to say it anymore. My wife gets angry. I say I sleep with a teacher every night, the same one, the same one. But let me tell you something. All you have to do is live with someone who is a dedicated educator as my wife.

She has two masters' degrees, a doctorate degree. She's teaching English in the community college level now after 17 years in the public school system. And the fact of the matter is all you have to do, all you have to do is live with or be around a dedicated teacher to understand where these gigantic holes are in the system.

I happen to teach. I'm an adjunct professor of constitutional law for the last 18 years. I teach the course, I grade the papers, I show up all the time, I do it myself at Widener University Law School. I teach an advanced course in constitutional law, a separation of powers course. There's an old expression, something that -- something -- I've written a manuscript, a text that I'm inclined to send to the President if he'd only read it, if he'd only read it.

And the influence as it relates to education, I think there's a guiding principle of education that I believe that a lot of the scholars here understand and know but don't put in the same term as my mother, Jean Biden, who is 90 years old and lives with me taught us. And I mean this literally, not figuratively.

From the time of a child, I've heard my mother say children tend to become that which you expect of them. Children tend to become that which you expect of them. We have not challenged. We have not challenged the most disadvantaged children among us as much as we should for their own sake, for their sake. The capacity exists.

And it's basic for me. There are basically four elements of education policy for me. And it seems to me if you talk to any school board member, you talk to any teacher, principal, or parent having a child in school, it's not No Child Left Behind. No Child Left Behind, I think, at this point should be left behind. After 71 -- now, it's not because the idea was not a good idea, but the way in which we had it function was self defeating in my view and under funding it by 71 billion dollars so far made it a joke, made it a joke.

There are four things that every single solitary informed person and parent in America knows that are needed in education. You don't need a PhD to know that the earlier you start a child in school, the better chances they have of succeeding. Let me say it again. The earlier you start a child in school, the better chance they have of succeeding.

We know all these studies, some of you in this room have written

them, about birth to age three, how cognitive capability is still foreign. Just a child who just in the first two years has a mother or father who speaks to that child everyday will have a three hundred word vocabulary larger than a child who is not spoken to.

We talk about an achievement gap. Half the achievement gap exists before that disadvantaged child sets his or her foot into the first classroom, half of it. And we expect it to somehow not grow but shrink in an education system whose classes are too large, whose teachers, the best of them are leaving because we got my generation of teachers women -- when I graduated with a 2.43, my sister graduated with a 3.42.

You think I'm joking; I'm not, from the same university. People looked at me, Madame Chairman and they didn't doubt I could be president of DuPont, President of the United States, a doctor, lawyer, or an Indian chief. It didn't even faze them. But my sister's generation and she's younger than I am, my sister's generation was and generations before her, you can be a teacher or a nurse.

So what did we get? We got an entire generation of brilliant young women devoted to teaching for virtually nothing. Well, they're leaving. Eighty-five percent will be gone in the next five years. And of you young students who are graduating from the universities now, if we want the best students, we need the brightest teachers. And you young students graduated in the last 7 years, 60 percent of you have left after 5, 60 percent have left after 5.

What do we expect? What do we anticipate? We play around with

No Child Left Behind. We play around with limiting federal involvement. We play around with all this when the basics are very, very simple. And it's not reading, writing, and arithmetic. It's early, smart, small, and college. That's what it is. You don't need a degree to know that. You don't need a degree to know that.

The question is how do we do that. How do we attract a teacher, a young math student graduating from this university who is at the top of his or her class to go into teaching? In Germany, I tell you how I attract you. You will get paid the same salary if you begin teaching, entry salary, as you do if you go with an engineering firm. You'll get paid the same salary to go into education if you decided to go work for Microsoft. We must do that.

I'm so tired of people telling me how much they value education. Don't tell me what you value, as my father would say, show me your budget. I will tell you what you value. How can it possibly be -- how can it possibly be -- let me just give you a few little -- rattle these off real quickly so we can get to questions. If you begin early intervention in disadvantaged households with basic skills being taught to mothers in those households, ages 1 to 3, if you send a child to school to a solid preschool at age four, that child has a 60 percent chance -- better chance of graduating from high school than the same child starting at age 6.

What do we do? Well, folks, for a total of \$7,000 -- excuse me, \$7 billion a year, you can double -- quadruple early HeadStart, four times the number now, and double HeadStart. If you really wish to see these children enter school

without this gap that is almost impossible to catch up with -- how many of you are teachers? Raise your hand. How many have ever taught in a classroom? You tell me how you'd catch up with a child who starts off so far behind.

So, ladies and gentlemen, if you decide you really want to make a difference, it's not hard. I -- 400,000 children, students were accepted at college this year who could not go because they couldn't afford it, 400,000. And by the way, it's not just the 400,000 that we're squandering. Think of those 400,000 plus parents, how they feel looking into the eyes of their talented child, knowing there's not a thing they can do to help them get that ticket to the middle class.

I remember what it was like. Some of you do to. My father was an elegant, decent, honorable, high school educated guy who was a salesman. I remember after my junior year after a baseball game in the spring going down to see my dad to see if I could borrow the car for the prom, not see, to borrow the car. And I saw my dad -- I asked where he was and they said he's in the lot. I walked out in the lot and it looked like something terrible had happened to him.

This is a true story, and I bet you have a lot of them like this yourself. And I said, "What's the matter, Dad?" He said, "I'm so sorry, Jim. I'm so, so sorry." I said, "Dad, what are you sorry about?" He said, "I went to the Farmer's Bank today to borrow the money to get you to the University of Delaware. They won't lend it to me, Jim. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry." I'll never forget the look in my father's face as long as I live. He was a proud decent man who did everything in his power.

We found the money. I got a little help because I was a pretty

good athlete. Things worked out fine. But how about all those parents out there right now who know what it means for their kid not getting a college education in the 21st century.

Folks, I know you had a panel discussion. We'll talk about these things in a minute. But for a total of four billion, two hundred million dollars a year, I can raise the Pell Grants from \$4200 to \$6300. For four billion, six hundred million dollars a year, I can guarantee a \$3,000 refundable tax credit for every single family for every child whose income is under \$161,000 a year. That means every child eligible for Pell Grant will have \$9,300 a year allowing them to go to most any state university for four years, room, board, and tuition.

And you tell me we can't afford it. We're spending \$11 billion a month, 11 billion a month on a war with no end in sight. We are spending \$85 billion this year for a tax cut for people who didn't ask for it, who don't need, and if it were taken away, would not even notice it. You must have an average income of \$438,000 a year to qualify to be in the top one percent. The average income in that range is \$1,300,000, and it costs \$85 billion a year.

