



CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES FORUM ON CHILDREN

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MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN: Good evening. I'm Marian Wright Edelman, and president of the Children's Defense Fund, and I want to welcome you to the Children's Defense Fund's 2003 National Conference and to this Presidential Candidates Forum on Children on the 30th Anniversary Celebration of our beginning. I want to thank each of the candidates for agreeing to come and tell us what they will do if they become president to make sure that children are not left behind in our rich and powerful nation.

The mission of the Children's Defense Fund is to leave no child behind, and to ensure every child a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start, and a moral start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. We agree with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian, who was killed opposing Hitler's Holocaust, that "The test of morality of a society is how it treats its children." Well, America is not passing Bonhoeffer's test when we let a child be neglected or abused every 36 seconds; when we let a child be born into poverty every 41 seconds in the richest nation on earth; when we let a child be born without health insurance every 59 seconds. We have 5.2 million uninsured children, 90 percent of them live in working families. We're not meeting Bonhoeffer's test of morality and of common sense and cost effective investment, when we let millions of our children start school not ready to learn, and millions of our children be in schools that are not teaching them to learn and to grow, and to be able to get a good job, and to form the next generation of families.

And as our nation is preoccupied with the war against Iraq, and is anxious and fearful about terrorism at home, I think it is not right that the Bush Administration and the House and Congress have been debating a budget, and indeed have passed budgets, which they will make some final decisions on shortly, that leave no millionaire behind, but leave millions of children behind. Just the tax dividend portion alone of the new 2003 proposed Bush Administration tax cut would pay for a Head Start for every needy eligible child and would pay for health coverage for every uninsured child. It is not right to be dismantling Head Start, to be dismantling child health services under Medicaid, to be taking away foster care protections, to be dismantling Section 8 housing in order to subsidize lavish tax cuts for millionaires. We must say "no" to these priorities.

So it's time for new voices for new choices in our nation—choices that help children first rather than hurt children first. And it isn't enough just to stop bad things from happening, because as we look at these figures, as we said at the beginning, we have got to make sure that all of our children get what they need. God did not make two classes of children, and every single child has a right to health care and a good education, and that's why we are supporting the comprehensive Dodd-Miller Act to Leave No Child Behind. This act is not to be confused with the single issue, under-funded Bush Administration No Child Left Behind Act. They are different, and we must make people aware of this fact. Our act wants to give every child health care. We set a goal and a vision of ending child poverty, of seeing that every child has education, and over the next five to seven years, I hope that will be a reality to ensure that no child truly is left behind in our great nation.

Our children can't vote, and they can't lobby, but many of them sure do know how to speak for themselves. So I want you all to listen carefully to what children have to say about leaders and power and the qualities that a president should demonstrate. Adults and leaders can learn a lot from these fourth graders at Cotswold Elementary School in Charlotte, North Carolina.

(Video shown)

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MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN: And now, I want to turn the forum over to our moderator for the evening, CNN's Judy Woodruff.

Thanks, Judy.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: I am just going to say very simply that I am pleased to be part of this forum. I know that our three panelists are as well. You're going to be hearing from them in just a moment. Issues surrounding children are important to all of us, all of us in this room, all who are watching on television, and even though we know the first presidential primary is more than nine months away, it is never too early to start to focus on the issues of importance to children and their families.

So, we're going to get right to it. We are fortunate that all nine of the declared Democratic presidential candidates are with us tonight, and I'm going to begin by introducing them from right to left. On the right, from the State of Illinois, former United States Senator Carol Moseley Braun; from Vermont, former Governor Howard Dean; from North Carolina, United States Senator John Edwards; from Missouri, United States Representative Dick Gephardt; from Florida, United States Senator Bob Graham; from Massachusetts, United States Senator John Kerry; from Ohio, United States Representative Dennis Kucinich; from Connecticut, United States Senator Joe Lieberman; and from New York, the Reverend Al Sharpton.

Our questioners are Juan Williams, senior correspondent of National Public Radio and political analyst for the Fox News Channel; Michelle Martin, ABC News Nightline news correspondent and contributor to This Week; and Mark Shields, syndicated columnist, political analyst on the News Hour with Jim Lehrer, and moderator of CNN's Capital Gang.

Before we begin the questions, each candidate is going to have an opportunity to make an opening statement of one minute, so with a sharp eye on the clock, we're going to ask you to do that now starting with Senator Braun.

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: Thank you very much.

Thirteen million American children live in poverty, 13 million children. They have no votes, they have no lobbyists, but they do have a voice, and that voice is represented best by the Children's Defense Fund. I am so pleased to have been invited to join in this forum, and pleased that all of you are here to participate in this critical decision about the kind of country we will have, about the kind of people we are, because surely how we deal with children will represent our legacy as a generation to the world.

I am the only candidate in this race who has not only borne a child and raised one, but borne the battle for children over the years from the very beginning of my career as a state legislator. I fought for children in the Illinois House to provide them with food. I fought to provide them with living subsidies. As a member of the United States Senate, I fought to see to it that no child's limit was cut off from living subsidies with the welfare bill that eliminated the national safety net. I believe that we have a responsibility, all of us as Americans, to see to it that every child is cared for, given health care and opportunity for an education, a secure family environment, and a chance to grow and contribute to this great nation to the best of their abilities. And that is what I will fight for as President of the United States.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Governor Dean.

FORMER GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN: Tonight I think we're beginning a battle for the soul of the Democratic Party, as well as for the soul of America. I don't think we can win the White House if we spend all our time talking about the Patient's Bill of Rights instead of insisting that we have health insurance for every American, as we do for every child under 18 in Vermont. I don't think we can win the White House by voting for the No Child Left Behind Bill, which should be called the No School Board Left Standing Bill, instead of funding childcare for

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most children as we do in the State of Vermont. I don't think we can vote for \$350 billion tax cuts that prevent us from balancing the budget, prevent us from funding early education as we do in the State of Vermont. And I don't think that we can vote for a new doctrine of presidential preemptive war and still keep American values.

(Applause)

FORMER GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN: I'm Howard Dean, and I'm here once again to represent the Democratic wing of the Democratic Party. Thank you.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Edwards.

SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS: America's families are working harder, earning less, and spending less time together every single day. The poverty rate is going up again for the first time in a decade. We have to make a national priority of strengthening America's families. I wish I could tell you tonight that we can have everything. We can't. We need to be honest. Here's what I would do. First, a \$2500 refundable tax credit for family leave so that every parent of a new child can spend time with that child. Second, making after-school available to every one of our 7 million latchkey kids who need access to after-school. Third, in addition to holding mothers of kids on welfare responsible, holding fathers of kids on welfare responsible, helping them get jobs but making sure they pay their child support at the same time. And lastly, college for everyone—a proposal I have that says, if you're willing to work 10 hours a week your first year of college, we'll make sure you can go to a state university or community college tuition-free.

Thank you all very much.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Representative Gephardt.

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD GEPHARDT: All of us know the importance of this organization. I want to thank Marian Wright Edelman for what she's meant to this organization through the years. We all know that we've got to not just look at statistics about children, we've got to look at each individual child, and consider that they are our own, because they are. When my son was two he was diagnosed with terminal cancer. The doctors were able to use experimental treatments to save his life, because we had good health insurance. I met a lot of parents when we were in radiation and chemotherapy treatments who did not have health insurance to take care of their kids, and I vowed when I went through that, that we had to get everybody in this country covered with health insurance. This centerpiece of my campaign, the centerpiece of my campaign will be to add money to children's health, to give tax credits to business to require each business to offer plans to their employees. We have got to get everybody in this country covered with health insurance. It is the moral thing to do, and it's the right thing to do for this country. And as president I will see that it's done.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Graham.

SENATOR BOB GRAHAM: Thank you, and I also wish to extend my thanks to Ms. Edelman and for all of you who are giving us the opportunity tonight to tell you why we think we should be the next President of the United States. I think I should be the next President of the United States because this nation faces unusual challenges—a war, a stagnant economy, declining resources for health and education. I think the question before us is what should be our priority. My priority will be our children. The question is, do we have the courage of our convictions? Eloquence will not do it alone, it takes clarity of action. I voted to eliminate all of President Bush's tax cuts.

(Applause)

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SENATOR BOB GRAHAM: A massive tax cut at a time of war, which not only eliminates resources for our children, but assures that they will end up paying the gigantic deficits that we are creating, is fundamentally unfair; it is not what we do in America. I am the grandfather of 10, and 3 of my 10 are with us here tonight. I will be guided by the goal of assuring that those grandchildren and all of those in their generation have an opportunity to grow up in a better, safer America that offers greater opportunity.

Thanks.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Kerry.

SENATOR JOHN KERRY: We're not just here tonight to fight for the soul of our party, we're here to fight for the conscience and the soul of our country. We saw today on television the most extraordinary photographs. The world saw these photographs of the power of America to liberate people in a far off land from tyranny. I am running for President of the United States because it is long, long since time that we put that power to use here at home, to liberate our children from the indifference and from the neglect that engulfs their lives. Marian talked a moment ago about the America that we are. We're two Americas, the one politicians talk about, and the one we really are. And the one we really are has millions of our children who have no health care; they are homeless; they are having problems of nutrition; and it is long since time we had a president who made real the words "leave no child behind." I am running for president to hold this president accountable for making a mockery of those words, and instead of spending \$70,000 a year to house kids in prison, we need to spend the money on Early Start, Head Start, Smart Start, and put them into full citizenship in our lives.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Representative Kucinich.

