

The New York Times

Transcript of the Republican Presidential Debate

February 14, 2016

Following is a transcript of the Republican debate, as transcribed by the Federal News Service.

DICKERSON: Good evening. I'm John Dickerson. This holiday weekend, as America honors our first president, we're about to hear from six men who hope to be the 45th. The candidates for the Republican nomination are here in South Carolina for their ninth debate, one week before this state holds the first-in-the-South primary.

George Washington wrote that the truth will ultimately prevail where there is pains taken to bring it to light. We hope to shed some light on the candidates' positions tonight to help voters make up their minds.

So gentlemen, please join us on stage.

(APPLAUSE)

With us tonight — with us tonight are retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson of Florida, Senator Marco Rubio of Florida.

(APPLAUSE)

Businessman Donald Trump of New York.

(APPLAUSE)

Senator Ted Cruz of Texas.

(APPLAUSE)

Former Governor Jeb Bush of Florida.

(APPLAUSE)

And Governor John Kasich of Ohio.

(APPLAUSE)

Now, as most of you have heard by now, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia died today at the age of 79. He was the longest-serving member of the court, appointed by President Reagan in 1986. Justice Scalia was the court's leading conservative, and even those who disagreed with his opinions regarded him as a brilliant legal scholar. Please join us and the candidates on our stage in a moment of silence for Justice Antonin Scalia. Thank you.

We will talk to the candidates about Justice Scalia and the road ahead when the debate begins in a moment.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DICKERSON: Before we get started, candidates, here are the rules. When we ask you a question, you will have one minute to answer, and 30 seconds more if we ask a follow-up. If you're attacked by another candidate, you get 30 seconds to respond.

And here's how we keep time. After we ask a question, you'll get a green light. The yellow light means you have 30 seconds left to finish your answer, and when time is up, the light turns red. That means please stop talking. If you keep talking, you'll hear this.

(BELL RINGING)

You don't want to hear that. Joining me in the questioning tonight, my CBS News colleague, chief White House correspondent Major Garrett, and Kimberley Strassel, who is on the editorial board of The Wall Street Journal.

And you can participate in the debate through our partnership with Twitter. Tweet us your questions and comments using the hashtag "#GOPDebate."

So, let's begin.

First, the death of Justice Scalia, and the vacancy that leaves on the Supreme Court. Mr. Trump, I want to start with you. You've said that the president shouldn't nominate anyone in the rest of his term to replace Justice Scalia. If you were president and had a chance, with 11 months left to go in your term, wouldn't it be an abdication, to conservatives in particular, not to name a conservative justice with the rest of your term?

TRUMP: Well, I can say this. If the president, and if I were president now, I would certainly want to try and nominate a justice. I'm sure that, frankly, I'm absolutely sure that President Obama will try and do it. I hope that our Senate is going to be able — Mitch, and the entire group, is going to be able to do something about it.

In times of delay, we could have a Diane Sykes, or you could have a Bill Pryor — we have some fantastic people. But this is a tremendous blow to conservatism. It's a tremendous blow, frankly, to our country.

DICKERSON: So, just to be clear on this, Mr. Trump, you're O.K. with the president nominating somebody ...

TRUMP: ... I think he's going to do it whether or I'm O.K. with it or not. I think it's up to Mitch McConnell and everybody else to stop it. It's called delay, delay, delay.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Governor Kasich, I want to get your thoughts on this. Justice Scalia was a real believer, obviously, in the strict word of the Constitution. Now, Harry Reid says that a failure to fill his vacancy would be, quote, "shameful abdication of one of the Senate's most essential constitutional responsibilities."

Where do you come down on this?

KASICH: Well, John, first of all, if I were president, we wouldn't have the divisions in the country we have today. I do want to take a second as we reflected on Judge Scalia, it's amazing — it's not even two minutes after the death of Judge Scalia, nine children here today, their father didn't wake up. His wife, sad, but I just wish we hadn't run so fast into politics.

Here's my concern about this. The country is so divided right now, and now we're going to see another partisan fight take place. I really wish the president would think about not nominating somebody. If you were to nominate somebody, let's have him pick somebody that's going to have unanimous approval, and such widespread approval across the country that this could happen without a lot of recrimination. I don't think that's going to happen, and I would like the president just to, for once here, put the country first. We're going to have an election for president very soon, and the people will understand what is at stake in that election.

And so I believe the president should not move forward, and I think that we ought to let the next president of the United States decide who is going to run that Supreme Court with a vote by the people of the United...

(BELL RINGING)

KASICH: ... States of America.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Dr. Carson. Dr. Carson, you, like others, put out a statement after the death was announced, and you said the president should delay.

You've written a book on the Constitution recently. What does the Constitution say about whose duty it is here to act in this kind of a situation?

CARSON: Well, the current Constitution actually doesn't address that particular situation, but the fact of the matter is the Supreme Court, obviously, is a very important part of our governmental system. And when our Constitution was put in place, the average age of death was under 50, and therefore the whole concept of lifetime appointments for Supreme Court judges and federal judges was not considered to be a big deal.

Obviously, that has changed, and it's something that probably needs to be looked at pretty carefully at some point. But, we need to start thinking about the divisiveness that is going on in our country. I looked at some of the remarks that people made after finding out that Justice Scalia had died, and they were truly nasty remarks. And that we have managed to get to that position in our country is truly a shame. And we should be thinking about how we could create some healing in this land.

But, right now, we're not going to get healing with President Obama. That's very United Nations clear. So, I...

(BELL RINGING)

CARSON: ... fully agree that we should not allow a judge to be appointed during his time.

DICKERSON: Senator Rubio, you're a...

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Senator Rubio, you're a lawyer. Quickly, can you address the issue of whether the Constitution tells us who has the power to appoint Supreme Court justices?

And then, also, the Senate Republicans last year floated an idea of removing the filibuster for Senate — excuse me, for Supreme Court nominations. You seemed open to that. What's your feeling on that now?

RUBIO: Well, let me first talk about Justice Scalia. His loss is tremendous, and obviously our hearts and prayers go out to his family. He will go down as one of the great justices in the history of this republic.

You talk about someone who defended consistently the original meaning of the Constitution, who understood that the Constitution was not there to be interpreted based on the fads of the moment, but it was there to be interpreted according to its original meaning.

Justice Scalia understood that better than anyone in the history of this republic. His dissent, for example, on the independent counsel case is a brilliant piece of jurist work. And, of course, his dissent on Obergefell as well.

No. 2, I do not believe the president should appoint someone. And it's not unprecedented. In fact, it has been over 80 years since a lame duck president has appointed a Supreme Court justice.

And it remind us of this, how important this election is. Someone on this stage will get to choose the balance of the Supreme Court, and it will begin by filling this vacancy that's there now.

And we need to put people on the bench that understand that the Constitution is not a living and breathing document. It is to be interpreted as originally meant.

DICKERSON: Quickly, though, on this question...

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Very quickly, Senator, on this specific question, though. You were once in favor of dropping the threshold...

(CROSSTALK)

RUBIO: That's not accurate.

DICKERSON: ... majority — you were never in favor of that?

RUBIO: No, I've never — there has been, for example, today, according to the changes Harry Reid made, appellate judges can now be appointed by a simple majority, but not Supreme Court justices.