You tell me it's not more valuable to the nation and the common good that we provide for early education, that we provide for incentivizing teachers, adding 100,000 teachers. I'm the guy that wrote the 100,000 cop bill. I wrote a memo, little Paul, that came in during the Clinton Administration. It brought down violent crime 8 and a half percent per year as long as it existed. It cost that portion about 11 billion dollars. Ladies and gentlemen, I want a new assault on education. One hundred thousand new teachers can reduce class size.

Find me a teacher who will tell you no matter how good or bad they are that you can't achieve more in a smaller class, whether they're advanced or remedial.

Folks, you don't need -- you don't need a doctorate degree like my wife has in education to know start earlier, smaller classes, brighter teachers, access to college. That's the key.

And get to the last point and I will conclude. Ladies and gentlemen, the fact of the matter is that if we talk about international competitiveness and we think we are going to compete with our children going to school fewer total hours, less number of years, with teachers less qualified and going to do as well and compete, then you have been hanging out with too many conservative philosophers in politics. It ain't going to happen. It will not happen.

China, this year, 350,000 engineers, computer scientists, scientists, America, 150,000, 1 in 5 foreign born. Ladies and gentlemen, we have work to do, but it's totally within our capacity to get these things done.

I was going to talk about what Amy talked about, competitiveness, but I think I should save that in light of the fact that I'm over the 10 minutes for the question and answer period.

Ladies and gentlemen, the American public is fully prepared. They have more gumption, they have more grit, they have more spunk than any political party suggests they have. They are not afraid of tackling the healthcare problem. They are not afraid of tackling this education problem. They are not afraid to tackling the environment. They know there are no easy answers, but

they're looking for a leadership that at least will level with them, tell them the truth about the difficulty and tell them the truth about the costs and have them make the choice.

From my perspective is -- here's where I stand, this is what I think we should do, this is how much it will cost. If you like it, help me out; if not, vote for the other guy. But, take a look.

You know, my colleagues from Harry Reid and others on are always kidding me because I'm always quoting Irish poets, and they think I do it because I'm Irish. I don't. I do it because they're the best poets. And my favorite modern poet, Irish poet is Shamus Haney.

And I think we make a gigantic mistake in dealing with education, competitiveness, the environment, healthcare, foreign policy, nuclear weapons. If we don't understand, there's a stanza in his poem that I think summarizes the sentiment that is in the heart of the vast majority of Americans at this moment at this time in our history. Sometimes a stanza of poetry is worth more than a chapter of prose. And it goes like this, he said, "History teaches us not to hope on this side of the grave but then, once in a lifetime, that long forward tide wave of justice rises up and hope and history ride."

We have a shot. We have a shot because every single great stride forward we have made has been in the face in the aftermath of a crisis. It has never occurred, it has never occurred in common times. These are uncommon times. We represent uncommon courageous people. Let's start to level with them and get about the business of making this nation the leader in the 21st century,

which we are in jeopardy of not being able to be. Thank you.

I have to shed my eyes here, so I can see you. Do I have to stay at these mikes or does this mike work for me? Okay. I can see you better if I walk over here.

SPEAKER: I don't even know if this mike is on.

SENATOR BIDEN: It's on, yeah.

SPEAKER: Every presidential candidate says that education is an important issue; however, it seems that the promises for better education are usually broken. What plans do you have to change the education system in the United States? What will you do to help the poorest schools in the nation? And how will you bring back the arts in school that play a critical part in the overall education of children?

SENATOR BIDEN: Well, first of all, if I break the promise, I'll be sleeping alone. That's a significant incentive. You think I'm kidding, I'm not. If I'm your president, you're going to see. You're going to have the most strenuous advocate for education that's ever resided in the first lady's spot in the White House.

But having said that, you asked the question what do we do about the poorest schools in the nation and how do I assure you I do not break the promises. One of the ways to assure you I don't break the promise is to tell you straight up before I'm elected what I'm going to do. People tend to break their promises when they set a goal and tell you what the goal is but don't have the courage to tell you what the cost is and how after the fact they can get you to go

along with the goal and pay the price to get to the goal.

That is not my style any of you who know me. I will lay out and have laid out briefly the cost of the things I want to do, how I'm going to pay for it, where I'm going to get the money, and why I'm going to do it. And so, for me, if I am elected president, I will take that as a mandate that what I suggested I would do is not only politically acceptable, but I am morally responsible to try to do. That's the difference between debating a subject and laying it out in a presidential campaign and not debating it and trying to deal with it after the fact.

With regard to poorer schools, number one, the way to deal with poorer school is to provide for three different methods of access to get them "out of the environment" that makes that school a poor school. One is to provide for economic incentives to get the best teachers, the best teachers into those schools, and being willing to be in those schools, whether they're inner-city or rural.

There is what they call in South Carolina a corridor of shame in education. It runs through not the metropolitan areas but the rural areas. And so, in the South, the worst schools in the nation are in rural areas as well as they are in highly congested, inner-city areas.

But you've got to get the best teachers into those schools, committed people. What you do to do that in the interest of time -- and I can give you a whole paper on this. I'm not being a wise guy but just to short circuit it is you give them incentives from everything from writing off their college loans -- everyone of you are graduating today. I mean, how many students in here? How many students are going to graduate, do you think, without any debt from your

college education? Raise your hand. A couple, but the vast majority of you and it's going to range between \$15,000 and \$30,000 for the bulk of you. That used to be a mortgage. That used to be a mortgage.

So, the point is we let you write off your school debt if you in fact will teach, but you need a commitment of four years to be able to do this for it to really be able to take any root, take hold.

The other thing to do in terms of those goals is to concentrate on early education to make the overwhelming effort to get into the home. My daughter is a social worker. She's 27 years old. She works in a very difficult environment. She can easily identify for you -- in those homes where mothers who are single mothers who are raising kids and/or parents who are raising a kid who needs considerable help and training, -- just a modicum of things to be able to do to bring their children into a position that they in fact are more prepared to start early. Early preschool of quality is of phenomenal consequence in graduation rates.

And the third thing I would do is I would provide incentives within those schools for children who do well to be able to earn the ability to find financial assistance to go to college. And I know you say that sounds strange. You say why would a kid who is in a down and out school talk about college?

Have any of you ever met a mother or a father, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, poor, Louisiana, Reno, Nevada, who didn't aspire for their kid to get a college education? Raise your hand. We dumb down these folks. We dumb them down. We somehow as white middle class and upper middle class people

think their aspirations are somehow not as lofty as ours. I don't know a mother or a father who doesn't have a lofty aspiration for their child. I don't know one.