REPRESENTATIVE DENNIS KUCINICH: Thank you very much. My memories of an inner city childhood in Cleveland are still fresh—the oldest of 7 children living in 21 different places by the time I was 17, including a couple of cars, family having trouble making ends meet, constant evictions, and wondering about where the next meal was going to come from, overcrowded living conditions. I know what Langston Hughes meant when he said, "life for me ain't been no crystal stair." People in so many neighborhoods we lived in had a lot of the same problems. I remember where I came from. That's why I authored a bill for universal free kindergarten, which provides for early childcare and educational enrichment. That's why I worked tirelessly to increase the childcare development block grant to \$20 billion over 5 years. That's why I co-authored a bill for universal health care. I'll be a president who knows what families go through, who knows how they struggle to make ends meet, who knows how they work to have a decent roof over their head. I remember where I came from, the crossroads of hope and despair, many American children are at that crossroads today, and we need to help them make the move to the path of economic justice.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Lieberman.

SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN: Thank you, Judy. Thanks to Marian, and thanks to the Children's Defense Fund. Our children are growing up in a world today that we could not have imagined just three years ago. War against tyranny abroad, the threat of terrorism, and a stagnating economy here at home. Challenges are difficult, but today, thanks to the bravery and skill of the American military, we have a little bit of hope. As I saw that statue of Saddam Hussein falling in Baghdad, I could feel the hopes of the children of Iraq for a better life rising, and I could feel the hopes for the children of America for a safer life rising, as well. Now we have to come back home and not only help our children have a safe life, we have to help them have a better life, and that means reordering our priorities, not financing trillion-dollar tax breaks on the backs of America's children. Let's invest that money in reviving our economy so American parents can take care of their children; let's invest it in better schools, better

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health care, better childcare. And let me set this goal as your next president. Yes, it's important to leave no child behind, but this is American. We can do better than that. Let's help every American child get ahead.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Reverend Sharpton.

REVEREND AL SHARPTON: I, too, join in saluting the work of the Children's Defense Fund. Sometimes you learn the best defense is an offense, and we need to go on the offensive, which is why I'm running for president. We need to go on the offensive against an administration who will give tax cuts to the rich, cut aid to public education, cut aid to daycare, turn around and use the rhetoric of "leave no child behind," while they leave the budget behind their own proposals of leaving no child behind. This president has in many ways perpetrated a political fraud on the American public at the expense of American children. We have young men and women that tore down the statue of Saddam in Iraq today, and have now been part of those that will promise universal health care to children in Iraq, who will come home and can't get universal health care to their own children in America.

(Applause)

REVEREND AL SHARPTON: I just got warmed up, Judy.

JUDY WOODRUFF: We'll give you an opportunity to say more as the evening wears on. I've been very easy on all of you. We let you go long for your opening statements, but we're going to crack the whip as we get to these questions coming up. I just want to say briefly, we do have questions from our panelists, we have a rotating system. Each panelist will be asking questions of two candidates. By the end of the evening, every candidate will have been asked two questions, that is, if we can move along here. We are going to give you a minute and a half for the first question, a minute for the follow up, which you're going to get. But before that we're going to start with what we're calling a lightning round, where I'm going to ask one question of all nine candidates, and I want you to make your answer as brief as possible, ideally 30 seconds or less than a minute. Here it is. As we gather tonight in Washington, as some of you have pointed out, the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq is crumbling. The war is coming to an end; we saw the people of Baghdad celebrating today. Before we go on to discuss resources for America's children, I want to ask each one of you if you opposed this war, as five of you did, you saw the excited faces of these Iraqi people today in Baghdad. Are you still convinced this war was the wrong thing to do? And if you voted for the war resolution, how much do you think it's going to end up costing? We already see \$80 billion, and we know it's going much higher, and can you assure us it's not going to hurt domestic priorities? A minute or less, Senator Braun.

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: Thank you very much, Judy. I would point out I went under a minute on my opening, or close to it. In any event, the first answer is, I'd rather—if we spent \$80 million to kill Saddam Hussein, that's \$79, 999—

JUDY WOODRUFF: Billion.

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: Billion, \$80 billion to kill Saddam Hussein, that's \$79 billion too much. I'd rather see that money spent on providing health care for children, universal health care for our country, to build schools and provide quality education, to deal with domestic concerns of the American people. It is an outrage that we are going to pass along budget deficits to the next generation based on a war, as President Carter called it, of choice and not necessity.

JUDY WOODRUFF: So the war is not worth it, you're saying?

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: I'd say that charity begins at home, and if we're going to attend to our priorities, we should take care of America first, and American children first. And it is an outrage to suggest that we are going to rebuild another country when our own communities are falling apart and people are unemployed. It's just not right.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Governor Dean.

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I'm sorry. I know you all want to applaud a lot, but every time you applaud it's coming out of question time later—I mean answer time, sorry.

Governor Dean.

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: I didn't get a chance to use my whole minute. I didn't get a chance to use my whole minute the first time, so if you don't mind, just be as nice to me.

JUDY WOODRUFF: We'll be fair.

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: Thank you.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Governor Dean.

FORMER GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN: Sure. The reason I didn't support the war—and I continue to maintain this position—is because it opens up a new, dangerous, preemptive doctrine. And the war resolution urged the president to go to the United Nations, but made no such requirement. I think it's a dangerous thing to do, to give the president six months ahead of time a blank check, which is what I think the resolution did. We have more dangerous foes in front of us, North Korea and Al-Qaeda; there's been no such concentration on those dangers. And I think Senator or Ambassador Moseley Braun is right. We're going to spend a lot of money in Iraq. We're at \$80 billion, it's going to be \$200 billion. For \$200 billion, we can insure every child under the age of 18 in this country, just like we do in the state of Vermont. It seems to me that that's a better investment. We need to contain Saddam, we should have contained Saddam. We've gotten rid of him, and I suppose that's a good thing, but there's going to be a long period where the United States is going to need to be maintained in Iraq, and that's going to cost American taxpayers a lot of money that could be spent on schools and kids.

JUDY WOODRUFF: All right. I'm going to alternate a little bit and go with Reverend Sharpton next.

REVEREND AL SHARPTON: I oppose the war, and I'm still saying that I do not see the necessity for the war. I do not see where we've seen the nuclear weapons that we were told were there. I do not see the imminent danger. I do not see the necessity for military action. I'm glad Saddam was toppled, but I also would like to see things toppled in this country, like no health insurance, like illiteracy, like childhood obesity. The real question to me is, if we can come up with billions to occupy Iraq, why can't we come up with money for the budgets of the 50 states we already occupy?

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Lieberman.

SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN: Thank you, Judy.

As you know, I supported the war, and I did because I believe one of the first responsibilities of government, as our Constitution says, is to provide for the common defense. And history teaches us that if you leave a brutal, immoral dictator with weapons of mass destruction, eventually he will use them. And all of our liberty and everything else we strive for will be compromised.

But the choice between security for our nation, and a better life for our children is a false choice. If we re-order our priorities based on our values, if we pull back this outrageously unfair and irresponsible tax cut program of President Bush's, we could protect our security and provide a better life for our children. That would be my goal as President of the United States.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Edwards.

SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS: This is not an either/or choice. It is actually the responsibility of the President of the United States to be able to do two things at the same time. I support the cause in Iraq, I have always supported the cause in Iraq. I think it is a just cause. I think that what we're doing there is right. I think it is a fight, among other things, for the liberation of the Iraqi people. We have to now show that we went there for the right

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reason by, as soon as we reasonably can, turning over the governing of the Iraqi people to the Iraqi people by turning over the oil fields and the revenue from those oil fields to the Iraqi people. We have a wonderful opportunity.

But this is a false choice. We can do two things at the same time, particularly if we get rid of the tax cut for the top 1 to 2 percent that would save us \$1-1/2 trillion over the next 20 years and allow us to invest in programs like after-school programs and the work that needs to be done in our schools.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Representative Kucinich.

REPRESENTATIVE DENNIS KUCINICH: I led the effort in the House of Representatives to challenge the war in Iraq, and I'll continue to lead the effort and any effort to take America in an aggressive pose against any nation in this world. I think that we have to know the difference between defense and offense. I also think that this war was about a pretext, that it was not about whether they had weapons of mass destruction. I mean, let's face it, poverty is a weapon of mass destruction, homelessness is a weapon of mass destruction, lack of adequate education is a weapon of mass destruction, our children not having good neighborhoods is a weapon of mass destruction. We're blowing up bridges over the Tigris and Euphrates; we're not building bridges in our own cities. We need a new urban policy; we need a new national security strategy; we need a strategy for peace and prosperity.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Representative Gephardt.

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD GEPHARDT: Our highest responsibility is to keep our people safe, and the reason I supported this action was that I do not want to have another 9-11. I do not want weapons of mass destruction used in this society. And I think we have to do what we have to do to defend the security of our people. We also should feel very proud tonight of the young men and women who are in Iraq putting up their lives and their injuries for us to be safe. They've done a magnificent job.

Let me just add one point. We are going to have more deficits as a result of this war. We have to get rid of almost all of the Bush tax cut, the one last year and whatever he tries to put on the books this year. We cannot have those tax cuts, most of which go to the wealthiest Americans in this country. We need to use that money to get every person and certainly every child in this country covered with good health insurance. When I'm president, that's what we'll do.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Kerry.