And I think today you see the wisdom of why we don't want that to change. Because if that were the case and we were not in charge of the Senate, Harry Reid and Barack Obama would ram down our throat a liberal justice, like the ones Barack Obama has imposed on us already.

DICKERSON: O.K. Thank you, Senator.

Governor Bush, I would like to ask you, conservatives for a long time have felt like that their Republican presidents have picked justices that didn't turn out to be real conservatives.

BUSH: Right.

DICKERSON: Bernie Sanders has said he would have a litmus test. He would make sure that he appointed a justice who was going to overturn Citizens United. If they can have a litmus test for a nominee, what about you? Would you have a litmus test for a nominee? And what would it be?

BUSH: Not on specific issues, not at all. I think the next president — if I'm president, I will appoint people — I'll nominate people that have a proven record in the judiciary.

The problem in the past has been we have appointed people thinking you can get it through the Senate because they didn't have a record. And the problem is that sometimes we're surprised.

The simple fact is the next president needs to appoint someone with a proven conservative record, similar to Justice Scalia, that is a lover of liberty, that believes in limited government, that consistently applied that kind of philosophy, that didn't try to legislate from the bench, that was respectful of the Constitution.

And then fight and fight, and fight for that nomination to make sure that that nomination passes.

Of course, the president, by the way, has every right to nominate Supreme Court justices. I'm an Article II guy in the Constitution. We're running for the president of the United States. We want a strong executive for sure. But in return for that, there should be a consensus orientation on that nomination, and there's no doubt in my mind that Barack Obama will not have a consensus pick when he submits that person to the Senate.

DICKERSON: Right, so, Senator Cruz, the Constitution...

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: So, Senator Cruz, the Constitution says the president "shall appoint with advice and consent from the Senate," just to clear that up. So he has the constitutional power. But you don't think he should.

Where do you set that date if you're president? Does it begin in election year, in December, November, September? And once you set the date, when you're president, will you abide by that date?

CRUZ: Well, we have 80 years of precedent of not confirming Supreme Court justices in an election year. And let me say, Justice Scalia...

DICKERSON: Just can I — I'm sorry to interrupt, were any appointed in an election year, or is that just there were 80 years...

(CROSSTALK)

CRUZ: Eighty years of not confirming. For example, L.B.J. nominated Abe Fortas. Fortas did not get confirmed. He was defeated.

DICKERSON: But Kennedy was confirmed in '88.

CRUZ: No, Kennedy was confirmed in '87...

DICKERSON: He was appointed in '87.

CRUZ: He was appointed in...

DICKERSON: ... confirmed in '88. That's the question, is it appointing or confirming, what's the difference?

CRUZ: In this case it's both. But if I could answer the question...

DICKERSON: Sorry, I just want to get the facts straight for the audience. But I apologize.

(BOOING)

(LAUGHTER)

CRUZ: Justice Scalia was a legal giant. He was somebody that I knew for 20 years. He was a brilliant man. He was faithful to the Constitution. He changed the arc of American legal history. And I'll tell you, his passing tonight, our prayers are with his family, with his wife, Maureen, who he adored, his nine children, his 36 grandkids. But it underscores the stakes of this election. We are one justice away from a Supreme Court that will strike down every restriction on abortion adopted by the states. We are one justice away from a Supreme Court that will reverse the Heller decision, one of Justice Scalia's seminal decisions, that upheld the Second Amendment right to keep and to bear arms.

We are one justice away from a Supreme Court that would undermine the religious liberty of millions of Americans — and the stakes of this election, for this year, for the Senate, the Senate needs to stand strong and say, "We're not going to give up the U.S. Supreme Court for a generation by allowing Barack Obama to make one more liberal appointee."

And then for the state of South Carolina, one of the most important judgments for the men and women of South Carolina to make is who on this stage has the background, the principle, the character, the judgment and the strength of resolve to nominate and confirm principled constitutionalists to the court? That will be what I will do if I'm elected president.

DICKERSON: All right.

(APPLAUSE)

Thank you, Senator Cruz. All right, we're going to move on to national security here, and we are going to — I want to read a quote from Secretary Robert Gates, former Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who served for eight year — under eight presidents.

And this is what he said about Republican candidates, quote, "Part of the concern that I have with the campaign is that the solutions being offered are so simplistic and so at odds with the way the world really works."

So, in that spirit, we're going to work tonight to be more specific.

Mr. Trump, I want to start with you. You have said as president, you'll get up to speed very quickly. You'll know more quickly as president than any of the experts.

So, you've been elected president. It's your first day in the Situation Room. What three questions do you ask your national security experts about the world?

TRUMP: What we want to do, when we want to do it, and how hard do we want to hit? Because we are going to have to hit very, very hard to knock out ISIS.

We're going to also have to learn who our allies are. We have allies, so-called allies, we're spending billions and billions of dollars supporting people — we have no idea who they are in Syria. Do we want to stay that route, or do we want to go and make something with Russia?

I hate to say Iran, but with Russia, because we — and the Iran deal is one of the worst deals I have ever seen negotiated in my entire life. It's a disgrace that this country negotiated that deal. But very important...

(APPLAUSE)

Not only a disgrace, it's a disgrace and an embarrassment. But very important, who are we fighting with? Who are we fighting for? What are we doing? We have to rebuild our country. But we have to — I'm the only one on this stage that said: "Do not go into Iraq. Do not attack Iraq." Nobody else on this stage said that. And I said it loud and strong. And I was in the private sector. I wasn't a politician, fortunately.

But I said it, and I said it loud and clear, "You'll destabilize the Middle East." That's exactly what happened.

I also said, by the way, four years ago, three years ago, attack the oil, take the wealth away, attack the oil and keep the oil. They didn't listen. They just started that a few months ago.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Senator Rubio — just 30 seconds on this question, Senator Rubio. Are those the questions you would ask?

RUBIO: No. I think there are three major threats that you want to immediately get on top of. No. 1 is, what are we doing in the Asia-Pacific region, where both North Korea and China pose threats to the national security of the United States.

No. 2 is, what are we doing in the Middle East with the combination of the Sunni-Shia conflict driven by the Shia arc that Iran is now trying to establish in the Middle East, also the growing threat of ISIS.

And the third is rebuilding and reinvigorating NATO in the European theater, particularly in Central Europe and in Eastern Europe, where Vladimir Putin is now threatening the territory of multiple countries, already controls 20 percent of Georgia and a significant percentage of Ukraine.

DICKERSON: Let me ask you a follow-up, a full, proper question, then.

(APPLAUSE)

Violent extremists are operating or active in 40 countries. Some 80 countries are in different degrees of instability. And so, that's just the crises overseas. Barack Obama walked into an economic collapse when he came into office. We face international health crises, from Ebola to Zika.

So, there is a lot of opportunity for crisis, as you have talked about. What would you point to in your past to show voters that you've been in a crisis and that you've been tested when that inevitable crisis comes when you're president?

RUBIO: Well, let me tell you what has happened a couple of years ago. One of the hardest decisions you'll ever make in Congress is when you are asked by the president to authorize the use of force in a conflict, because you are now putting your name, on behalf of the people of your state, behind a military action, where Americans in uniform could lose their life.