Yes, ma'am?

SPEAKER: Should every student in America be encouraged to pursue a higher education than a high school diploma?

SENATOR BIDEN: I think every student in America should be encouraged to pursue the education level to the degree to which they're educable. And that means in almost every case every child would be able to proceed beyond 12 years of school. It doesn't mean it has to be a four year academic institution for all children.

It could be a community college. It could be a technical college. It can be a training academy. But the idea that you're going to be able to make it on the same 12 years total amount of cumulative hours in front in an educational environment in the 21st century as it exists now is not very high. So, I think every child, every child should have the opportunity and every child should be pushed to strive to be able to do that.

You're about to tell me something.

SPEAKER: There's one more question.

SENATOR BIDEN: Okay.

SPEAKER: I'm Patricia (inaudible), a dual degree in Chemistry and Political Science. I would like to know what our next government should do to improve the low rate of high achievers in the student population in the United States.

SENATOR BIDEN: What we should do to deal with those who are advanced in school -- I'm not sure I understood the question. And I'm going to turn this down so you can --

SPEAKER: What our next government should do to improve the low rate of high achievers in the United States.

SENATOR BIDEN: To improve the low rate of high achievers, the first thing to do is identify them. And I'm not being facetious. Identify them, and once they're identified, then track them. There's an interesting article in this week's New York Times -- I mean, Time Magazine -- a front page article about how we spend only 10 percent of the money on the most advanced high achievers, children with an IQ of over 145 in our school systems as we do on children who are low achievers. We spend one tenth of the amount of money. And the dropout rate, ironically, is almost as high. The dropout rate is almost as high.

And so, we have to not be afraid in our public school system to recognize high achievers and channel them, channel them to be able to meet their capacity. And that means in many cases in my view the single most important thing we could do is allow them to grade skip.

An awful lot of schools have policies where you cannot skip one, two, or three grades. There are about 67,000 children in the public school system now who have the capacity to skip three grades. When they don't skip three grades, deal with the challenges that they can confront and have no challenge, an equal number, same percentage dropout as kids who are disadvantaged.

Can I do yes or no?

SPEAKER: Just one more minute.

MALE SPEAKER: With the disappearance of traditional pension plans, what would you do to help Americans save for expenses such as education and still have money left over for retirement?

SENATOR BIDEN: Yes. One minute. I thought it was going to be an easy one. Three things you got to do. You got to be able to provide for the number one, guaranteeing those plans under -- making sure companies who have dedicated pension plans in fact keep those pension plans by the set asides and the federal government underwriting of the insurance that follows behind that. We've done some of that.

Secondly, I think you have to have a system whereby every employer should be encouraged to have a pension plan that if they can't afford a dedicated plan to have a plan where there's essentially a 401K, where there is a requirement to participate in putting in the same amount of money up to a certain amount. Every employer would automatically enroll every employee in that plan unless they conclude they don't want to be in it, because you'll find people at the low income level will not sign onto a plan because every penny matters. But if they're put into the plan, they will stay in the plan and it increases their possibility.

Number three, to deal with it, you need healthcare and you need education assistance. You're not going to do it through savings. No parent is going to be able to go through a middle income job working at a minimum wage even, which is not -- come on up and get me off of here.

But the bottom -- come on. That's right. This will be my way out without them being really mad at me.

SPEAKER: Okay.

SENATOR BIDEN: The bottom line is you can't do it. You can't send a kid to college. Hear me now, you can't send a kid to college if you are making somewhere between \$25,000 and \$40,000 a year and you have more than one child. Don't kid yourself. Don't kid yourself. You can't save enough unless you're going to live in your car. So, ladies and gentlemen, that's why you have to have direct aid to education, direct aid to education for those folks who can't afford it. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER: Let's thank Senator Biden.

(Applause)

SPEAKER: Thank you. Really great, really great.

SENATOR BIDEN: Thank you all very much.

SPEAKER: We're just going to take about a 10 minute break and then we'll have Governor Richardson.

(Recess)

MS. DERBY: It's my pleasure to introduce to you Governor Bill Richardson. Bill Richardson is the governor of the state of New Mexico. He was elected in 2002 by the widest margin in a gubernatorial race since 1964. He previously served as Secretary of Energy and Ambassador to the United Nations.

Governor Richardson's policy priorities have been to cut income taxes and the tax on food, build a high wage economy, develop a statewide water

plan, and make New Mexico safer by getting tough on DWI, domestic violence, and sex crimes, and implementing a forward looking, clean energy agenda in the nation.

Governor Richardson currently serves as Chairman of the Democratic Governor's Association. He previously was Chairman of the Western Governors Association, the Board of Governors Conference, and the 2004 Democratic National Convention.

Improving America's schools has been central to the governor's work turning around New Mexico. As governor, he has worked hard on behalf of teachers, investing in higher salaries and expended benefits. He raised New Mexico teachers' salaries from 46th in the nation to 29th and increased the number of highly qualified teachers.

Governor Richardson signed legislation that expanded full day kindergarten and made pre-kindergarten available for thousands of four year olds across the state of New Mexico.

Please join me in welcoming Governor Richardson.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Thank you, thank you.

Everything Jill Derby said is totally true. And I think Jill. She's my best -- she's the best introducer of me anywhere and I want to thank you. I want to thank Brookings, that learned -- boy, I can't see anything because -- no, I'm fine. You leave the lights, don't worry.

I want to thank the Brookings Institution. You know, I spent a lot of time in Washington, D.C. when I was in the Clinton Administration and when I

was in Congress and anytime Brookings said anything, everybody listened. And to be at this university, a great university, great university with a basketball team, it's great.

What I'm going to do is -- you know, politicians, we talk too much. I'm going to try to abbreviate my stump speech, which is about an hour and a half to a little less. No. I'm going to talk about education. I'm going to talk about how to reduce the deficit. And then I'm going to talk about a jobs program. And I promise I'll try to do this in 10 minutes, because I mainly want to take your questions. This is your forum. And I was very proud to be the first candidate to accept this form and I have not wavered. I'm here. I'm honored to be here. I'm a fellow westerner. You see my boots. Did you notice them?

I'll tell you briefly I was in New Hampshire and I was having one of those town meetings, and this woman kept like looking at my shoes closer and closer. And I said, "Ma'am, do you have a question?" And she said, "Your boots, is that an endangered species?" No, it's not. I'm a westerner.