SENATOR JOHN KERRY: Well, I really fall in a different place from what has been said. I voted for the resolution to provide the president with a credible threat of force, which I believe the president has to have and should have been able to use, presuming also that a great country like ours can respect multilateral institutions that work with the world to build a coalition. And I said that the United States of America should not go to war because it wants to, we should go to war because we have to. And you have to when you've exhausted remedies available to you. So I support the use of force. I support disarming Saddam Hussein, but I have been very critical of the way this administration went at it, because it leaves the American people carrying a greater financial burden and an enormous repair job within NATO, the United Nations, the European Community, and the rest of the world.

And now the Bush Administration is laying out an enormous plan for building roads, schools, hospitals, and providing books in Iraq, and it's time for us to demand that they lay out a plan to do the same here in the United States of America. No to the Bush tax cut, yes to those plans for America.

JUDY WOODRUFF: All right. On the cost, Senator Graham.

SENATOR BOB GRAHAM: I voted against the resolution to authorize the president to use force against Iraq. I did so because I thought the war against Iraq would make us less secure, not more secure. Saddam Hussein is an evil person, he lives in a neighborhood with a lot of evil people. The question is, where do we put our priorities for the safety of Americans? In my judgment, those priorities should be to eliminate the shadowy group of international terrorist organizations that killed almost 3,000 Americans on September 11th. I believe that the war in Iraq has actually reduced our ability to effectively carry out the war against terrorism. It has shattered our alliances that will be critical to success in the war on terrorism. At the same time, we have given a pass to some of the

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countries which have been harboring terrorists so that we could get their vote in the United Nations. I believe the standard should be, what is in the best security of the people of America, and the answer to that is to pursue without distraction the war against terrorism.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Thank you.

Senator, we are going to move now to the questions from the panelists. Because of our time, we're going to ask each of you to limit your answers to one minute. Juan Williams has the first question, and it goes to Senator Braun.

JUAN WILLIAMS: Senator Braun, President Bush's single plan, as you've heard mentioned here tonight, for American's children called No Child Left Behind, the key in that plan is accountability in public education. The president condemning what he calls the soft bigotry of low expectations, especially for minority children in America's urban schools. But many parents, teachers, and children question the plan's emphasis on testing. Do you endorse rigorous testing for all school children as required under the president's plan in grades 4, 8 and 12?

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: The truth of the matter is that the federal government right now contributes less than 7 percent of the cost of elementary and secondary education, and pushes the rest of the cost onto states and local governments. This plan, which really is No Child Left, not No Child Left Behind, really is punitive and counterproductive in terms of providing quality education. For this program to suggest that the federal government is going to mandate a series of tests to segregate, isolate and otherwise identify "low performing schools," but not send any money to help the communities, help parents, help the local governments pay for schools, is just outrageous and not very thoughtful.

What I would like to see our government do, as president, I would like very much to begin to change the way we deal with school funding so that there's a greater federal contribution, so that we can relieve the burden on local property taxes, and so that the states will get the help and assistance in a constructive way to provide quality education for all children, starting with early childhood education, expanding Head Start, and doing it the right way to provide for quality education.

I think I did it under my minute.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Almost.

JUAN WILLIAMS: Governor Dean, as governor, you criticized the president's plan of a huge unfunded mandate. Do you endorse the Dodd-Miller Leave No Child Behind plan, which calls for spending to guarantee housing, after-school care, health care, and even more, this is a plan endorsed by the Children's Defense Fund? On the panel, only Representative Kucinich has endorsed the bill, and obviously that bill would create an even larger unfunded mandate, even though it would be in service of America's children?

FORMER GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN: What we need is the kind of approach that we took in Vermont. We don't have those kinds of unfunded mandates. We have accountability testing. We have a testing system that's so hard that not one school in the state meets the standards. That brings everybody up and requires everybody to work, the suburban schools as well as the inner city schools. We have something approaching universal early education. We have health care for all kids under the age of 18. We have subsidized childcare up to \$40,000 a year. If you want to leave no child behind, that's where you start.

The other thing you ought to start with is refunding the mandates that we already have, such as special education, which stops taking money out of the regular school system, which stops the fighting between the parents with kids with special needs and parents with kids without special needs. I think we ought to get rid of No Child Left Behind in its entirety. If Dodd-Miller were to pass, I think that's terrific. Let the federal government fund it. I do not support unfunded mandates, which is the principal problem with No Child Left Behind, other than its name.

JUDY WOODRUFF: But you would not support Dodd-Miller?

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FORMER GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN: Not as an unfunded mandate. If the federal government is going to ask the states to do something, I want the federal government to pay for it.

JUDY WOODRUFF: All right. Michelle Martin has a question for Senator Edwards.

MICHELLE MARTIN: Good evening, Senator Edwards. You offered some very detailed proposals about health care, but as your colleague, Governor Dean, has pointed out, supporting a patient's right to sue an HMO doesn't help you very much if you don't belong to an HMO, and prescription drug coverage doesn't help everybody either. You've talked about college for everyone. What's the plan for health care for everyone?

SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS: I would do these things right now. First of all, the SCHIP, the Children's Health Insurance Program, in which we have six million children eligible for that, plus Medicaid, and we're not taking advantage of it, should be fully funded.

Second, we should expand the Children's Health Insurance Program to include the parents of those children.

Third, we should follow President Clinton's recommendation during the time of his presidency to allow people over the age of 55 who are not insured, to buy into Medicare at cost, and if necessary, subsidize those who can't afford it.

Those are things that can be accomplished and are achievable today, and we should do those things today.

MICHELLE MARTIN: And my follow-up is, how much and from where? How much will all of this cost, and how do you propose to pay for it?

SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS: The way I propose to pay for it is exactly the way I've always described it. Every single plan I have ever made, college for everyone, \$2,500 refundable tax credit, all the things that I have suggested, my education plan to get the best teachers into the schools where they're needed the most, my plan for after-school—all those things I have paid for specifically, and the vast majority of those costs come out of stopping the president's tax cut for the top 1 to 2 percent scheduled to go into effect in 2004, which over the course of the next 20 year costs \$1-1/2 trillion. That is way more than enough money to do the things that I just proposed.

JUDY WOODRUFF: All right. Michelle has a question for Representative Gephardt.

MICHELLE MARTIN: Good evening, Congressman. A similar question to you, it's also about health care. You've also offered a detailed proposal offering tax credits for employers to encourage them to cover more workers. But, as you know, we're in the middle of a recession. We have a number of people who are unemployed—millions, in fact. And in addition to that, we have millions more who have had their hours cut to the point where they are now part-time and no longer covered by employer health benefits. You offered a buy-in program for Medicare for people 55 and up; that doesn't help children very much. The same question to you, the big picture, how are you covering everybody?

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD GEPHARDT: Well, first of all, I would call for an expansion of the Children's Health Care Program, which is already out there and needs to be expanded. Incidentally, the administration is trying to cut back on that program right now, along with a lot of other programs in the budget for children. We have to stop those cuts.

Secondly, we've got to expand Medicare and Medicaid to pick up people that will still fall between the cracks.

But, finally, my proposal is to require employers to offer health care plans to their employees. I give them a 60 to 70 percent tax credit to help offset that cost, so that they can pass that savings along to the employees. It would be a refundable tax credit, so it would go to companies that now pay taxes and companies that don't pay taxes. We think it costs about \$100 billion a year. We're working on the numbers, and we think we've got to get rid of the Bush

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tax cuts. I said I would get rid of almost all the Bush tax cuts. And, incidentally, this would stimulate the economy. This would put money in people's pockets, it would make the economy work better.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Representative Gephardt, I actually have a follow-up here. We know that Social Security and so-called SSI has brought the poverty rate down considerably among the elderly. It has been cut by something like a third over the last three decades. At the same time, the percentage of children in poverty continues to go up—it has more than doubled. With finite resources, why shouldn't this country, this government, begin to scale back on support for the elderly and bring up the support for children?

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD GEPHARDT: Well, as Hubert Humphrey I think once said, “the test of any nation is how you deal with the people in the late stages of life, and how you deal with children.” And I think we have to be able to do both. We've got big challenges in this country to deal with Social Security, to deal with long-term care, which I think can be added to the kind of tax credit that I've been talking about. But we've got to make sure that we get children out of poverty, we've got to have better jobs for our people. That's why I talk about an international variable minimum wage, so that we can begin to bring up standards around the whole world, so that we can have good jobs in this country. I'm for increasing the minimum wage, which I think is vitally important. It's one of the best things we did in the Clinton Administration; it is Democratic economics, building from the bottom up, not the top down. I believe in “trickle down,” it just takes 100 years to trickle down. I want it to go up immediately. I'm for Democratic economics.

JUDY WOODRUFF: All right. Mark Shields has a question, first, for Senator Graham.

MARK SHIELDS: Senator Graham, President Bush has proposed a speed-up of the scheduled increase of the child tax credits, from \$600 to \$1,000 per child, but the administration offers no help to more than one-quarter of American children, including one-half of Black and Latino children, because they live in moderate low-income families, where their parents, who often pay thousands of dollars on payroll taxes, sales tax, and excise tax, do not make enough to qualify under the Bush standard for income taxes. Do not these children need and doesn't justice demand that the full tax credit be extended to them?

SENATOR BOB GRAHAM: Absolutely, Mark. That's one of the problems of Republican economics, is that it focuses on the issue of the income tax exclusively. The fact is, most Americans pay more into payroll tax than they do in the income tax. And if you want to ensure that you're going to have an equitable reduction in the payment for the cost of government, the means of doing so is to reduce the payroll tax so that all Americans benefit.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Do you want to follow up, Mark?