So, in 2014, Barack Obama said he would not take military action against Assad unless it was authorized by the Senate, beginning on the Committee of Foreign Relations, where I am one of its members. And it was hard because you looked at the pictures. I saw the same images people saw. I'm the father of children. I saw the images of these little children — been gassed and poisoned by their own leaders, and we were angry. Something had to happen, and there was the sense that we needed to seek retribution.

And then I looked at Barack Obama's plan. Barack Obama's plan, which John Kerry later described as unbelievably small, and I concluded that that attack would not only not help the situation, it would make it actually worse. It would allow Assad to stand up to the United States of America, survive a strike, stay in power and actually strengthen his grip.

So it was a difficult decision to make, and when we only had a few days to look at and make a decision on it, and I voted against Barack Obama's plan to use force, and it was the right decision.

DICKERSON: Dr. Carson, I want to ask you a question...

(APPLAUSE)

Dr. Carson, you said you've had more 2 a.m. — 2 a.m. phone calls than anybody up on this stage. But when those 2 a.m. phone calls came, you operated on a foundation of all of that

amazing medical work that you did, all of that learning. So if you were to be president, though, you wouldn't have the political foundation that hones those instincts when the 2 a.m. phone call comes. So isn't that a liability?

CARSON: No, it isn't. First of all, let me go back to your first question for me. It wasn't phrased as who gets to nominate Supreme Court appointees. Of course that's the president. So I know that there are some left-wing media who would try to make hay on that.

Secondly, thank you for including me in the debate. Two questions already. This is great. Now, as far...

(LAUGHTER)

(APPLAUSE)

As far as those 2 a.m. phone calls are concerned, judgment is what is required. And the kinds of things that you come up with are sometimes very, very difficult and very unique. One of the things that I was known for is doing things that have not been done before. So no amount of experience really prepares you to do something that has never been done before. That's where judgment comes in.

And that, I think, is a situation that we're in right now, a situation that we have never been in before with the kinds of threats that pose real danger to our nation, and it comes in very handy in those situations.

DICKERSON: Governor Kasich, Russia is being credited...

(APPLAUSE)

Russia is being credited with bombing U.S.-backed rebels on behalf of Assad in Aleppo and Syria. They've also moved into the Crimea, eastern Ukraine. You've said you want to punch them in the nose. What does that mean? What are you going to do?

KASICH: First of all — yes. First of all, look, we have to make it clear to Russia what we expect. We don't have to declare an enemy, rattle a sword or threaten, but we need to make it clear what we expect. No. 1 is we will arm the folks in Ukraine who are fighting for their freedom. They deserve it. There will be no ifs, ands or buts about it.

Secondly, an attack on NATO, trumped up on any excuse of Russian-speaking people, either in the NATO countries or in Finland or Sweden, is going to be an attack on us. And look, I think we have an opportunity as America to put something really great together again.

The Egyptians, the Saudis, the Jordanians, the Gulf states, they all know they're at risk. We need to look into Europe, we look at France, we look at Germany and the migrants. We look at

Belgium, we look at Britain. Everybody now is being threatened by radical Islam. We have an opportunity to lead.

You know, the fact of the matter is the world is desperate for our leadership. Sometimes they may — they may make a remark here or there that we don't like, but frankly, the world needs us. And we have an opportunity now to assemble a coalition of the civilized people, those who respect civilization, the rights of women, the rights to protest, to be able to reassert our leadership all across this globe again and make sure this century is going to be the best we've ever seen.

DICKERSON: Governor...

(APPLAUSE)

Governor Bush.

BUSH: Yes.

DICKERSON: You said defeating ISIS requires defeating Assad. But wouldn't that also put us into conflict with Russia, a country that supports Assad? So doesn't that mean, effectively, Assad's there to stay?

BUSH: No, it doesn't, and that's the problem. The lack of leadership in this country by Barack Obama, John Kerry, Hillary Clinton, thinking that this is a policy that works, this policy of containment with ISIS. It's a complete, unmitigated disaster. And to allow Russia now to have influence in Syria makes it harder, but we need to destroy ISIS and dispose of Assad to create a stable Syria so that the four million refugees aren't a breeding ground for Islamic jihadists.

This is the problem. Donald Trump brought up the fact that he would — he'd want to accommodate Russia. Russia is not taking out ISIS. They're — they're attacking our — our — our team, the team that we've been training and the team that we've been supporting. It is absolutely ludicrous to suggest that Russia could be a positive partner in this. They are on the run. They are making — every time we step back, they're on the run. The question that you asked was a really good one about what you would do — what three things would you do.

I would restore the military, the sequester needs to be reversed. I would have a strategy to destroy ISIS, and I would immediately create a policy of containment as it relates to Iran's ambitions, and to make it make clear that we are not going to allow for Iran to do what it's doing, which is to move towards a nuclear weapon.

Those three things would be the first and foremost things that we need to do...

(BELL RINGING)

BUSH: ... in 2017.

DICKERSON: Mr. Trump, you're...

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Mr. Trump, you were mentioned here. You did say that you could get along very well with Vladimir Putin. You did at one point say let Russia take care of ISIS...

TRUMP: ... (INAUDIBLE) called me a genius, I like him so far, I have to tell you. Let me just tell you this.

Jeb is so wrong. Jeb is absolutely self — just so you understand, you know what that is? That's Jeb's special interest and lobbyist talking.

Look, let me just tell you something, Jeb — Jeb is so wrong. You got to fight ISIS first. You fight ISIS first. Right now you have Russia, you have Iran, you have them with Assad, and you have them with Syria. You have to knock out ISIS. They're chopping off heads. These are animals. You have to knock 'em out. You have to knock them off strong. You decide what to do after, you can't fight two wars at one time.

If you listen to him, and you listen to some of the folks that I've been listening to, that's why we've been in the Middle East for 15 years, and we haven't won anything. We've spent \$5 trillion dollars in the Middle East with thinking like that. We've spent \$5...

(BELL RINGING)

TRUMP: Lindsey Graham, who backs him, had zero on his polls. Let me just say something — we've spent — we've spent.

I only tell the truth, lobbyists.

We've spent \$5 trillion dollars all over the — we have to rebuild our country. We have to rebuild our infrastructure. You listen to that, you're going to be there for another 15...

DICKERSON: ... All right...

TRUMP: ... You'll end up with World War III...

DICKERSON: ... All right, Governor Bush, please respond.

BUSH: The very basic fact is that Vladimir Putin is not going to be an ally of the United States. The whole world knows this. It's a simple, basic fact.

(APPLAUSE)

BUSH: They're not taking out — they're not even attempting to take out ISIS. They're attacking the troops that we're supporting. We need to create a coalition, Sunni-led coalition on the ground

with our special operators to destroy ISIS and bring about stability. And you can't do that with Assad in power. He has...

TRUMP: ... We're supporting troops...

BUSH: ... Let me finish...

TRUMP: ... that we don't even know who they are.

DICKERSON: ... O.K., settle...

BUSH: ... This is ridiculous...

TRUMP: ... We're supporting troops that we don't even know who they are...

DICKERSON: ... All right, Mr. Trump, all right...

TRUMP: We have no idea who they are.

DICKERSON: Gentleman, I think we're going to leave that there. I've got a question for Senator...