Here's education. You know, education is the most important issue in my judgment. Talk about anything that wraps around what we need to do in terms of competitiveness, in terms of reducing poverty, creating jobs, making our kids viable in globalization, family values, it all boils down to education.

Education issues should be on the front page of every newspaper every day, and they're not. It's sort of an issue -- oh my God, let's talk about Iraq. Let's talk about healthcare -- enormously important. Education doesn't get in my judgment the attention it deserves. I, as president, would want to be known

as the education president just as I wanted to be known as the education governor in New Mexico. I would almost overhaul American education.

Here's what I would do. I would start out by making preschool available to every child in this country. And I'm talking about under four. You get to kids, you mold their minds before they're four. I'd have full day kindergarten. We don't have this in this country. I would have healthy breakfast for every child. I'd get rid of junk food in schools. I would have school based health clinics in every school. Now, you see I'm combining some of the health issues with education.

And here is the centerpiece of my education plan if I become president. The centerpiece is our teachers. Our teachers are disrespected. Our teachers are shoved aside. I'm talking about K through 12. I'm talking about elementary school teachers. I know this is a college audience, but I will say that today in this country what we pay as an entering salary for teachers at \$24,000, \$25,000 a year is abysmal. I would have a minimum wage for all our teachers at \$40,000 a year. And I would push for it as a president.

I would also say to you that there's a lot of discussion -- I know the panel. I was briefed that you talked about No Child Left Behind. Here's what I will do with No Child Left Behind. I'm going to scrap it, because it's a disaster. And it's better to start over with something viable that measures efficiency, that measures accountability, and measures testing. One size fits all testing has not worked. You're talking to a governor.

And the difference between me -- By the way, I love Joe Biden. I

almost said to him did you copy my suit today. We didn't really coordinate. I haven't even seen him. I hope he's seeing this. Joe, you know, for God's sakes, let's have different suits next time.

But, what I am saying is that it's important in my judgment to have a strategy that says all right let's have viable testing, but one size fits all testing, this is the problem with No Child Left Behind. Disabled kids are left out. Special education kids are left out. English learning kids left out. Gifted kids left out. One out of two minorities, Hispanic, Native American, and African American don't graduate from high school, left out. Teacher training left out.

And also, this system where you grade school and when a school isn't doing well, you list it, humiliating it, and then you cut off their funds. If a school isn't doing well, you help that school. And then as a governor, you have an unfunded mandate, we got to do all these things or we're penalized with no federal funds, but we're not given the resources to do it. Under funded No Child Left Behind is \$40 billion, so I would want to start over.

You know, sometimes when you're not doing something right, you change. And I just think that looking at it, you know, politicians talk let's fix it, tinker with it, you know, this -- we got to replace it.

Now, the kind of federal cooperation that I would like to see in education involves putting this pod in teachers, for a minimum wage for teachers. But I would have licensure requirements, the way we did in New Mexico, accountability, because you want the best possible teacher. And what you also want to do is make a startling recognition that we are horribly behind the world

the in science and math.

Now, you talk about competitiveness, that's competitiveness.

We're 29th; America is 29th. The European Union, China, India are ahead of us.

So, what do we do about it?

Well, we have to create a bunch of new science and math academies in this country, and I would create over 250. I've had 100,000 new science and math teachers that would staff these academies, where we'd get the best and brightest to accelerate the pace of science and math.

Now, what does that mean? That means revitalizing high school curriculum. That means in looking at some of these organizations, one and others that look at extending the school day, expanding school hours, smaller class sizes, expanding science and math education, emphasizing civics, which we don't do as much in this country, languages, and I have an idea.

Here's my idea, because we did it a little bit in New Mexico and it's working, to expand our kids' minds in science and math, to get out of being 29th. And I would have a goal, in 15 years, we're back to being number one again.

It would be -- you know what it is, art in school. Start an art in schools program, nationally, that supplements art in the schools programs, music, dance, expand the creativity of kids. It's a theory that I think is going to work, because it's working in my state.

Our scores are a little better because of extensive art in the schools program. But that is going to be critical if we are going to become competitive

again. Science and math, it means looking at -- saying to the school districts, hey, you're spending too much on administration, not enough on learning, on teacher salary, not enough on competitiveness, on parental involvement, on at-risk programs. So that's what I would do in the area of K through 12 education.

Now, you know, a lot of college students here, and I'm preparing an education plan, but here's two concepts that I want to throw out. One involves college affordability. It is obvious that we need to have a way to allow Americans -- I would define education differently.

I think education is for those between three and 99. I know the whole focus is on 18 year olds, and I'm all for that, and I believe there should be a national scholarship for those wanting to go to college, or community college, or junior college, or vocational school.

Not every kid is going to go to college. Whatever happened to vocational schools that aren't high school? I try to bring them back. What are we thinking today that, you know, it's so narrow, the Pell Grants, very valuable, but they're way down, work study grants. I would try to have a national scholarship that would allow every American to get a chance to expand their college education.

I would also look at a new concept, college loan. I heard Joe talk about it, too. Well, what do we have today? We have rip off operations, we have banking institutions getting involved. Some of our kids are paying, what, 12 years, and I've got a deal for you. How many college students in here? All right. I have a deal for you in paying off some of your college loans. Does the camera still see me? I was watching Joe, and for a moment he disappeared. That's not good for television. Am

I disappearing? Okay.

Here's my question. I have a deal for you. This is the deal. To pay off part of your college loan, I would start a program of national service. Will you give your country one year of national service in paying off some of your loans? I don't know the structure of it. And in that year, you would work in a hospital, work in the community, clean up a forest, join the military. Would you give your country a year of national service to defray your costs?

I don't see unbridled enthusiasm. But, you know, I just think we've got to be more creative and find ways to bring the spirit of John F. Kennedy back, where we're all doing something for the country, and I think that's a good, logical step. I would try to start that as President.

Now, the deficit. You know all these talks about -- and by the way, people are going to say, and I know it'll be one of the questions, okay, Governor, how are you going to pay for all this. Well, you know, nobody asked the country how we're paying for this war where we're spending \$450 billion, and so, you know, reporters say, well, how are you going to pay for all of this. Well, we need to invest in education. We need to invest in the future. We can't be afraid of the future. And so what I would do with the deficit is this, it would be tough medicine. I would have the following steps; first, the \$450 billion in discretionary spending goes to health care and education in this country. I mean that would be a start. And those that tell you that the money isn't there, it is there.

But then you deal with the debt, which is \$9 trillion, and you do what a governor has to do. I've got to balance budget. I balance five budgets as a governor

or I'm impeached, something I'm not looking forward to.