All right. I'm going to move on to Senator Kerry.

MARK SHIELDS: Senator Kerry, abortion remains an enormously divisive and painful issue in our nation. In our most recent Los Angeles Times poll on the issue, 72 percent of women polled said that abortion should not be legal in the second trimester, and 61 percent of women in the poll agreed with the statement that abortion is murder. Yet, according to today's Boston Globe, you've pledged as president you would nominate only supporters of abortion rights to the court. Beyond this litmus test you've imposed, aren't you telling millions of pro-life Democrats that their views and their values would not be heard in a Kerry Administration?

SENATOR JOHN KERRY: No, Mark, I'm not telling them that. But, I am saying that in the United States of America it is today a constitutional right and, in my judgment, settled law that there is a right of privacy, and that women in our country, women have the right to make that critical and painful difficult decision, as a right between themselves, their doctor, their god, and the government has no business intervening in it.

(Applause)

SENATOR JOHN KERRY: And I think it's critical that all of us understand that in all of these things we're talking about fighting for here, we don't need a Democratic Party that keeps saying to the Republicans, “yes,

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but a little less, yes, but slower.” The one thing we don’t need in the country is a second Republican Party, and we need to define the priorities of the Democratic Party in a straightforward way.

MARK SHIELDS: You have chosen to define this as a litmus test you would impose.

SENATOR JOHN KERRY: I don’t consider it a litmus test, Mark. I think you have to understand something: that a President of the United States has a responsibility to interview appointees to the Supreme Court of the United States, and in that interview it is important, not as a matter of “a litmus test,” but as a matter of their understanding of the Constitution, and of the law of the land that they, indeed, understand what are our rights. I would interview him as to whether or not he recognized illegal search and seizure, what his attitude, or her attitude was about all of the Bill of Rights, and other separation of power issues, and so forth. That is a critical position. And to kid ourselves that a president, this president or otherwise, isn’t going to do that is wrong. But here’s my test. Potter Stewart had the test that when you read a decision of a justice on the court, you want to know that that decision, as you read it, you can’t tell whether it was written by a man or a woman, a Republican or a Democrat, a liberal or conservative, a gentile, Jew, or Muslim. You simply know it is the decision of a good jurist. And unlike President Bush who said, “what we need are good conservative judges on the bench,” I’m going to appoint good jurists who have a record of jurisprudence we can be proud of.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: All right. Juan Williams with a question for Mr. Kucinich.

JUAN WILLIAMS: Representative Kucinich, earlier you spoke about poverty among children, homelessness among children, as weapons of mass destruction here in our own land. You’re the only lawmaker here on this panel to endorse and co-sponsor Leave No Child Behind, which then begs the question, are there any social programs that you don’t support? How would you prioritize your interests in children’s affairs?

REPRESENTATIVE DENNIS KUCINICH: What we’re really doing in this election is talking about setting priorities for the nation. This election will give America an opportunity to decide whether we favor war and tax cuts on one end, or the reconstruction of a social safety net on the other hand, in this country. And so, my approach is to look to what we can do to rebuild this country and to heal this country. The reason why I support a \$20 billion increase in the childcare funding is because I think that we have to have a society which values children if we’re truly going to leave no child behind. We have to show that we value children. The children that we see, whose pictures we see here, the children we saw on the board earlier, are all asking us the question, are we listening to the hearts of the children when they ask us are we going to have better schools? Are we listening to the hearts of the children when they wonder, are my mother and father going to have decent health care? So my approach is to look to the heart of America, the social needs of America, and to set aside an agenda that calls for tax cuts and war.

JUAN WILLIAMS: All right.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Do you have a follow-up?

JUAN WILLIAMS: I’m not sure I got an answer. But is there one program you would say, “You know what, even though it would be good for children in our land, I’m not going to support it,” and tell me why?

REPRESENTATIVE DENNIS KUCINICH: No, I’m in this to transform the nation, and get it to focus on social programs. I mean, that’s what a nation ought to be about—not just war.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: To Senator Lieberman, a question.

JUAN WILLIAMS: Senator Lieberman, rising out of poverty for children is closely tied to having married parents. How would you, as president of these United States, promote marriage?

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SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN: I wish my wife was here to answer that question. Look, stable families, and families today are taking very different forms, and in many cases, that are not traditional, providing great upbringings for our children. This is an area where government has to be very careful not to involve itself too much, but to remove disincentives. Remember, the welfare system, as it used to exist, provided a disincentive for couples to live together. That was wrong, and we removed it. And we ought to go through our laws and make sure that the incentives, through our tax system, through our social service system, are to create stable families. Incidentally, in the next chapter of welfare reform—in the first chapter, we asked a lot of women, and they responded heroically. In the next chapter, we have to ask more of fathers to assume responsibility for their children, and to do everything we can with a combination of more support for non-custodial parents to bring them back home to take care of their kids, and the toughness of law through child support enforcement, to make sure that fathers take care of their children. A strong family, ultimately, is as important as anything government will do. And a strong economy will help families provide better lives for their children.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Right. Senator, I have a follow-up. Your recently deceased colleague Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, we know, almost 40 years ago warned about the implications of the breakup of the family. At that time the Black out-of-wedlock rate was something like 25 percent. Today it is something like 65 percent, while the overall rate is 30 percent. My question to you is, is there something that government should have done, could have done over that period of time to keep those percentages from growing as they did?

SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN: As I said, the welfare reform, which was one of the accomplishments of the Clinton-Gore Administration, was one of the things that I think will help that. I think we have to work through counseling of our young men and women to help them with planned parenthood, and convince them that when they have a child out of wedlock, they're making their futures more difficult to achieve what they dream of for themselves, and making life for their children more difficult. So I think this is a matter—I love the mission statement of the Children's Defense Fund, which not only calls for a healthy, fair head start for America's children, but a moral start. And this ultimately is all about not just teaching our kids how to read and write, but teaching them right from wrong, and part of right is building stable families.

JUDY WOODRUFF: All right.

Michelle, a question for the Reverend.

MICHELLE MARTIN: Good evening, Reverend. I'd like to ask you the same question. It is no secret that there is a link between the poverty rate and the percentage of out-of-wedlock births. In fact, in the last census, it showed that married couple White families and married couple Black families have almost achieved income parity, and yet single parent households headed by African American and Hispanic women are among the poorest in the country. So do you think that the government has a role in encouraging and supporting marriage?

REVEREND AL SHARPTON: I think the government has a role in providing equal opportunity for all of its citizens, and to provide a guarantee for young people in this country to live a life that we promised. You know, one of the things I'm doing in my campaign is dealing with a constitutional amendment that would give us the right to health care, and the right to vote, and the right to a quality education. We cannot become divisive by blaming children if their parents broke up. We cannot act like traditional marriage is the answer to everything. I think, for example, what Rod Page said today about Christian values in education was a disgrace. He should apologize or resign. We cannot have the Democratic Party—and I'm the preacher on the panel—we cannot have the Democratic Party trying to legislate morality, so we duck responsibility for assuring a life for all Americans.

(Applause)

MICHELLE MARTIN: So, Reverend, I take it the answer to my question is no.

REVEREND AL SHARPTON: I wanted you to ask the follow-up so I can get the extra minute. Your answer is no. I think that we have gone too far in trying to do what we cannot do. Sure, we love marriages, sure we'd like to see homes together. That takes a leap, but it doesn't take a leap to pass Dodd-Miller; it doesn't take a leap to guarantee health care; it doesn't take a leap to immediately kill Bush's tax cuts and invest that in education.

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Let presidents do what presidents have the authority to do. We can preach on Sunday, but let's give America the right legislation Monday through Saturday.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: We're going to begin the second round of questions now, Michelle, with a question for Senator Braun.

MICHELLE MARTIN: Ambassador Braun, since you've been so good about the time limits, do you want to answer the same question, or do you want a new one?

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: I think Reverend Sharpton did a great job with that.

You did, you did a good job.

MICHELLE MARTIN: The question I have for you, then, is about the rate of incarceration, and some new figures came out this week that show the United States has one of the highest rates of incarceration in the world, if not the highest. We also know that African Americans and Hispanics continue to be incarcerated at a rate far higher than Whites, often when they're accused of the same crimes. Is this inherently a problem, and if so, what is your proposal for addressing it?

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: Let's face it, the issue, the underlying issue to all of this conversation has to do with poverty, and income inequality, and the lack of hope and opportunity in communities. When young girls don't think that they have much of a future, they have babies instead, and they don't get married, and they don't set up stable families, and communities begin to fall apart. When young men can't envision having a good paying, nine-to-five job, or even a job working overtime, they go out and they sell crack, and they do horrible things, and they tear up the social fabric. And so I think that, to echo Reverend Sharpton, what presidents do is help to create an environment in which change can happen in a country that desperately wants it. The American people—we are a great people, this is a great country—and all we have to do is tap the resources we have to make certain that no American is left behind, that every community has good jobs in it, that people have hope that they can contribute to the whole community to the maximum extent of their ability, whether they're Black, White, Hispanic, male, or female. And I think, I want to congratulate, this is my first time on such a panel, but I am really proud to be a Democrat. We are at least touching upon the issues that the people care about.

(Applause)

MICHELLE MARTIN: Ambassador, the applause is coming out of your time, I'm sorry to say. But given that a majority of those incarcerated are non-violent offenders, you don't believe that government policy has anything to do with the high incarceration rate? You think it's all a matter of culture, hopelessness?