BUSH: ... This is coming from a guy who gets his foreign policy from the shows.

TRUMP: ... Oh, yeah, yeah...

BUSH: ... This is a guy who thinks that Hillary Clinton is a great negotiator in Iran...

TRUMP: ... Let 44 million in New Hampshire, it was practically (INAUDIBLE)...

BUSH: ... This is a man who insults his way to the nomination...

TRUMP: ... 44 million — give me a break.

(CROSSTALK)

DICKERSON: ... All right, all right, gentlemen, gentlemen, let's leave it there so I can ask a question of Senator Cruz, who's also running for president.

(LAUGHTER) (APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Senator Cruz, you talked about the first Gulf War as being a kind of model for your focused and determined effort to go after ISIS. But there were 700,000 ground troops as a part of that, and you don't have a ground component to your plan. Why?

CRUZ: Well, we need to focus on what the objective is, you know? Your question about the first three questions you would ask in this Situation Room. I think it is a problem if the president,

commander in chief, we've elected does not have the experience and background to understand the threats facing this country coming in on Day 1.

If you look at the threats facing this country, the single gravest threat, national security threat, is the threat of a nuclear Iran. That's why I've pledged on Day 1 to rip to shreds this Iranian nuclear deal, and anyone that thinks you can negotiate Khamenei does not understand the nature of Khamenei.

When it comes to ISIS, we've got to have a focused objective. One of the problems of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton's foreign policy, and, sadly, too many establishment Republicans in Washington, is they focus on issues unrelated to protecting this country. They focus on nation building, they focus on toppling governments to promote democracy, and it ends up undermining our national security.

Now, with regard to ISIS, we need a commander in chief that sets the objective we will utterly defeat them because they have declared war. They've declared a jihad on us.

Now, what do we need...

(BELL RINGING)

CRUZ: ... to carry that out. We need overwhelming air power, we need to arm the Kurds, who can be our boots on the ground, and if ground troops are necessary, then we should employ them, but it shouldn't be politicians demonstrating political toughness. It should be military expert judgment carrying out the objectives set out by the commander in chief.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Very quickly, 30-second follow-up. You've said that, essentially, the Kurds would be the American ground forces in there. The criticism that experts have on that is that the Kurds only can work within their territory.

If they take larger amounts of territory, you have an ethnic war with the Arabs. So the Kurds can't really do as much as you seem to be putting on their backs.

CRUZ: We have Kurds in both Iraq and Syria. They are fighting ISIS right now. They are winning victories right now. ISIS is using American military equipment they've seized in Iraq. And the Obama administration refuses to arm the Kurds, the pesh merga, the fighting forces who have been longtime allies.

We ought to be arming them and letting them fight. Now, if we need to embed Special Forces to direct our overwhelming air power, if it is required to use ground troops to defeat ISIS, we should use them, but we ought to start with using our incredible air power advantage.

The first Persian Gulf War, we launched 1,100 air attacks a day. Today, we're launching between 15 and 30. We're not using the tools we have, and it's because the commander in chief is not focused on defeating the enemy.

DICKERSON: All right. Mr. Trump...

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: ... On Monday, George W. Bush will campaign in South Carolina for his brother. As you've said tonight, and you've often said, the Iraq war and your opposition to it was a sign of your good judgment.

In 2008, in an interview with Wolf Blitzer, talking about President George W. Bush's conduct of the war, you said you were surprised that Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi didn't try to impeach him.

You said, quote: "Which, personally, I think would have been a wonderful thing." When you were asked what you meant by that and you said: "For the war, for the war, he lied, he got us into the war with lies." Do you still believe President Bush should have been impeached?

TRUMP: First of all, I have to say, as a businessman, I get along with everybody. I have business all over the world.

(BOOING)

TRUMP: I know so many of the people in the audience. And by the way, I'm a self-funder. I don't have — I have my wife and I have my son. That's all I have. I don't have this.

(APPLAUSE)

TRUMP: So let me just tell you, I get along with everybody, which is my obligation to my company, to myself, et cetera.

Obviously, the war in Iraq was a big, fat mistake. All right? Now, you can take it any way you want, and it took — it took Jeb Bush, if you remember at the beginning of his announcement, when he announced for president, it took him five days.

He went back, it was a mistake, it wasn't a mistake. It took him five days before his people told him what to say, and he ultimately said, "It was a mistake." The war in Iraq, we spent \$2 trillion, thousands of lives, we don't even have it. Iran has taken over Iraq, with the second-largest oil reserves in the world.

Obviously, it was a mistake.

DICKERSON: So...

TRUMP: George Bush made a mistake. We can make mistakes. But that one was a beauty. We should have never been in Iraq. We have destabilized the Middle East.

DICKERSON: But so I'm going to — so you still think he should be impeached?

BUSH: I think it's my turn, isn't it?

TRUMP: You do whatever you want. You call it whatever you want. I want to tell you. They lied. They said there were weapons of mass destruction, there were none. And they knew there were none. There were no weapons of mass destruction.

(BOOING)

DICKERSON: All right. O.K. All right.

Governor Bush — when a member on the stage's brother gets attacked...

BUSH: I've got about five or six...

DICKERSON: ... the brother gets to respond.

BUSH: Do I get to do it five or six times or just once, responding to that?

TRUMP: I'm being nice.

BUSH: So here's the deal. I'm sick and tired of Barack Obama blaming my brother for all of the problems that he has had.

(APPLAUSE)

BUSH: And, frankly, I could care less about the insults that Donald Trump gives to me. It's blood sport for him. He enjoys it. And I'm glad he's happy about it. But I am sick and tired...

TRUMP: He spent \$22 million in...

(CROSSTALK)

BUSH: I am sick and tired of him going after my family. My dad is the greatest man alive in my mind.

(APPLAUSE)

BUSH: And while Donald Trump was building a reality TV show, my brother was building a security apparatus to keep us safe. And I'm proud of what he did.

(APPLAUSE)

BUSH: And he has had the gall to go after my brother.

TRUMP: The World Trade Center came down during your brother's reign, remember that.

(BOOING)

BUSH: He has had the gall to go after my mother.

Hold on. Let me finish. He has had the gall to go after my mother.

TRUMP: That's not keeping us safe.

BUSH: Look, I won the lottery when I was born 63 years ago, looked up, and I saw my mom. My mom is the strongest woman I know.

TRUMP: She should be running.

BUSH: This is not about my family or his family. This is about the South Carolina families that need someone to be a commander in chief that can lead. I'm that person.

DICKERSON: Governor Kasich, would you weigh in on...

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Governor Kasich, please weigh in.

KASICH: I've got to tell you, this is just crazy, huh?

(LAUGHTER)

KASICH: This is just nuts, O.K.? Jeez, oh, man. I'm sorry, John.

DICKERSON: Why is it nuts? Talk about it. Give us your sense of...

KASICH: Oh, well, listen, I think being in Iraq, look, we thought there were weapons of mass destruction. Colin Powell, who is one of the most distinguished generals in modern time, said there were weapons there.