And so you balance budgets in your household, but the Congress has created, in seven years, \$9 trillion debt, with a President that goes into an unfunded, unauthorized war, and a Congress that just spends and spends and spends, with tax cuts that are not paid for, and I'm not against tax cuts, but if you don't pay for them, I am.

Constitutional amendment to balance the budget, you do that a four or five year period, you make sure you don't do it in a recession or in time of war. But you put that in the statutes. You have a line item veto, authority a governor has. Why doesn't a President have it to deal with wasteful spending? Number two, pay as you go policy. What does that mean? In the Budget Act, you say, all right, you start a good, new program; you find a way to pay for it in the budget. You also find a way to, if you're going to have a tax cut, pay for it, that's called pay as you go. You get rid of congressional earmarks.

You know, people talk about -- thank you. Don't tell Senator Reid I said that, who's my dear friend. We came into Congress together in 1982, so he'll hear about this. I'll get an angry call from him, and then we'll end up, you know, hugging each other.

But what I'm saying is that \$23 billion of earmarks, bridges to nowhere. You know why we couldn't repair this bridge in Minneapolis, was because so much money went to special projects, earmarks.

I would get rid of corporate welfare, \$73 billion. Every possible special interest has some kind of corporate welfare, especially -- you know there's a

tax incentive for companies? If you ship your jobs overseas in a certain sector, there's a tax incentive to do that. No wonder working people are mad. No wonder we have to ship -- So these are some of the very, very tough steps that I would take that I believe we need to happen.

Now, my last point, the economy. I have a different approach. I'm not a -- if you're looking for a candidate to back that is class -- you know, rich against the poor, that's not me. I made our state one of the fastest growing economies in the country, 80,000 new jobs, sixth fastest income growth. What we did in my state is what I would try to do as President. I would try to incentivize the industries and the private sector in the areas that are good for the country and were good for my state.

For example, I want to see a green America, I want to see a shift from fossil fuels to solar wind, and biomass distributed generation. We gave them huge tax incentives. We invested, we being the state. Now we're at the center of renewable energy in this country.

I would also do the same for biotechnology, biomedical research, science. I want the Democratic Party to be the party of science. If a company comes into New Mexico and pays over the prevailing wage, you give them a tax incentive. If it comes into a rural area and properly treats its workers and pays over the prevailing wage, you give them a tax incentive, a technology start-up.

We said no taxes for three years. You're incentivizing them to do the right thing. If they pay their workers right, we find a way also to stop some of this outsourcing by investing in some of the new technology.

In Nevada here, with your wind energy, with your renewable energy,

you've got fossil fuels, you've got mining, and we need to get some water, which is another issue. But I just think that we have to look at the economy a different way. You know, I cut taxes for New Mexico; you have no state income tax. I mean you've got other taxes. But we weren't able to compete. We found ways to reduce the state income tax significant so we could compete. People like it, putting more money in peoples' pocket, but we paid for it.

But if you incentivize the private sector, we brought movies in. We got nine movies coming into our state today, because we give them tax rebates, tax incentives, we invest jointly with the movie companies on training. It's our own people. They're union jobs, you know, it's working well. That's what I would do as President. And, Jill, do I --

MS. DERBY: Just take the question.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Just take the question, all right.

SPEAKER: Hi, my name is Claire -- I'm a pre-nursing major here in the University of Nevada, and my question is, where does the federal government responsibility fall in regards to funding higher education?

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Higher education, well, you know, the federal commitment to education is exactly seven percent. And I would like to see it, when it comes to higher education, go higher. I mentioned what I'd like to do with college loans and a national scholarship that would enable every American to get some help in going to college. But what we need to do is, we need to start linking funding and emphasizing graduation rates at our higher institution rather than attendance, rather than enrollment, that's number one.

Number two, I believe there is a federal commitment. You know, we don't have enough graduate programs in nursing in this country. We have a nursing shortage. We have a teacher shortage. In New Mexico, we created what is called a heroes program to help teachers, which we needed, cops, which we needed, and nurses. We gave them incentives to not just pursue a higher education, but also to help them with housing costs in the high income areas. So I do believe there is a substantial commitment.

Of course, I would like to see the Pell Grants increase, the work study plans. Maybe what we need to do is consolidate all of these aid programs, all of these grant programs. I prefer grants to loans. I'd like to shift that in this country.

I'd like to also have a college affordability act for every American that, based on need, can go to college, and I said between three and 99. The non-traditional moms that, you know, have had a couple kids, all of a sudden they say, hey, I want to, you know, get a computer course, but they can't get it because they're at a poverty level that says they're middle class, so they can't get any help, you know. So there's just so many things. What's the answer you wanted? Don't leave. What's the answer? No, I'm asking you. You asked for a reason.

SPEAKER: That you're -- because we do have several programs like we do, and our nursing program here at the University. We only accept 48 students per semester. We're one of the states that needs nurses mostly, but it's so competitive to get in here, and some of the reasons are, if we had more people graduating, we'd have more teachers and be able to educate more nurses.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Well, the state and the federal

government -- see, here's my difference with others. I see the federal government is not taking over school districts of setting policy for local schools, but being a part, you know, instead of having No Child Left Behind laws, imposing a will on local districts and teachers and communities, it would be, okay, how can we work together to increase teacher salaries, to have more invigorating courses, to have more advanced placement, to increase graduation rates in college, so that most of the kids coming into college need some prep work.

I mean so we should have started early. But when it comes to critical areas like nurses, like doctors, like, I was going to say lawyers, I'm not a lawyer. But those critical shortages we have, you know, the federal government should be a partner and give to your university here some scholarship funds to develop a nursing curriculum, especially in emerging areas like the west, like Las Vegas, that are growing. Everybody is moving here.

MR. McDONALD: Good afternoon, Governor. I'm Shawn McDonald, I'm the speaker pro tem of our undergraduate students on this campus. My question deals with prisons and education. There seems to be a huge discrepancy between the number of prisons that are being built and the number of schools that are being built, and no matter what we do, the prisons always seem to be full. Do you think that education is the key to reducing our prison population? What can be done to reduce the effect of the prison industrial complex, if you will, in our country?

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: You know, when I ran for governor five years ago, one of my stump speeches was I don't want to build any prisons, I

want to build schools. And, you know, it reached the point now where we built almost a billion dollars in school construction. I'm very proud of the investments in education we made.