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: It is hopelessness. Government has a lot—government, particularly at the state level. Remember, most of the criminal laws are state laws, and so the response to poverty is often to just lock them up and throw away the key. And then you send them back out on the street again, and they can't get a job, because then they're offenders and repeat offenders.

We can work with these young people; we can salvage these young people who in many instances, as you point out, are in prison for non-violent crimes; give them the education, give them the training. Let's reconstruct our communities by salvaging and saving the people who live there, and I think that that is an approach that the American people would endorse, because it's logical, it's sensible, and it does reflect the higher values that we share as a country.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: All right. Mark Shields has a question for Governor Dean.

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MARK SHIELDS: Yes. Governor Dean, you have been reported saying if Al Gore had your position on gun control, you would not be running, because he would be president today. But it is safer today in the United States to be an on-duty law enforcement officer than it is to be a child or a teen, one of whom is killed by gunfire every two hours and 40 minutes. The House has voted to give gun makers and dealers unprecedented protection from liability from local or state governments and victims of violence. The manufacturers of teddy bears and toaster ovens are more regulated than American-made guns are, and when toys would be liable for more negligence in design, production and distribution, what would you do if this legislation came before your desk or if you were in the Congress today? And this has, obviously, nothing to do with sportsmen and hunters.

FORMER GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN: Sure. I would vote no, and I'd veto the bill as president. Let me tell you why my position on gun control is what it is, and why it is what it is. We have no gun control in Vermont, essentially, of any kind. It's a rural state. We actually do have one bill, you're not allowed to have a loaded gun in your car because drive-by shootings in Vermont are against deer, not people. We don't think that's nice. We also have the lowest homicide rate in the country. One year in my 11-1/2 years, we had five homicides. We don't need a lot of gun control in Vermont. On the other hand, people need lots of gun control in New York and California, and probably Washington, D.C.

So, let me tell you what my position is. I support the assault weapons ban, I support reauthorization of the assault weapons ban. I support the Brady Bill. I would like to use the Brady Bill to close the gun show loophole. And after that, I would like to let each state make their own laws because what you need in D.C. and California and New York is a lot different than what you need in Wyoming and Montana and New Jersey. But I do not believe we ought to exempt gun dealers, who may be breaking the law, from liability. That doesn't make any sense whatsoever.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Governor Dean, I have a somewhat related follow-up. It really picks up on something you said earlier. You were quoted back in 1996, after President Clinton signed the welfare reform bill into law, you said: "Liberals like Marian Wright Edelman are wrong. The bill is strong on work, on time limits assistance, and it provides adequate protection for children." Do you stand by what you said?

FORMER GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN: Are you kidding? I would never stand by that in front of Marian Wright Edelman. I wouldn't dare. This is like being on Tim Russert's show, how many years ago, seven years ago. We were the first state in the country to do welfare reform, even before Wisconsin. What we do is, we support folks for private jobs, we give them childcare, we give them daycare, we give them health care for a year after they go to work. And the folks that we put into work, work in the private sector, many of them are now supervising people, and they have not returned to the unemployment rolls. So we were the pioneers of welfare reform. In fact, we did it before Bill Clinton. It was a little different. But I think welfare reform has been an incredibly positive force.

I do not, however, support the ridiculous proposal of the Bush Administration to require women to work 40-hour weeks and leave every child at home with no childcare money. That is not sensible welfare reform.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: All right. Mark has a question for Senator Edwards.

MARK SHIELDS: Senator Edwards, you're barely two years into your public life. Critics would say you're inexperienced. You would say you're undefeated.

SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS: It's not two years, it's four, by the way.

MARK SHIELDS: It's just flown by. I'm sorry. How could you, with no personal military experience, and no apparent expertise in that area, persuade the electorate that you would be a credible, dependable Commander in Chief in the war against terrorism?

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SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS: Because I have a set of ideas about what needs to be done here in this country to protect the American people, including taking away from the FBI the responsibility for fighting terrorism within our borders. They've been an absolute abomination in doing that job. That job should be taken away from them and given to a separate and different agency, while we protect our civil rights and civil liberties at the same time. We should do a much better job of protecting our borders and doing inspections at our ports to keep dangerous things and dangerous terrorists out of this country. We should do a much better job of making sure our most vulnerable targets are protected—our nuclear plants, our chemical plants, our stadiums—and we should get the American people more involved in protecting themselves. They've not been asked to sacrifice. We have not tapped into their patriotism. Every parent in America wants to be involved in not only protecting their own family, but protecting their community. We should ask for their help. Most families have no idea what they're supposed to do different today than they would have done on September 11th if a terrorist attack occurred in their neighborhood or in their community. That is a failure of leadership. All those things are proposals that I have laid out for the American people.

And second, I have a clear idea about what America's role in the world is. America should lead in a way that brings others to us, not that drives others away. Because every single family in America—this is no longer one of those abstract discussions that used to go on in Washington about foreign policy—I would say to every family in America, everyone watching this broadcast, your family is safer and more secure in a world where America is looked up to and respected.

(Applause)

MARK SHIELDS: How then do you explain what every poll shows, Senator, which is an overwhelming preference and confidence on the part of the American voters on the issue of national security in the Republicans instead of the Democrats?

SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS: Because they haven't heard our case. They are about to hear our case. During this presidential campaign, for the first time since George Bush was elected president, during this presidential campaign, after I am the nominee of this party, they will hear the case about what George W. Bush has failed to do. What he has failed to do here in this country, what he has failed to do abroad. It is a powerful case. I've been a lawyer for 20 years before I was elected to the United States Senate. This is the easiest case I've ever had to argue.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: All right. Juan has a question for Representative Gephardt.

JUAN WILLIAMS: Representative Gephardt, children and adults involved in the foster care and adoption system in this country are almost universally critical of it as a system in disrepair, a system that does not serve children. Realizing that we're talking about you as president of the United States, not as a governor, what could you do to try to help children caught up in a nightmare situation of foster care that oftentimes loses them or allows them to be abused?

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD GEPHARDT: It is a system that needs great repair. We have tried in the Congress in the 25 years that I've been there to repair it. Some things that were done were good. Some things that were done were not. We need to go back at it. It is a system that is broken. I had a case in my own district where someone who was providing foster care for 13 or 14 children was found to be abusing the children that they were being paid to take care of. It cannot go on. We have to treat every child's welfare in this country like we would treat the welfare of our own child. And we have to have leadership in this country to make sure that that happens. No longer slogans, idle slogans. This president and this administration has made a fraud of Leave No Child Behind. It is a fraud. It is a shoddy gimmick. It is cynical. They never meant it. They're never going to reform these programs. We need new leadership in this country to really leave no child behind. And when I'm president, that's what will happen.

(Applause)

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JUAN WILLIAMS: Does that mean you would entertain the idea of somehow federalizing foster care, or mandating change? What specific change in terms of adoption policy in the country?

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD GEPHARDT: I think this has always been something that states have had jurisdiction over. I don't know that you can easily federalize it. But I do think that we can put federal effort behind helping states reform this program, so that adoption is easier, so that we encourage people to adopt children, especially older children that have sometimes trouble being adopted.

In short, we've got to have a sea change in the way the leadership of this country deals with children. I talked a minute ago about getting every child covered with health insurance. We've been talking about this for 50 years. I helped try to lead the fight for the Clinton health care plan. We failed. I learned. I've got a plan that I think I can pass. I can get labor for it, I can get business for it, I can get the health care community for it. We can get this done. We can reform foster care. We can reform adoption. We can actually see that we have early childhood education and after-school programs in every school in this country. It is an abomination that we've got two million people in prison in this country, but it's no wonder, because we haven't taken care of the children at the earliest stage. That's what we have to do.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Okay, Juan, you have a question for Senator Graham.

JUAN WILLIAMS: Senator Graham, you come from a state with a large immigrant population, and you have proposed an amendment to end caps on enrollment for the children of legal immigrants who are seeking to participate in the children's health insurance program, the CHIP program. Is that something that could be extended nationwide, ending that cap, so that children of immigrants could get health insurance?

SENATOR BOB GRAHAM: Yes, Juan. In fact, my proposal would be a nationwide proposal. 1996 was one of the low points in the United States Congress. A very vicious, mean-spirited set of legislation was enacted, including this, which eliminated access to basic services for legal immigrants in the United States. Who suffered the most? The children of those legal immigrants. I think it is imperative as part of a comprehensive program to provide care for children that we take action now to reverse that mistake, the horrendous mistake that we made in 1996.

JUAN WILLIAMS: And when people come to you and say, "you know that we can't afford it," what will you say?

SENATOR BOB GRAHAM: The answer is, we can afford it. These legal immigrants are paying taxes, they are working families. They contribute much more to our economy than those who fall into a status that makes them eligible for welfare. We should be building on these families, not excluding these families.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Michelle has a question for Senator Kerry.

MICHELLE MARTIN: Hello, Senator Kerry. I have a couple of follow-ups, if that's okay. So far, we've heard that you're in favor of razing the Bush tax cuts. So is everybody else. You're in favor of more for childcare. So is everybody else. You supported the war resolution. So did half of your colleagues. So what's the difference between you and everybody else?