(APPLAUSE)

KASICH: But, but, the fact is we got ourselves in the middle of a civil war. The Sunni, the Shia and the Kurds, never gotten along. In fact, that country was drawn — the borders of that country were drawn after World War I by Westerners that didn't understand what was happening there. The tragedy of it is that we're still embroiled. And, frankly, if there weren't weapons of mass destruction, we should never have gone. I don't believe the United States should involve itself in civil wars. Civil wars are not in our direct interest, and if you — and look, I served on a defense committee for 18 years and was called into the Pentagon after 9/11 by Secretary Rumsfeld to deal with some of the most serious problems that we faced.

The fact is, is that we should go to war when it is our direct interest. We should not be policemen of the world, but when we go, we mean business. We'll do our job. We'll tell our soldiers, our people in the service, take care of your job and then come home once we've accomplished our goals.

That's what we need to do.

DICKERSON: Thirty seconds, Senator Rubio.

RUBIO: I just want to say, at least on behalf of me and my family, I thank God all the time it was George W. Bush in the White House on 9/11 and not Al Gore.

(APPLAUSE)

And you can — I think you can look back in hindsight and say a couple of things, but he kept us safe. And not only did he keep us safe, but no matter what you want to say about weapons of mass destruction, Saddam Hussein was in violation of U.N. resolutions, in open violation, and the world wouldn't do anything about it, and George W. Bush enforced what the international community refused to do.

And again, he kept us safe, and I am forever grateful to what he did for this country.

(APPLAUSE)

TRUMP: How did he keep us safe when the World Trade Center — the World — excuse me. I lost hundreds of friends. The World Trade Center came down during the reign of George Bush. He kept us safe? That is not safe. That is not safe, Marco. That is not safe.

RUBIO: The World Trade Center came down because Bill Clinton didn't kill Osama bin Laden when he had the chance to kill him.

(APPLAUSE)

TRUMP: And George Bush — by the way, George Bush had the chance, also, and he didn't listen to the advice of his C.I.A.

DICKERSON: All right, Dr. Carson, we have a cleansing...

BUSH: Can I just...

DICKERSON: We have a cleansing...

BUSH: I'm not going to invite Donald Trump to the rally in Charleston on Monday afternoon when my brother is coming to speak.

TRUMP: I don't want to go.

(LAUGHTER)

BUSH: I'm rescinding the invitation. I thought you might want to come, but I guess not.

DICKERSON: All right. Well, Dr. Carson, I have got a question now for you.

A moment of pause here. You have said, Dr. Carson, that — referring to yourself, that people bought into the idea that, quote, “A nice person can't be tough on terrorists.”

You have called for loosening the rules of engagement for the military, which could lead to more civilian casualties.

So, explain why those casualties would be acceptable in the fight against ISIS?

CARSON: Well, first of all, let me just address the Iraq question.

You know, I was not particularly in favor of us going to war in Iraq, primarily because I have studied, you know, the Middle East, recognizing that those are nations that are ruled by dictators and have been for thousands of years. And when you go in and you remove one of those dictators, unless you have an appropriate plan for replacing them, you're going to have chaos.

Now, fortunately, we were able to stabilize the situation, and it was the current administration that turned tail and ran and destabilized the situation.

(APPLAUSE)

Now, having said that, in terms of the rules of engagement, I was talking about, you know, Obama has said, you know, we shouldn't bomb tankers, you know, coming out of refineries because there may be people in there, or because the environment may be hurt.

You know, that's just asinine thinking. And the fact of the matter is...

(APPLAUSE)

You know, we — obviously, you're not going to accomplish all of your goals without some collateral damage. You have to be able to assess what is acceptable and what is not.

DICKERSON: All right, thank you, Dr. Carson.

We're going to have to take a commercial break here. Thank you to all the candidates. We'll be right back with CBS News's 2016 debate in Greenville, South Carolina.

(APPLAUSE)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DICKERSON: We're back with the Republicans who could be president. The topic now is money and how the candidates would spend it. We'll turn the questioning over to Kimberley Strassel of The Wall Street Journal and Major Garrett of CBS News. Kim?

STRASSEL: Mr. Trump.

TRUMP: Yes.

STRASSEL: You have made a lot of promises and you have also — you're the only candidate who has said he would not touch entitlements. The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget has estimated that your ideas would cost an additional \$12 trillion to \$15 trillion over the next 10 years and that we would have to have annual economic growth of anywhere from 7.7 percent to 9 percent annually to pay for them. Are you proposing more than you can actually deliver, at least not without big deficits?

TRUMP: First of all, the — when you say I'm the only candidate, if you listen to the Democrats, they want to do many things to Social Security, and I want to do them on its own merit. You listen to them, what they want to do to Social Security, none of these folks are getting elected, O.K., whether they can do it or not. I'm going to save Social Security. I'm going to bring jobs back from China. I'm going to bring jobs back from Mexico and from Japan, where they're all — every country throughout the world — now Vietnam, that's the new one.

They are taking our jobs. They are taking our wealth. They are taking our base. And you and I have had this discussion. We're going to make our economy strong again. I'm lowering taxes. We have \$2.5 trillion offshore. We have 2.5 trillion that I think is actually five trillion because the government has no idea when they say 2.5, they have no idea what they're doing or saying, as they've proven very well.

We're going to bring that money back. You take a look at what happened just this week. China bought the Chicago Stock Exchange, China, a Chinese company. Carrier is moving to Mexico, air conditioning company. Not only the ones I talk about all the time, Nabisco and Ford and — they're all moving out.

We have an economy that last quarter, G.D.P. didn't grow. It was flat. We have to make our economy grow again. We're dying. This country is dying. And our workers are losing their jobs, and you're going...

STRASSEL: But in terms of...

TRUMP: I'm the only one who is going to save Social Security, believe me.

STRASSEL: O.K. But how would you actually do that? Can I ask you? Because right now, Social Security and Medicare...

TRUMP: Because you have tremendous waste. I'll tell you...

STRASSEL: They take up two-thirds of the federal budget, and they're growing.

TRUMP: You have tremendous waste, fraud and abuse. That we're taking care of. That we're taking care of. It's tremendous. We have in Social Security right now thousands and thousands of people that are over 106 years old. Now, you know they don't exist. They don't exist. There's tremendous waste, fraud and abuse, and we're going to get it. But we're not going to hurt the people who have been paying into Social Security their whole life and then all of a sudden they're supposed to get less. We're bringing our jobs back. We're going to make our economy great again.

GARRETT: Senator Cruz.

(APPLAUSE)

John mentioned this is about dollars and incentives. We also want to talk about economic growth engagements. You have proposed a consumption tax, you called it the "back tax." Some analysts compare it more to an attributed "value-added tax."

From the perspective from economic growth in building wages, how does that work, and how would you address those longstanding conservative concerns that something approaching the "value-added tax" would be used to constantly increase those rates to pay for future government spending and become an escalator of taxation, not of growth?

CRUZ: Well, let me say it at the outset that everyone here understands — everyone understands that how — that the middle class has been left behind in the last seven years of the Obama economy, and we've got to bring jobs back. We've got to get people back to work. We've got to get wages going up again. We've got to get people moving from part-time work to full-time work.

We all agree on that, but it's not going to be solved with magic pixie dust. It's just going to be solved by declaring into the air, "Let there be jobs." We actually have to understand the principles that made America great in the first place.

Now, where do you get economic growth? If you look at cause and effect over our nation's history, every time we lessen the burden of Washington on small-business owners, on job creators, we see incredible economic growth. You do that through tax reform and regulatory reform.