Now our prison population is -- we've got too many, and so we're trying to deal with it, find ways that we can ensure that we have enough capacity. But your question is the correct one. I believe that having education is key to keeping people out of prison, it's key to getting kids out of gangs. And what we don't have in this country is in the prisons. We need more job programs where we reduce the recidivism, the returning back to prison with concrete treatment, jobs, educational programs, we don't have enough of that, and that's because you deal with a cycle of poverty. And when you don't have active job creation and economic development programs and gang related prevention programs in prisons, you're basically circling the wagon, and those kids are coming back.

But if I have to invest, if I have resources, it's in schools. But what would I invest? Not building new, modern facilities, I'd invest in some good treatment, jobs, programs in our prisons.

We're losing the war on drugs, we're losing the war on gangs, and you just can't incarcerate people. You can't just have programs that increase penalty. That's good, I've done that. But you've got to have programs that encourage treatment, education, and outreach, especially get them some skills in those prisons so that they don't come back. What do you think? Give me your --

MR. McDONALD: I would absolutely agree. I think, especially in this state, too much money is spent on prisons, not enough on education, and I think

whatever we can do as a country to invest more in education is a positive development.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: You know, if I have a small suggestion, your teacher salaries are a little too low here. You know, I try not to butt into local affairs, but I guess I just did.

MR. McDONALD: Thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: Hi, my name is Taylor Anderson, and I'm a Senator on the Associate Student Senate with Mr. McDonald. My question is, what course of action would you take to ensure that chronic low achievers and public school systems are getting the necessary attention they need from local and state officials?

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Okay. Chronic achievers, is that --

MR. ANDERSON: Chronic low achievers, low achievers.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Oh, low achievers. You're talking about like disabled kids, you're talking about at-risk kids?

MR. ANDERSON: Well, yeah, it's included in there. It's kind of a mixture of people who also just -- their test scores just don't improve, they're chronically getting the lower -- and it may not be due to any disability or anything like.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: See, this is where I think No Child Left Behind has been the worst derelict on this, because you get these special needs kids, because they don't test or the testing is different, they're kind of pushed aside. You know, this country has a commitment, it's a financial commitment, it's called

special education, and it's never been properly funded.

Low achievers, okay, you're talking about kids that don't graduate. You've got to enhance the number of parental involvement programs. You know, we've tried some in New Mexico that involve the parent participating in the class, the parent working with the kids on homework, you know, even some very tough medicine like locking up the parent if they are keeping their kids from school. You know, Florida and New Mexico, we're kind of trying it, but it's a harsh measure, but it involves finding ways to increase that parental involvement.

You know, what else, at-risk kids, at-risk programs, after school programs. One of the problems we have found with after school programs, especially in a rural area is, you've got to bring the kids back to the school, so you've got to have buses and transportation. It's not easy. It's not as if the parents can wheel the kids back to school.

So these are a lot of funding priorities that, because of the budget constraints, the federal government should be helping the local communities and it's not doing it. You know, also gifted kids, you know, gifted kids, I believe we need to have investments in them in science and math.

Here's another statistic that really bothers me because we're not doing enough. Did you know that one out of 166 kids have autism? And we don't know what to do about it. You know, you've got a lot of experts, maybe, I'm sorry if there's a UNR expert on autism, but is there? Where, are you here? Okay. Well, because I ask, what are we doing about autism, what is the treatment, people say, we don't know, we need money, well, tell me what you're doing. This is a national calamity.

We've got to find strategies because this is a growing problem among our kids. My last point is mental health. Now, I don't know if mental health is a component of your question, but we don't give mental health parody in this country.

One out of four Americans has a mental health problem. If you include schizophrenia and you include depression, one out of four. But mental health is kind of pushed aside. Oh, it's not as important as cancer, so we're not going to give it treatment or Medicare or Medicaid to cover. So if that's a component, we have to deal with, too, of your question. Senator, did I, you know, I'm sucking up to you. Do I need to -- is there anything else you need?

MR. ANDERSON: No, that answered my question. Thank you very much.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: You know, when you're at 13 percent, you've got to do something. But I'm moving up, you know, I'm moving up. Go ahead.

MR. LUND: Well, here you go, Christopher Lund, Douglas County, south of here, a Central Committee participant, I guess you'd say, Democratic Central Committee. First of all, I'd preface my question by saying that, surely, education is the very fulcrum of our democracy, and that it has certainly been undermine in the last 25 or 30 years, and we need to get that back, because without an educated populous, we can't make decisions, so of course, we need the media to be a little more pertinent than it is. My question to Ambassador to the United Nations, Richardson, is, we are constantly accused on the left of being cut and run, and if we cut and run from Iraq, we are going to find ourselves leaving the Iraqi

people upside down, et cetera, et cetera, in chaos.

My question is, as one who's been involved in the United Nations, wouldn't the international community through the United Nations, through the EU, through the Asian Block, step in, and they all have an invested, or a vested interest in peace in that oil pile; wouldn't something happen? I mean the Democrats seem to answer with nothing; why is that, and wouldn't the international community take action?

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Well, my answer to you is, yes, and you put it admirably. What we did in Iraq I believe has caused us to lose enormous international prestige around the world, and it's also diverted us from our main foreign policy goals in this country, which are reducing greenhouse gas emissions; dealing effectively with international terrorism, because there are people out there that want to kill us; loose nuclear weapons, nuclear materials in the hands of a terrorist international poverty issues. So my answer is yes. Now, what we did was, by being unilateral, by saying we're going to use military and preemption first as our tool in our foreign policy before negotiation and mediation, building international support for our goals, being part of NATO, being part of the U.N. Security Council, we kind of said, we're not going to do any of this.

So, yeah, here's -- on Iraq, what I propose, the media likes to characterize, well, Richardson wants to get out, well, yeah, I do, and I don't leave any residual troops behind, because I believe that our kids have become targets, and having one American there will prevent us from engaging in the peace and the reconstruction that is needed.

So what I would do, and it involves a lot of multilateral solutions like you mentioned; one, I would withdraw our forces within a reasonable period of time, let our military decide, you know, six, eight months or so, no residual forces, but then you use the leverage of that withdrawal to do three things, one, to get the three groups in Iraq, the Sunni, the Shiia and the Kurds to develop a reconstruction plan on political engagement.

What does that mean? The coalition government is what it means. It means dividing oil revenue, a possible partition, not into three countries, but three entities. And it has to be supervised, in my judgment, by the United Nations. But it's a date and type agreement, where you're really divvying up even bridges, it takes American leadership. Secondly, under U.N. auspices, an all Muslim peace-keeping force. I mean this is a Muslim/Arab war. I'd get Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia to participate in a peace-keeping force that would secure those borders. I would also ask Iran and Syria.