SENATOR JOHN KERRY: I think there are great distinctions between us, but the most important thing that everybody here in the country is looking for is confidence that someone will offer real leadership, and has passed the test of character with respect to leadership, so that they know that that person will stand up and take this country where we want to go. I believe that beginning with my service in Vietnam, and then my fight to end the war that I came to see as wrong. My efforts as a district attorney, first assistant district attorney, and leading the district attorney's office, where I showed by hiring, when women were only 11 percent of the bar, I hired almost 50 percent women. I created the first rape counseling efforts there. We delivered justice on time. I made groundbreaking efforts

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as lieutenant governor to make acid rain a national issue, and to make it part of the plank, ultimately, that we passed in the Clean Air Act.

And as a Senator, I've walked a different path. I am the only person that has run for the Senate four times, been elected without ever taking a dime of soft money, PAC money, or independent expenditures. I have shown leadership by standing up to Ronald Reagan and holding him accountable for an illegal war in Central America. I blew the whistle on Oliver North and his illegal aid network, on the BCCI Bank, and I believe what the country wants is the capacity to make America safer, stronger, and more secure and whose priorities for children, for health care, for the environment, and education are in sync with most Americans. And I believe I offer that.

MICHELLE MARTIN: Senator Kerry, I wanted to also clarify something that you said to Mark earlier. Doesn't your logic on federal supreme court cases mean the Dred Scott case could never have been overturned?

SENATOR JOHN KERRY: Certainly you can challenge a case. But I, as a president, I mean, obviously some jurist may come along, and the court may be appointed at some point in time, and they'd have the ability to say, we are reinterpreting the law at some later date. That is precisely why, as I said, I believe it is settled law. I believe there is a right of privacy. And one of the things that is at stake in this race in a way that it hasn't been in a long time, is the Supreme Court of the United States. Just because the Supreme Court made a mistake in the appointment or the selection they made in the Year 2000 for the presidency doesn't mean that we have to live with that mistake for the next six years. And I believe that we may have retirements of three or four justices over the course of the next four years. Therefore, I think that right of privacy is at stake, and I certainly, as president, and every voter in America has a right to make a decision whether they want a president who will pick somebody who will respect that right, and I think it is vital.

JUDY WOODRUFF: All right. Michelle with a question for Representative Kucinich.

MICHELLE MARTIN: Good evening, Congressman. Is there anything in your public life you've been wrong about?

REPRESENTATIVE DENNIS KUCINICH: I think that with a public life that began in 1967, as a candidate for city council, and served a number of terms in council and clerk of courts and Mayor of Cleveland, I'd say as Mayor of Cleveland, I probably had a few opportunities to do better. I mean, you know, Babe Ruth, who was at one time "home run king" in this country, at one time, I think he struck out about 712 times. It's possible to make mistakes. And I try to dwell on what the possible is, and learn from my mistakes. And over my career, I'm sure I've made more than my share.

JUDY WOODRUFF: I'll follow-up on something else. We notice that you were the only serving member of Congress here on the panel who has actually signed onto the bill that Marian Wright Edelman mentioned earlier, the Dodd-Miller Act to Leave No Child Behind. Why do you think you're the only one?

REPRESENTATIVE DENNIS KUCINICH: Let me say, that was not a mistake. I try to look for opportunities to lead the way on issues of social welfare. That's why I sponsored the universal pre-kindergarten act. That's why I worked to create a Department of Peace, to make nonviolence an organizing principle in our society. I try to set the pace in everything that I do. That's why I was proud to sign onto the Children's Defense Fund effort with Dodd-Miller.

JUDY WOODRUFF: All right. Mark has a question for Reverend Sharpton.

MARK SHIELDS: Senator Lieberman, you came of age when the—

JUDY WOODRUFF: I'm sorry, Senator Lieberman.

MARK SHIELDS: You came of age when the nation had a military draft, and when three out of four college graduates served in the military, as well as three out of four high school graduates. Could you tell us why you did not serve in the military, and do you regret it?

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SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN: I did not serve in the military, because I had two different kinds of deferments, or exemptions. One was because I was a student, and the second was because I was a parent. And do I regret it? I do. I wish that I had been part of that service. I have been part of public— part of it is because I spent a significant part of my work in the Senate of the United States on the Armed Services Committee. I have the highest regard for what our military does. I've tried hard to support them. I'm extremely proud of how brilliantly and bravely they've just performed in Iraq. I've worked with John McCain and Evan Bayh and others to try to create inducements for more people to both get into military service and be part of other forms of national service. So you can't do it all, but as I look back, I wish I'd had the opportunity to serve in the military. In some sense, I hope that my service in public office and particularly my backing of the military has helped in some way to make up for that.

MARK SHIELDS: Just a follow-up on what else has been said. There seems to be a consensus emerging from your colleagues that we can't legislate morality, yet in 1964 in this country, there were, frankly, immoral, segregationist policies of prohibiting African Americans from eating in restaurants, going to theaters, staying in hotels, having jobs. Wasn't that an example of government actually legislating morality?

SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN: It absolutely was, and I do not take the position that we cannot legislate on the basis of morality. There are some areas where we tread lightly, because they are matters of privacy and civil liberties in our society. But, the reality is that almost everything we do as public servants, at our best, is a reflection of our values. So I don't toss that aside. Look, we have a President of the United States who says that passing a tax cut is a moral issue. But he somehow doesn't think it's a moral issue when as a result of that tax cut you can't afford to support better education for our kids, more childcare for our kids, and health care for every American. That's not good values, and I think it's wrong.

(Applause)

MARK SHIELDS: Reverend Sharpton, Fidel Castro of Cuba, whom you praise in your book as “absolutely awesome,” and “a great leader,” has just this week sentenced to 25-year jail terms more than 80—in secret trials—more than 80 Cuban dissidents who are doing nothing more than advocating democracy. Is this the absolutely awesome act of a great leader?

REVEREND AL SHARPTON: No, certainly it is not. What I said in my book—I did a chapter on leadership, and I praised Ronald Reagan, who I disagree with just about everything he did. I praised Winston Churchill, who I consider an imperialist. I talked about the qualities of leadership, and I described a meeting with Castro. I don't agree with a lot of Castro's policies. I did not say what he did was awesome. I think that there are some people that show leadership qualities that I may disagree with, but my discussion in the book, *Al On America*—by the way, it's still in the stores—my discussion in the book was on leadership qualities. I also later in the book talked about leaders that I think led in the direction I agree with, like Dr. King, like Reverend Jackson. I think a great leader is not only married, but a husband, like Peter Edelman who had the moral courage to stand up against welfare reform when it counted. But, we were not talking about direction. I was talking about qualities of leaders. I think there are some good reporters, who I absolutely disagree with what they write.

(Applause)

MARK SHIELDS: Reverend Sharpton, could you name one domestic initiative of President Bush's, one idea of his, with which you agree?

REVEREND AL SHARPTON: I only have a minute now. I think I agree with the president saying that we must have a reform of education, I just don't agree with how he reforms it. I agree with the president being more inclusive in his hiring practices. He's put people of color in high office, the Secretary of State, Ms. Rice, he's even nominated some judges. He just has to realize because of their color doesn't make them appropriate. Everybody that is my color is not my kind. All my skin folk ain't my kinfolk.

(Applause)

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JUDY WOODRUFF: In the time that we have left, we have one final question, one final lightning round, very quick answers from each one of you, before we listen to your closing statement. And this is the question. If the United States Supreme Court overturns Bakke, the Bakke case, and rejects the University of Michigan's affirmative action program, I assume you would all oppose that. But my question is what, as president, if you're elected president next year, what could you or would you do to undo such a decision?

Let's begin with Senator Braun.

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: You know, I think that the conversation about reparations in this country could lead us in the direction of a conversation that would reconcile us on the issue of race, which remains America's original sin. It has divided us for far too long, and I think if we follow the model of what they did in South Africa, with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, talking about these issues, being honest about these issues, recognizing that our past as Americans is a shared past, the good, the bad, and the ugly. But, the question is, how can we go forward as one country, how can we go forward in a way that gets us beyond race, and sex, and all the "isms" that divide us, and taps the talent and the capacity that we have in the whole community? That is the direction that I believe we have to head. The University of Michigan was trying to do that, to create diversity, to give opportunities in ways that did not entail quotas, and it was the height of cynicism that this administration would call it that on Dr. King's birthday in intervening in the Michigan case.

(Applause)

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: But we do have to have an honest discussion about race in this country, and we ought to do it in a way, not to have a shouting match and argue with each other, but rather to say, these are the things that we share as Americans, how can we build on this so that we can grow together, so that the next generation of Americans can look back and say, "Oh, did they have those problems in those days?" That's the direction I'd like to point the country.

JUDY WOODRUFF: All right. I'm going to move to the other end, and we'll go back and forth. Reverend Sharpton, if the court were to rule that way, what could you do as president?

REVEREND AL SHARPTON: One, you could direct your cabinet to run agencies in line with trying to repair the damages done, and really set goals of diversity. Second, I would by executive order use as much of my presidential power to try to enact programs, and I would welcome someone to then bring me to court so we could reargue this case, and if we had to argue it over and over again, we'd argue the case, because if we had given up with Presley vs. Ferguson, we'd have never got to Brown vs. Board of Education.

(Applause)

REVEREND AL SHARPTON: Even if for some reason the court rules one way, and goes against the University of Michigan, if I'm president the justices can prepare for a rematch, because we must fight to protect diversity in America and equal opportunity for all Americans. And that's why as president I would welcome having to go back to court if that becomes an issue.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Governor Dean?