My tax plan — typical family of four, first \$36,000 you earn, you pay nothing in taxes — no income taxes, no payroll taxes, no nothing. Above 10 percent, everyone pays the same simple, flat 10 percent income rate. It's flat and fair. You can fill out your taxes on a postcard, and we abolish the I.R.S. If you want to see the postcard, I've got it on my website.

GARRETT: Now, the question — conservatives have sort of this idea conceptually for a long time, but especially on this consumption value-added tax system. In Europe, where it exists, it has become an escalator of taxation to feed government spending, and that's why conservatives have long resisted it. Why and what would you do as president to make sure that doesn't happen?

CRUZ: Now, Major, the business flat tax that is in my tax plan is not a VAT. A VAT in Europe is a sales tax. The business flat tax is not a sales tax, it is a tax of 16 percent imposed fairly and evenly across the board on all business.

One of the things that's critical is we're doing that in conjunction with abolishing the corporate income tax, with abolishing the Obamacare taxes, with abolishing the payroll taxes, which are the biggest taxes paid by most working Americans, and with abolishing the death tax, which is cruel and unfair. And you asked about economic growth — the nonpartisan Tax Foundation estimated a simple flat tax that would produce 4.9 million new jobs, it would increase capital investment by 44 percent and would lift everyone's income by double digits.

That's how you turn the country around, not just hoping and praying for it, but implementing policies that work.

STRASSEL: O.K., I have a question, a related tax question.

Senator Rubio, you have the highest tax rate of anyone up on the stage in terms of the top tax rates, 35 percent. Some economists say, "It would limit its potential to boost economic growth." You do that so that you will have more revenue to pay for a tripling of the Child Tax Credit.

Normally, it's liberals who like to use the tax code to insert social policy. Why should conservatives who want to tax adopt the other side's approach?

RUBIO: Well, because I'm influencing social policy — this is their money. This is the money of parents. You don't earn the tax credit unless you're working. That's your money, it doesn't belong to government.

Here's what I don't understand. If a business takes their money and they invest in the piece of the equipment, they get to write off their taxes. But if a parent takes money that they have earned to work and invests in their children, they don't? This makes no sense.

Parenting is the most important job any of us will ever have. Family formation is the most important thing in society. So what my tax plan does, is it does create, especially for working families, an additional Child Tax Credit. So that parents who are working get to keep more of their own money, not the government's money, to invest in their children to go to school, to go to a private school, to buy a new backpack.

Let me tell you, if you're a parent that's struggling, then you know that \$50 a month is the difference between a new pair of shoes this month or not getting a new pair of shoes for your

kids. I'm going to have a tax plan that is pro-family, because the family is the most important institution in society. You cannot have a strong country without strong families.

(APPLAUSE)

STRASSEL: Governor Kasich, this is on size of government. In 2013, you pushed through a Medicaid reform in your state over the rejections of many of the Republicans in your state. Total enrollment and overall cost of program have gone well beyond what anyone had expected, including yourself. How can you argue that this overall growth fits in with conservative ambition to significantly cut back on the size of federal welfare programs?

KASICH: Yeah. Well, first of all, those numbers, incorrect. We are — our Medicaid programs are coming in below cost estimates, and our Medicaid program in the second year grew at 2.5 percent.

And Kimberley, let me tell you, when we expand Medicaid and we treat the mentally ill, then they don't live under a bridge or live in a prison, where they cost \$22,500 a year.

When we take the drug addicted and we treat them in the prisons, we stop the revolving door of people in and out of prisons, and we save \$22,500 a year.

Guess what else? They get their lives back. And the working poor, they're now getting health care. And you know that about a third of the people who are now getting that health care are people who are suffering very serious illnesses, particularly cancer.

So, what I would tell you is, we've gone from an \$8 billion hole to a \$2 billion surplus. We've cut taxes by more than any governor in America by \$5 billion. We have grown the number of jobs by 400,000 private-sector jobs since I've been governor.

Our credit is strong. Our pensions are strong. And frankly, we leave no one behind. Economic growth is not an end unto itself. We want everyone to rise, and we will make them personally responsible for the help that they get.

And that is exactly the program we're driving in Ohio. And, boy, people ought to look at Ohio, because it has got a good formula.

(APPLAUSE)

GARRETT: Governor Bush, a question for you — but if you want to jump in, please.

BUSH: I'd like — can I — can I...

GARRETT: Jump in, and then I've got a question for you.

BUSH: Look, I admire the fact that Governor Kasich is supporting spending more money on drug treatment and mental health. I think that's a high priority all across this country, but

expanding Obamacare is what we're talking about, and Obamacare's expansion, even though the federal government is paying for the great majority of it, is creating further debt on the backs of our children and grandchildren. We should be fighting Obamacare, repealing Obamacare, replacing it with something totally different.

(APPLAUSE)

When I was — as a private citizen, Florida was confronted with the choice. The governor was supportive of doing what John did. So was the Florida Senate. A committed speaker of the House asked me to go as a private citizen to make the case against the expansion.

I did, and it wasn't expanded there, just as it wasn't expanded in South Carolina under Governor Haley.

(CROSSTALK)

GARRETT: Real quickly, jump in, because I have got a question for Governor Bush, but jump in.

KASICH: Yeah, let me say a couple of things.

First of all, when Jeb was governor, his first four years as governor, he expand — his Medicaid program grew twice as fast as mine. O.K.? It's just a fact.

Now, with Obamacare, I've not only sued the administration, I did not set up an exchange. And he knows that I'm not for Obamacare, never have been. But here's what's interesting about Medicaid.

You know who expanded Medicaid five times to try to help the folks and give them opportunity so that you could rise and get a job? President Ronald Reagan.

Now, the fact of the matter is, we expanded to get people on their feet, and once they're on their feet, we are giving them the training and the efforts that they need to be able to get work and pull out of that situation.

GARRETT: Understood, Governor Kasich.

KASICH: That's what we're doing in our state.

BUSH: South Carolina — South Carolinians need to know this, because the Cato Institute, which grades governors based on their spending, rank him right at the bottom.

GARRETT: Yeah, Governor Bush, fine.

BUSH: And Governor Haley is ranked at the top.

(CROSSTALK)

GARRETT: Let me get in a question from...

BUSH: No. He mentioned my name.

GARRETT: I understand, I understand.

BUSH: Let me finish, though. No, no, no — hey, wait, wait, wait. Just hold, Major, hold, Major. Hold on, Major.

(CROSSTALK)

BUSH: South Carolinians want to make that, they elect the most conservative governor or candidate that can win.

KASICH: Let me — let's tell you...

GARRETT: I have a question on economic growth, Governor Bush.

(APPLAUSE)

KASICH: Major — Major, we can't — we've got to — look, I have got to correct the record. And the fact of the matter is, we went from an \$8 billion hole to a \$2 billion surplus. We're up 400,000 jobs. Our credit is rock solid.

And I don't know...

GARRETT: A (INAUDIBLE), Governor.

KASICH: Look, the bottom line is the people of this — of this country and this state want to see everybody rise, and they want to see unity, and I don't want to get into all this fighting tonight, because people are frankly sick of the negative campaigning.