You're saying, oh my God, those are bad guys, yeah, they are, but they don't want thousands of refugees. They need some kind of stability in the region. I believe that with American leadership, and getting the Europeans to participate, too, and getting the whole U.S. Security Council, and not have China and Russia always block what we're trying to do, would allow us to have some kind of security entity.

And then lastly, reconstruction and rebuilding of Iraq. I mean we've spent \$500 billion there, it's time that the other countries take over. It's time also that Iraq had 150 billion reserves of oil, they're not exactly helpless. They have 330,000

security forces.

I would bring the European Union, I would bring Japan, other nations, in a reconstruction effort, a donor conference that would help them rebuilt. But a lot of it has to be done by them, by themselves, their own security. They have resources.

MR. ANDERSON: So I guess the bottom line to me is, why aren't the Democrats addressing that there is an answer through the international community rather than just standing there nakedly not responding to the cut and run allegation?

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Well, I say this all the time, but they ignore me at debates.

MR. ANDERSON: Get louder.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: I did say it at the last one, and I'm not complaining about the last debate, but it took about six debates for them to call a question. Actually, if you saw the last debate, they asked all the candidates about prayer, you know, when do you pray, and they got the (inaudible) he got off the best line, he says, I've been praying for 45 minutes that you let me answer a question.

SPEAKER: Governor Richardson, you mentioned that a lot of gifted students have a hard time in public schools, and that really spoke to me, because as a gifted student in a single father working class family, I really struggled. And you mentioned expanding math and science education opportunities for gifted students, but not all of us are gifted in that way. How would you help us to succeed?

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Well, see, one of the things I tried,

and you can critique this, I wouldn't make it the total centerpiece, but I believe if you start early with kids in the arts, if you start expanding their minds with science, music, sculpture, painting, you know, I would let experts decide this. But we expanded our arts education program in my state and it's done a lot of good in artistic, that's what I would do. I don't have all the answers. I would turn to educators. Now, you're a gifted student, right; what would have turned you on to fulfill your potential that is not there? Maybe you should answer the question.

SPEAKER: I didn't feel terribly challenged in my poor community school. There wasn't a lot of opportunity. I went to gifted school once a week. And I felt that it was really not sufficient, because I would just come back and sit in class and be bored. And I feel that if there was more available -- there's a gifted school here, but it accepts very few students, and I believe it's private, and I wasn't able to get in, and I think that if it was expanded, that more students would be able to go to accelerated programs that were gifted and --

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: I have a couple of suggestions, or one of the things that I try and that I think makes sense. I'm for charter schools, and charter schools have options. I'm not for vouchers, because I think that really undermines public schools. But charter schools that are specialized, as long as they have to compete with public schools, you know, we have some charter schools in New Mexico in the arts, and it's really -- they're working well, in technical services, in the internet, expanding cyber academies. I just think we've got to be a lot more creative.

The second point I would make besides charter schools is, you know,

the key is good, strong teachers. You know, there's advanced placement programs; usually advanced placement goes to the most gifted kids. I would try nationally to have advanced placement for everybody, for every kid, even if the kid doesn't have potential.

We tried that in one school district in New Mexico, I think it was Hobbs, New Mexico, I can't remember, and it's working well. And you know what advanced placement is, it's basically taking teachers and really training them in these specialized courses to incentivize kids. But I don't have any further ideas. Do you have any further?

SPEAKER: No, I think expanding charter schools is a good idea. I think that --

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: How about some of the smart Brookings people or any of the people that were on the panels, have an idea on this?

SPEAKER: (Off mike)

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Go to the mike.

SPEAKER: Instead of making schools grade and age oriented, what about sectional orientation? In other words, if you're good at math, you're in an advanced placement for your math, and that's done in some ways, but it's still -- you're still either in fifth grade and you're, you know, whatever fifth grade is, I don't remember anymore, ten to 11 years old.

We need to, you know, older students can teach younger students at the level that they can. That encourages a sense of community throughout the whole entire school system, and it doesn't limit anybody, because everybody has got the

opportunity to teach someone that needs more help in an area than they do.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: That's good. How about any of the Brookings people? Where are you? Did you just do your panel and leave or what? No, you guys are great. I mean I'd like to know this. I don't have the answer. I'm sure -- yes, sir.

SPEAKER: (Off mike)

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Look, excellent suggestion. You know, with Brookings, what I would do, because I always ask these questions at educational conferences, you know, how to be a governor, how to be a good education governor, okay. What is effective parental involvement? What are we talking about? Are we talking about homework, are we talking about -- you're not talking -- because you get some teachers, they say, my God, I don't want anymore parents here, I can't do my job. So there's got to be some programs that work. In New Mexico, we have a program where actually the parent is involved in the kids' homework, and there's sort of a schedule. But I think we need to focus on what, you're right, what incentivizes the parent to get their kids involved in school. You know, we had that negative incentive, if we found out that they weren't taking their kids to school willfully, they got locked up. We didn't implement it fully, but you know, somebody in Florida tried it, they had some decent results. .

MS. HOBBS: Hi, my name is Amanda Hobbish and I'm with a group called Every Child Matters in Nevada. And my question is, I know you said something about not imposing on local government, but when local governments won't take the initiative and do things like providing full day kindergarten, which we

did not get passed in this state, and doing things like they needed educational reform system, like, you know, providing not early education, and enforcing foreign languages at an earlier age, when you know that they're most likely to learn rather than waiting until college.

How do you see the federal government and at the federal level getting involved, so that way we have national standards on what education should be? And I know it's great to have, you know, the local government be able to, you know, govern some of those areas and not have complete control from the federal government, but it seems like there needs to be some national standards and not just, okay, we choose to do this or that, but it's not best for the kids.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Good point, and this is what I would do. Yeah, I talked about the importance of school districts and local decisions and the school board, I'd respect that. But I would say, as I said earlier, it's the policy of the United States that we have preschool for every child, and I'm the President, and we're going to go to Congress with a package to make it happen.

And, you know, you can't impose that on parents, you can't impose it on the school districts, so it does mean that a school that doesn't participate in national goals doesn't get financial support. So use the lever of funding. The same with full day kindergarten. Wait a minute, you don't have full day kindergarten?

MS. HOBBS: A lot of parents are upset because they said it was forcing the kids to go to school and all it was was babysitting and it wasn't needed.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Kindergarten?

MS. HOBBS: Uh-huh.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: I mean we got accused of that for preschool, but kindergarten?

MS. HOBBS: Uh-huh.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Really? Well, you know, then the federal government, I'm not saying it has to take over, but you've got to, you know, you've got to show some leadership. I did not know that. You don't have full day kindergarten?