FORMER GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN: There are many policy differences I have with the president, but the one that I thought in which the president behaved most despicably was his use of the word quota five or six times on the evening news, because the University of Michigan does not now have quotas, it never has had quotas, and affirmative action is absolutely essential in this country, which is the most diverse country on the face of the Earth. Now, Democrats need to talk about race, and especially White Democrats need to talk about race, because Republicans always talk about it at election time. They just send folks to the polls and say, "If you haven't paid your rent, you'd better not go in there," or they make calls at 8:00 at night, three days before the election. What we need to say, particularly in the South, to White folks is, "Your kids don't have health insurance either, and we can help you." There are 75,000 kids in Georgia with no health insurance, most of them are White. Those folks need to be

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voting Democratic, because they've been voting Republican all these years. The Republicans haven't done anything for them, and they aren't going to do anything in the future. So what I want—I agree with Ambassador Moseley Braun, the dialogue about race in this country has to start with White folks, because believe me, Black folks know all about it, and they've known about it for 400 years.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Lieberman?

SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN: Judy, if the Supreme Court does what it should not do and overrules Bakke, as President of the United States I would do everything I could in my power to introduce and pass legislation that would make it legal and constitutional once again for America's colleges and universities to have affirmative action programs. That's the American way. Remember what this country is about, founded not so much on a set of borders, but a set of ideals. The Declaration of Independence says that every one of us has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as an endowment of our creator. Even then at the beginning, people of color were not even counted equally with White people. The history of racism is the most palpable indictment of those ideals, and we still struggle today to make it equal, to make it real.

I have a recollection tonight of 40 years ago in the fall of 1963. I was a student at Yale, and I was asked to come to dinner at the home of our chaplain, William Sloan Coffman. There were two other people there, Allard Lowenstein and Marian Wright. They challenged me to lead a group of Yale students to Mississippi to fight for the right of African Americans to vote. I did that, and I'm so proud I did. And I'm going to keep fighting to realize the dream of equality.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Edwards, what would you do to undo such a decision?

SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS: Well, I grew up in the South with the civil rights movement. I watched people lose their lives in the cause for civil rights. We have enormous work to do in this country in the cause of civil rights. We are not finished. African Americans make about half of what White Americans make today. I would, of course, fight for legislation in the Congress that would give us an opportunity for affirmative action. But, affirmative action is one small piece of trying to address the gross racial inequity that we have in America today. The two great civil rights issues of our time are educational and economic empowerment. I would do two specific things. First, I would make sure that we give teachers a real incentive to relocate—by paying them more and giving scholarships to young people in college to get them to the schools where they need them most. And second, give every young person, including African Americans, an opportunity to go to college by saying, "If you're ready, you're qualified, and you're willing to work 10 hours a week, we'll let you go tuition free to a state university." There is, I feel, a personal responsibility to make sure that African Americans, who today every minute of their lives still suffer the effects of discrimination, have a real opportunity in this country.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Representative Kucinich.

REPRESENTATIVE DENNIS KUCINICH: Of course, the Justice Department would have to be put in the service of affirmative action and bring up every opportunity at every level to create new cases in the Supreme Court and create a basis for overturning the decision if they went that way. But I think we have to realize that America has failed in this area, because if you go back to the Kerner Report, the Kerner Commission Report from the '60s, it outlined a broad range of areas where America needed to do better, in jobs and education and housing. We need to do so much more to make the promise of America good for everyone, and we have to call all Americans on that. A president has to set a moral tone for the nation. A president has to use his or her moral authority to make sure that there are opportunities for everyone, and challenge America to see that everyone does have an opportunity. And part of the problem of the whole idea of affirmative action is that it's a maximum of people fighting for a minimum of opportunities. We need to make it possible for fully paid college in this country, so everyone who wants to go to college, and that includes higher education, and law school, and medical school. We need everyone to be able to pursue their dream, and that is the kind of affirmative action that will work in America.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Representative Gephardt.

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REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD GEPHARDT: I graduated from the University of Michigan Law School in 1965. There was only one African American student in my graduating class of 350. His name is Harry Edwards; he's on the D.C. Court of Appeals. Since then, since there's been affirmative action, there have been 30, and 40, and 50 in graduating classes who are African Americans. I just have to stop and think what this one program has meant to these young people, to their parents, to their families, to their communities. They've been out in America, doing good things, being jurists, being lawyers, running businesses, because they were given this opportunity. And the most ironic thing about this is that the president, who is the beneficiary of the oldest preferential legacy—

(Applause)

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD GEPHARDT: The family legacy, that's how he got into Yale.

(Applause)

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD GEPHARDT: ...should be the one who is questioning affirmative action. I would do anything in my power as president—executive orders, new legislation, putting the right people on the court—so that we get affirmative action back. Our country will be weaker, our country will be poorer, because we do not have this program.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Kerry, what would you do to undo such a—

SENATOR JOHN KERRY: Well, Judy, I think that this is the greatest unresolved issue in our country today, and it needs leadership. When Trent Lott—when that occurred in the United States Senate, it reminded us of the great divide that exists, and of the obligation of the president to try to respond appropriately. I think I was the first, and perhaps the only United States Senator who suggested that it was appropriate for Trent Lott to resign. And I think that Jesse Jackson hit the nail on the head when he said, “The test is whether the Republican Party is embarrassed by Trent Lott or ashamed of him.” It turned out they were embarrassed, because they gave us Judge Pickering, and then they gave us the Michigan court case. I believe it's an obligation of the president to guarantee every step possible to restore affirmative action if it is struck down.

It is possible that it will be struck down without overturning Bakke, in which case you come back with a program that can't be judged by a quota. But, if it overturns Bakke, then there are a host of things we have to do, beginning with the following. In the 1960s, what Joe was talking about, which we all became involved in, was the great issue of separate and equal, and Justice Thurgood Marshall went to the Supreme Court to declare there was no such thing. Today in America, we have institutionalized something worst, called separate and unequal. And unless we have a president prepared to break down the barriers of race and acknowledge that there's no child in America 2-1/2 years old who hates anybody, and if we can stop people from teaching hate, by beginning to create an education system, and an early childhood education system, zero through eight, then I think we'll have an opportunity to break those barriers, and that's what we need to do.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Graham.

SENATOR BOB GRAHAM: Judy, I favor affirmative action, because I think it is a key to achieving a just America, an America that will have the diversity to serve the interests of all the people. One of the most persuasive statements in favor of affirmative action was that issued by leadership of our military, the critical role of this in terms of having an Army, a Navy, a Marine Corps, an Air Force, which represented America, both in its enlisted and officer ranks. I think there are two ironies: one is the one that Congressman Gephardt referred to, that a person who has been the beneficiary of a special type of affirmative action should now be attacking affirmative action for minorities in America. And second, an administration which talks about their belief in decentralization is attacking the University of Michigan. I would think it ought to be the State of Michigan's responsibility to decide how they're going to provide for diversity within their higher education system. In answering the question, what should we do now? I think we've talked about it for the last two hours. We need to see that all children have the opportunity to grow up with education, with a health care system, with a firm family, so that we can look for the day when we will not need affirmative action. That is a long way off.

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JUDY WOODRUFF: All right. Finally, we are going to ask each of the candidates to make a closing statement, and because it's been a little bit unfair to you, Senator Braun, to have you begin every round, we're going to start over here with Reverend Sharpton and go in this direction.

So Reverend Sharpton, your closing statement, for a minute.

REVEREND AL SHARPTON: Last Friday, April 4th, was the 35th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King. He died at a time that he was fighting the war in Vietnam, planning a march in Washington for poor and working class people to provide for their children, as well as at a time he was fighting for laborers in Memphis, Tennessee. I'm running for president around the King dream. I want to make it a right for people to have health care, a right for people to vote, a right for people to have a quality education, not just a new program, but a new Constitution that guarantees our rights. Dr. King said there are two types of leaders, there are thermostat leaders and thermometer leaders. Thermometers judge the temperature, thermostats change the temperature. I intend to turn up the heat in America for the children, for working class people, for those that are ignored.

And, Marian, I'm the youngest one up here, I'm the child of this panel. When the vote is in, I will not be left behind.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Lieberman.

SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN: Thank you, Judy, and thank you to CDF for sponsoring what I think has been a very healthy and constructive discussion.

We might disagree on some things, but I think it's clear to everybody who has listened to this debate and discussion tonight—every one of us is prepared to invest more in America's children than the Bush-Cheney Administration. This is a matter of leadership; leadership is a matter of priorities, and priorities are a matter of values. Our kids deserve more from the White House than a T-ball game on the White House lawn.

And let me give you an example of what I mean. Today, the CARE Act passed the Senate. I worked for years on this. It provides tax incentives which can create \$30 billion of new contributions to charities around America, and it gives \$1.2 billion, at our insistence, in social services block grants. We got bipartisan support for this in the Senate today. This afternoon, the Bush Administration said it was against the social service block grant funding. You know what? That's going to deprive the president's armies of compassion of the ammunition they need to fight to help America's poorest families. We've got to turn that around.

Let me say a final word. I think there are some people who would say, "Well, you've had an interesting debate, but really, ultimately, what's the use of it? You can't beat George W. Bush." I want to tell you why I know we can beat George W. Bush, because Al Gore and I did it in 2000.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Representative Kucinich, your closing statement.