GARRETT: I know, understood. Governor Bush.

KASICH: And I'm going to stay positive about what I want to do from the...

(APPLAUSE)

GARRETT: Governor Bush, from the perspective, economic growth — viewed from this perspective of economic growth, you have proposed a tax on hedge fund managers.

The Americans for Tax Reform, a conservative tax group you're probably aware of, has said no Republican should be for higher taxes on capital gains. And many conservatives wonder if this proposal of yours would undermine not only that philosophy, but undercut your projection of 4 percent economic growth annually under your presidency?

BUSH: Of course not. It won't have an impact on hedge funds managers paying ordinary income. In fact, it's not just hedge fund people, but people that are doing — they're in the business of investing other people's money, getting capital gains treatment is not appropriate.

They should be paying ordinary income. That's their business. They're grateful to be able to make a lot of money, I'm sure. And what we do is lower the rates. It's not the end of the world that private equity people and hedge fund folks that are, right now, getting capital gains treatment for the income they earn, pay ordinary income like everybody else in this room. That's not a problem at all. What we need to do is reform the tax code to simplify the rates, to shift power away from Washington, D.C. That's what I did as governor of the state of Florida, \$19 billion dollars of tax cuts, and it stimulated seven out of the eight years. Florida led the nation in job growth.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Dr. Carson, before we go to break, could you give us your sense of this conversation about either Medicaid or economic growth through taxation?

CARSON: Well, first of all, let me just mention on the tax issue. Bencarson.com, go read about it, because my tax plan has been praised by Cato, by Wall Street Journal. Forbes said it is the best, the most pro-growth tax plan, and it's based on real fairness for everybody. Starts at the 150 percent poverty level, but even the people below that have to pay something, because everybody has to have skin in the game, and the millions of people can't, you know, talk about what other people have to pay and have no skin in the game.

And it deals with corporate tax rate, and makes it the same as everybody else...

(BELL RINGING)

CARSON: ... Everybody pays exactly the same.

DICKERSON: Doctor...

CARSON: ... And, as far as Medicare and Medicaid, my main goal is to get rid of Obamacare and put the care back in the hands of (INAUDIBLE)...

GARRETT: ... Dr. Carson...

DICKERSON: ... Dr. Carson, I'm sorry, we have to go to a commercial. The free market wants what it wants.

Back soon with the 2016 Republican debate in Greenville, South Carolina.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DICKERSON: Welcome back. We'll begin the second half of the debate with one of the hottest issues in the Republican campaign, immigration. But before I turn it back to Major Garrett and Kim Strassel, I have one question for Mr. Trump.

Mr. Trump, in the Republican National Committee's Spanish-language response to the State of the Union, Congressman Diaz-Balart said, quote, "It's essential that we find a legislative solution," talking about immigration, "to offer a permanent and humane solution to those who live in the shadows. What does that mean to you, "a humane solution to those who live in the shadows"?"

TRUMP: I want everybody taken care of, but we have to take care of our people in this country. We're not taking care of our people. We have no border. We have no control. People are flooding across. We can't have it. We either have a border, and I'm very strongly — I'm not proposing. I will build a wall. I will build a wall.

Remember this, the wall will be paid for by Mexico. We are not being treated right.

(APPLAUSE)

We are not being treated properly. If we don't have borders, if we don't have strength, we don't have a country. People are flowing across. We have to take care of our people. Believe me.

GARRETT: Senator Rubio...

(APPLAUSE)

For the purposes of the lines — lines you would draw legislatively as a president on immigration reform, define amnesty.

RUBIO: Well, first of all, I think amnesty is the forgiveness of a wrongdoing without consequence and that — I've never supported that. I do not support that. I think there has to be consequences for violating our immigration laws. What I think is clear about this issue to begin with is we're not going to be able to make progress on illegal immigration until first, illegal immigration is brought under control.

You go back to 1986, when they legalized three million people and they promised to secure the border. It didn't happen, and as a result, people have lost trust in the federal government. It is now clear that the only way to make progress on immigration is not just to pass a law that enforces the law, but actually prove to people that it's working.

They want to see the wall built. They want to see the additional border agents. They want to see E-Verify. They want to see an entry-exit tracking system. Forty percent of the people in this country illegally are entering legally and overstaying visas. And only after all of that is in place, then we'll see what the American people are willing to support on this issue.

I think the American people will be very reasonable, but responsible, about how you handle someone who has been here a long time, who can pass a background check, who pays a fine and starts paying taxes and all they want is a work permit. But you can't do any of that until you prove to people that illegal immigration is under control once and for all.

(APPLAUSE)

STRASSEL: Senator Cruz. Senator Cruz, you have promised to deport illegal aliens. You have also promised to reverse President Obama's executive action that gives temporary amnesty to illegals brought here by their parent as children. As president, you would have the names and addresses of the some 800,000 of those that have registered under that action. Now, you have said that in this country, we shouldn't go door to door, look for illegals, but in this case you would have a list. Would you use it?

CRUZ: Well, you know, your question highlights a sharp difference on immigration on this stage. You know, in a Republican primary, everyone talks tough on immigration. Everyone is against illegal immigration in a Republican primary. But as voters, we've been burned over and over again by people that give us a great campaign speech and they don't walk the walk.

There are sharp differences on amnesty. If you look at the folks on this stage, when Harry Reid and Chuck Schumer and establishment Republicans were leading the fight to pass a massive amnesty plan, I stood with Jeff Sessions and Steve King and the American people and led the fight to defeat that amnesty plan.

(APPLAUSE)

STRASSEL: So would you — would you use the addresses?

CRUZ: Now, that moment...

STRASSEL: Would you pick them up?

CRUZ: That moment was what Reagan would call "a time for choosing." When it comes to deciding which side of the line you're on, the Rubio-Schumer amnesty plan...

(BOOING)

CRUZ: ... apparently supported by the donor class, which is why Washington supported it. The Rubio-Schumer amnesty plan passed the Senate, and it was on the verge of passing the House.

House leadership intended to take it up and pass it with the Democrats overruling most of the Republicans. And the question for anyone on illegal immigration is, where were you in that fight? Where did you stand?

You are right. There is a difference between Senator Rubio and me on this question.

(CROSSTALK)

STRASSEL: Senator Rubio, your reply.

RUBIO: We're going to have to do this again, O.K.? When that issue was being debated, Ted Cruz, at a committee hearing, very passionately said, I want immigration reform to pass, I want people to be able to come out of the shadows. And he proposed an amendment that would legalize people here.

Not only that, he proposed doubling the number of green cards. He proposed a 500 percent increase on guest workers. Now his position is different. Now he is a passionate opponent of all those things.

So he either wasn't telling the truth then or he isn't telling the truth now, but to argue he is a purist on immigration is just not true.

(APPLAUSE)

CRUZ: Major, I get a response to that.

GARRETT: Very quickly, Senator Cruz.

STRASSEL: All right. Senator Cruz. Your response, Senator Cruz.

CRUZ: You know, the lines are very, very clear. Marco right now supports citizenship for 12 million people here illegally. I oppose citizenship. Marco stood on the debate stage and said that.