MS. HOBBS: No; some schools do, and some of the parents have to pay for it.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Jill, you've got to run for office. She almost won for Congress. We need people like you to do that. Good point. You've got me thinking. You're right, you've got to show some leadership.

SPEAKER: Hi, Cindy -- with the Douglas County School Board. What I was going to ask you about is teachers. It seems that you have a good relationship with your teachers in New Mexico, and a lot of the questions have been answered that I've had, and of course, the one about No Child Left Behind.

Even though the Board in Douglas County is firmly behind No Child Left Behind, I happen to be of the opinion that I was not real happy with it because of its non-funding. And I'm not a big proponent of common assessment, you know, across the board testing.

And my question to you is, how did you deal with, or are you dealing with merit pay that is becoming a big issue? And one of the reasons why is because it is so subjective on a certain level. And also, giving the classroom back to the

classroom teacher, because so often now, with the amount of testing that our teachers are required to conduct, that a lot of the creativity is taken out of their hands, and it's one thing I hear a lot about. How do you feel about giving that creativity back to the classroom teacher?

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: I would give it back to the teacher. You know, I didn't -- I don't like merit pay. What I want is to get our teachers to get paid better. And what we did was, we set up in my state, like I said, a minimum, almost a minimum wage, at a level about 40, 50, 60,000, but with licensure requirements. You don't just give them the money, you've got to pass an additional licensure requirement, additional accountability, and I think you've got to pay your teachers better.

So my question to you would be this, and you're a school board member, and I'd want to be a President that worked with you, and what would -- and see, on No Child Left Behind, I started out being for this, you know, six, seven years ago, Ted Kennedy was for it, George Miller, I said, my God, this must be great, George Bush, you know, I was a little worried about that, but then I said, well, you know, we're testing kids, that's good, and then the first year started coming in, no resources, and then these, you know, horrendous requirements that would list schools, and people would be depressed by their school being on a bad list, adequate yearly progress, and I kept saying, well, is Santa Fe the same as New Mexico school district, as Reno, Nevada, and I said, maybe this isn't going to work. And I've reached the point where now I think you have to overhaul it. But you agree that we need to find some way to test -- to deal with testing and proficiency.

My answer in replacing No Child Left Behind would be, okay, school board member, let's get together with the President or the Department of Education, let's find ways that you participate also in determining what a sensible test for your community and for your school district is; do you agree with that?

SPEAKER: I totally agree with that.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Okay.

SPEAKER: And one of the reasons I asked about giving the classroom back to the teacher is that, especially if we did have smaller class sizes, that teacher can interact with those students' parents on a much more opportune level than just talking about a test, but actual projects in the classroom.

And that is one thing I hear a lot about, teachers complaining about, is that they are so oppressed by what they have to accomplish as opposed to what they can teach.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Good for you. We can do these, too. I don't want to -- lady, get back here, I want to get up to 14 percent. How's that?

SPEAKER: A short answer.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: A short answer.

SPEAKER: Actually, this will kind of piggyback so you can continue on. Regarding teachers, we talked about the students need to be involved, the parents need to be involved. In New Mexico, how do you handle teacher accountability to attract better teachers, have higher pay, and not have issues with teachers unions and that power, so that it's not the old civil servant and you get a bad teacher and you can't get rid of them?

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Well, as I mentioned, in New Mexico, we set up a three tier licensure system, starting at about \$40,000, where if you kept going up the scale of pay, you have to fulfill licensure and accountability requirements. We wrote this act with business leaders, with teacher unions, and we all agreed on it. So it's not like a freebie for more money. You know what it is, it's -- I'm not going to try to brag, it's called leadership.

You know, to get things done, you've got all these candidates, oh, you know, we the Democrats, we're going to resolve every problem. You've got to get other people with you, you've got to get independents, you've got to get some Republicans, you've got to get the business community, you've got to get teachers, you've got to get community leaders, you've got to get, you know, the bill support for what you're trying to do, you've got to negotiate, and so that's what I'm saying. You're probably wondering, will the teachers union support accountability? Yeah, they do. They don't just care about pay, you know.

There's this perception, the teachers union, they just care about pay; they don't, at least not in New Mexico. They care about stronger schools. Yeah, they want to get paid better. But my God, I mean what we pay our teachers in this country, it's criminal. So what's wrong with having the ability to organize, to protect yourselves with health care costs and salaries and pension?

SPEAKER: Thank you.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: We'll make you the last, all right, Jill.

MS. DERBY: Yeah.

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Then you're going to kick me out.

Go ahead.

SPEAKER: Well, if I'm going to be the last, I'm going to make sure we thank you for coming to the UNR and to Nevada and hope that you come back, and come back when the students are in session and the faculty are on campus. Okay. A quick question; you said something very interesting, that you wanted to see the federal government work on a pay as you go basis. Does this mean that you are looking for an alternative to the kind of mandatory budget authority, like farm bills that are signed every five years with spending earmarked for the life of the bill, stuff like that?

GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: Well, pay as you go is -- we had it in the Clinton Administration in the Federal Budget Act, and it basically said this, if you're going to start, it was retroactive, if you're going to start a new program, let's say all of a sudden we start a loan forgiveness program for students, in that same Budget Act, you've got to find a way to pay for it.

In other words, you're cutting spending somewhere else or you're raising revenues another way.

The same with a tax cut. Okay, Governor, I love taxes for the middle class, for working -- I do, I think it incentivizes families when they have more money in their pockets. But under the Budget Act, if I propose this, in the same Budget Act, I would find a way to pay for it, either, you know, a reduction, and I'm not saying it's going to be Defense, but maybe I would, procurement, the Halliburtons of the world, you know, procurement of the defense budget, no bid contracts, yeah, I probably

would find some there, but that's what I meant on pay as you go. Thank you very much.

MS. DERBY: Governor, thank you. We do have Bill Antholis, who's the Managing Director of the Brookings Institution, who's going to address the question that was asked earlier. Bill, please.

MR. ANTHOLIS: You've got a foreign policy person here, but I'll say that for those who have questions about younger kids, which is I think what we were talking about, we have two centers at Brookings that work on this, we have the Center on Children and Families, which you can find on our web site, brookings.edu, and then we also have the Brown Center on Education which goes from K through 12.

The Center on Children and Families looks at a lot of preschool issues like that. And anytime you'd like to come, we're happy to brief you on the full range of proposals for both of those, we'll happily set that up.

I want to thank everybody here for coming out. The University of Nevada, Reno has been a terrific partner.

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