REPRESENTATIVE DENNIS KUCINICH: To my good friend, Joe Lieberman, here's why this election will not be close. This election will not be close because the people will show up when the Democratic Party shows up with health care for all, with fully guaranteed Social Security and moving the retirement age back to 65. The Democratic Party will show up when we repeal NAFTA and the WTO. The Democratic Party will show up when we have universal free kindergarten and guaranteed public education from free kindergarten all the way to college. People will show up when a candidate takes the stand and says no to war, no to preemptive war, and says no more building of nuclear weapons, yes for nuclear disarmament, works to relate to the whole world community because the whole world community wants to work with a peaceful America. Protect this country with economic and social justice, because that is the security that America is really asking for. The security of a job, the security of health care, the security of decent schools, the security which no child truly left behind will bring to us. Let's reach out and let's lift up the children, and let's lift this nation up.

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Thank you very much.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Kerry.

SENATOR JOHN KERRY: Judy, thank you very much.

I want to join everybody in thanking Marian Wright Edelman for extraordinary leadership for 30 years, and thank you for everything. I want to share with you a story. About eleven years ago, I had the privilege of answering an invitation to go up to 118th Street in Harlem and visit a program—a terrible word to a lot of Republicans—but real kids were working in a building that I saw, 15 of them, learning a skill. And they were out of gangs, they were off the street, they were out of at-risk programs. One of them is here tonight. His name is Robert Clark. He was in jail for a period of time, got his life together, and took part in this program called Youth Build.

And today, Robert Clark is a graduate of college, who testified before the United States Congress today about this program. It is a program that, because I was chairman of a committee, I could walk back to Washington and I wrote it into HUD, and I'm proud to say it's in 43 cities, 171 programs, and more than 25,000 kids today are productive citizens and have a future in America because of it. But, for that program, for every childcare center in America, for every early childhood education program, for every opportunity we are providing, there are many more children left outside than will ever cross the threshold of those places. And it is not a lack of capacity in the United States of America; it's a lack of willpower and a lack of leadership. And I am running for president of the United States to make certain that never again in America will we abandon our children the way we have the past years, that we will give our children the opportunity to become full citizens, not just because it's good for them, but because it's the only way we're going to vitalize our own democracy and have a citizenry that have the ability to make this country what we want it to be. Let's do that together.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Graham.

SENATOR BOB GRAHAM: I also want to tell a story. When the American historian Stephen Ambrose wrote the book about Lewis and Clark, he made an observation that if Julius Caesar rather than Thomas Jefferson had asked Lewis and Clark to conduct the same expedition, they would have done it exactly the same way in 1803 as they would have done at the turn of the first century. Why? Why had there been no progress in science, in transportation over those two millenniums? The answer was because too many children had been left behind, were unable to develop their full potential and, therefore, contribute to their society.

America led the way with free public education, and we have brought, through that, we have brought all of the full capabilities of our people to serve our people. When we talk about opportunities for children, this is a fundamental issue for the future of our nation and our world. President George Bush has decided that it is more important to give massive tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans than to invest in our children. That is wrong. As president of the United States, I will reverse that policy, and assure that all of our children have the opportunity to be the very best that they can be.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Representative Gephardt.

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD GEPHARDT: Thank you, Judy.

My wife, Jane, and I have a child by the name of Kate, and she's 25 years old. She's an early childhood teacher. When she was in college, she would call me all the time and she'd say, "Dad, should I really do this?" And I would always say, "Kate, it's what you've always wanted to do. Why do you keep asking me this question?" And she

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said, “Because my classmates laugh at me because I’m not going to make any money.” I told her money wasn’t the important thing in life. What she had to do was follow her heart and her passion.

She got her degree, she got her graduate degree. She went out to get her first contract, \$17,000 a year. She came home and said, “Now I know what they were laughing about.” I said, “Kate, I know you can’t pay rent, so you can live with us.” She is living with us. She’ll be living with us a long time. I don’t want to miss any more Kates. When I am president, I will ask the Congress to pass a program. I’ll call it ROTC for teachers. If it’s good enough to get the right people in the Marines and the Navy and the Army, I’d pay the college loans of any kid who wants to be a teacher, and that would agree to teach where we need them for five years. Nothing is more important than having good teachers in front of every one of our kids, and our kids each deserve to have that teacher. When I’m president, we will make that dream a reality.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Edwards.

SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS: Thank you, Judy, and thank you all very much.

I want to tell you why I should be your nominee for president. First, I will take this fight right at George W. Bush in the toughest possible way. I will give the American people a real choice, a real alternative. I will stand for something. This is the alternative the American people will get if I’m your nominee, somebody who comes from you. My dad worked in a mill all his life. I was the first person in my family to go to college. I spent 20 years as a lawyer fighting for the same people I’d grown up with, people like my father, people who worked in the mill with him. They are the reason I want to be president of the United States. I believe they’re entitled to somebody in the White House who will fight their fight.

This president comes from a completely different place. Among other things, his father was president of the United States. I still believe that the son of a mill worker can take on the son of a president for the White House. And I think all of us believe that in America today. It is the reason, it is the reason I fight for everything I fight for, to make our schools better, to give kids access to health care. It is the reason after-school programs matter so deeply to me. My wife and I started two after-school programs in North Carolina. I have seen the impact these programs can have on the lives of young people who need a safe place to go. It’s about self-respect. It’s about these kids feeling like they actually have an opportunity to compete.

There are some things that ought to be obvious in today’s world—life is precious, families are hope, children are the future. Let’s fight for the future of this country by fighting for the families of America.

God bless you all and thank you very much.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Governor Dean.

FORMER GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN: I have two advantages in this race, one of which I share with Bob Graham; I’m a physician, and I’m a former governor. You’ve heard a lot of great things and I’ll be happy to support the nominee of my party, and I intend to do that vigorously, because I expect it to be me.

(Applause)

FORMER GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN: But the advantage of a doctor is that I know what happens when people don’t have health insurance, and we put health insurance in, in our state, for everybody under 18, and I know how to do that for the United States. The advantages of a governor is that we home visit 91 percent of all the kids in our state. We’ve reduced the child abuse rate by 43 percent, and those kids are going to go to college instead of prison 10 years from now.

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(Applause)

FORMER GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN: You know, I want to thank my liberal friend Marian Wright Edelman. People have often called me a liberal too, and I appreciate it, because if being liberal means balancing the budget—and no Republican president has done that in 34 years—then you can call me a liberal. If being liberal means figuring out a way to have health insurance for every single American and joining every other industrialized country on the face of the Earth, then you may call me a liberal. If being liberal means investing in early education, which we have done, and subsidizing childcare for working people, which we have done, and making sure that child abuse is down, and college attendance is up, then you may call me a liberal. I am tired of living in a country that's divided by race; I am tired of living in a country that's divided by income; I am tired of living in a country that's divided by gender; I am tired of living in a country that's divided. I want to be a president that brings this country back together, where we admit, again, that we are responsible for each other, and to each other, where it's not only important for my kids to have health insurance, but for my neighbor's kids to have health insurance, where it's not only important for my kids to go to good schools, but for my neighbor's children to go to good schools. If you want to help us, Deanforamerica.com.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

FORMER GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN: What we're going to do, we're going to give young people a reason to vote again in this country. Let's go to it.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: Senator Braun.

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: Thank you very much. I, too, want to thank Marian Wright Edelman for giving us this opportunity, and for her fabulous advocacy on behalf of people and children who would not otherwise have a voice. Thank you, Marian, and thank all of you for supporting her work.

You know, my grandfather fought in France in World War I, and he came back to a country where he could not vote, or even sit on the front of the bus. It was before women were allowed to vote, and yet he fought in that war because he believed in the promise of America. He believed that in this country that one day there would be opportunities that would build on the core concepts of this great country, that we would have liberty, that we would have opportunity, that we would have the blessings of this great nation. I am running for president because I believe in that same dream of America, and because I am a patriot, and because I believe I have a responsibility to do my best to contribute to my country, and to keep this the greatest country in the world. But the challenge for us all in this race is to make sure that America believes in itself again, that America believes that its greatness is not behind it, but in front of it, that America believes that we can provide education for every child, that we can provide health care for every person, that we can provide a living wage for every family. Those dreams should not be out of our reach. And, indeed, I hope to bring my experience, as a diplomat, a United States Senator, as a state legislator, to bear on these issues in the way that I have over the last 20 years. I have legislated in this area. I have worked in this area, but as much to the point, I want to be the candidate for president who will talk about bringing us together and providing for the harmony of the whole community.

My late mother used to say, it didn't matter if you came to this country on the Mayflower or a slave ship, through Ellis Island or across the Rio Grande, we were all in the same boat now. I want America to believe that a woman can lead the ship of state, can put us in the direction of getting our—

(Applause)

FORMER AMBASSADOR CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN: ...that preserves the liberty, and the privacy, and the freedom that so many generations have struggled to preserve on our behalf. That is the challenge. We have to get our country back from the people who would tap our emails and tap our phones, who would take our liberties

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away, who would spend money halfway around the world and leave children behind here at home. I join with my colleagues in the Democratic Party in saying, we have a case to make to the American people, and we will inspire the American people in this campaign to come to the polls, to take their country back, to make this democracy work for every generation, and distinguish our generation as the greatest American generation ever.

(Applause)

JUDY WOODRUFF: On behalf of the panelists, Mark, and Michelle, and Juan, and myself, I want to thank all the candidates, and I believe Marian Edelman has some closing remarks.

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN: First, I just wanted to thank Judy Woodruff and the panel. They've been wonderful.

(Applause)

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN: I also want to make very clear that we invited President George Bush to come tonight to say how he was not going to leave any child behind, but he was unable to be here. So I want you to know that, but most of all I want you to thank all the candidates for coming and for a very lively debate.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN: Thank you all so much.

(End of event)

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