But I would note not only that — Marco has a long record when it comes to amnesty. In the state of Florida, as speaker of the house, he supported in-state tuition for illegal immigrants. In addition to that, Marco went on Univision in Spanish and said he would not rescind President Obama's illegal executive amnesty on his first day in office.

I have promised to rescind every single illegal executive action, including that one.

(MIX OF APPLAUSE AND BOOING)

CRUZ: And on the question...

(CROSSTALK)

RUBIO: Well, first of all, I don't know how he knows what I said on Univision, because he doesn't speak Spanish. And second of all, the other point that I would make...

CRUZ: (SPEAKING SPANISH).

RUBIO: Look, this is a disturbing pattern now, because for a number of weeks now, Ted Cruz has just been telling lies. He lied about Ben Carson in Iowa.

(APPLAUSE)

RUBIO: He lies about Planned Parenthood. He lies about marriage. He's lying about all sorts of things. And now he makes things up. The bottom line is this is a campaign and people are watching it. And they see the truth behind all these issues.

And here is the truth, Ted Cruz supported legalizing people that were in this country...

CRUZ: That is simply...

(CROSSTALK)

RUBIO: ... and only now does he say...

(CROSSTALK)

CRUZ: That is absolutely false. What he said is knowingly false. And I would note, if you want to assess — if you want to assess...

RUBIO: Well, we'll put on our website, marcorubio.com. We're going to...

(CROSSTALK)

CRUZ: ... who is telling the truth...

(CROSSTALK)

CRUZ: If you want to assess who is telling the truth...

(APPLAUSE)

CRUZ: ... then you should look to Jeff Sessions, who said, without Ted Cruz the Rubio-Schumer amnesty bill would have passed, and Ted was responsible. You should look to Rush Limbaugh and Mark Levin, that said...

(CROSSTALK)

GARRETT: Governor Bush, I want to bring this out to a little wider philosophical aspect, if you will.

BUSH: Thank you.

GARRETT: You have said illegal immigrants, quote, "broke the law, but it's not a felony," still quoting you, "it's an act of love, it's an act of commitment to your family."

Mr. Trump has, as you are well aware, denounced that statement over and over. Do you still believe it? What does that mean to you? And how does that inform your approach to immigration reform?

BUSH: Great question. I feel like I have to get into my inner Chris Christie, and point out that the reason why I should be president is listening to two senators talk about arcane amendments to bills that didn't pass.

(APPLAUSE)

BUSH: This is — this is the problem. We need a leader to fix this problem. And I have a detailed plan to do just that, including controlling the border, dealing with the visa over-stayers, making sure that we have a path to legal status, not to citizenship, for those that come out from the shadows and pay a fine, learn English, don't commit crimes, work and pay taxes.

That is the better approach.

GARRETT: Fundamentally, do you believe this rhetoric is insufficiently compassionate to this issue?

BUSH: The great majority of people that come to this country come because they have no other choice. They want to come to provide for their families. That doesn't mean it's right. That doesn't mean it's right.

We should pick who comes to our country. We should control our border. Coming here legally should be a lot easier than coming here illegally. But the motivation, they're not all rapists, as you-know-who said. They're not that.

These are people that are coming to provide for their families. And we should show a little more respect for the fact that they're struggling. It doesn't mean we shouldn't be controlling the border. That's exactly what we should be doing.

GARRETT: Mr. Trump...

TRUMP: Look...

(APPLAUSE)

TRUMP: ... When I announced that I was running for president on June 16th, illegal immigration wasn't even a subject. If I didn't bring it up, we wouldn't even be talking. Now, I don't often agree with Marco, and I don't often agree with Ted, but I can in this case. The weakest person on this stage by far on illegal immigration is Jeb Bush. They come out of an act of love, whether you like it or not. He is so weak on illegal immigration it's laughable, and everybody knows it.

BUSH: ... So, you know...

(BELL RINGING)

BUSH: ... This is the standard operating procedure, to disparage me. That's fine...

TRUMP: ... Spend a little more money on the commercials...

BUSH: ... But, if you want to talk about weakness, you want to talk about weakness? It's weak to disparage women.

(APPLAUSE)

TRUMP: (INAUDIBLE). I don't know what you're talking about.

BUSH: It's weak to denigrate the disabled. And, it's really weak to call John McCain a loser because he was a...

TRUMP: ... I never called him — I don't call him..

BUSH: ... That is outrageous. The guy's an American hero.

(APPLAUSE)

TRUMP: He also said about language...

BUSH: ... The simple fact is I've also laid out my plans on (INAUDIBLE) immigration...

TRUMP: ... Language. Two days ago he said he would take his pants off and moon everybody, and that's fine. Nobody reports that. He gets up and says that, and then he tells me, oh, my language was a little bit rough...

STRASSEL: ... O.K....

TRUMP: ... My language. Give me a break...

GARRETT: ... Governor Kasich, here in South Carolina earlier this week, you said the idea, the concept of deporting 11 million undocumented workers...

BUSH: (INAUDIBLE) Just, for the record (INAUDIBLE) make sure my mother's listening, if she's watching the debate. I didn't say that I was going to moon somebody...

TRUMP: ... You did say it, you did say it. Been reported in 10 different news...

GARRETT: ... We will leave the moon metaphors to be adjudicated later, I assure you. Governor Kasich, you said earlier this week in South Carolina, the concept, the idea of deporting 11 million undocumented workers in this country is nuts. Why is it you are so opposed to that idea? Senator Cruz has said it's a simple application of existing law. The application of that is not inhumane, it is just. Why do you disagree?

KASICH: Before I get to that, this is the ninth or 10th debate. What I've been watching here, this back and forth, and these attacks, some of them are personal. I think we're fixing to lose the election to Hillary Clinton if we don't stop this.

(APPLAUSE)

KASICH: I mean, the fact is — you know what? I would suggest, why don't we take off all the negative ads and all the negative comments down from television and let us just talk about what we're for, and let's sell that, and the Republican Party will be stronger as a result...

GARRETT: ... What are you for on immigration?

KASICH: ... (OFF MIKE) (INAUDIBLE) First of all, I'm for sealing the border, O.K.? And then I'm for a guest worker program. People can come in, work and go back home. We haven't closed the border because special interests, I believe, blocked it. Then, we have 11 and a half million people here. If they have not committed a crime since they've been here, make them pay a fine and some back taxes, and give them a path to legalization, never to citizenship.

It is not going to happen that we're going to run around and try to drag 11 and a half million people out of their homes.

I'll tell you this. Within the first hundred days, I will send a plan like this to the Congress of the United States, and if I'm president, I'll bet you dollar to doughnuts right now, it will pass.

(BELL RINGING)

That is a reasonable proposal that the people of this country, in my judgment, will support, and so will the bulk of the Congress of the United States.

(APPLAUSE)

STRASSEL: Moving subjects. Dr. Carson, this week Morgan Stanley agreed to pay a \$3.2 billion fine to state and federal authorities for contributing to the mortgage crisis. You have a lot of Democrats out saying that we should be jailing more executives, so two questions.

Should financial executives be held legally responsible for financial crisis, and do you think fines like these are an effective way to deter companies from future behavior like that?

CARSON: Well, first of all, please go to my website, bencarson.com, and read my immigration policy, O.K.? Because it actually makes sense.

Now, the — as far as these fines are concerned, you know? Here's the big problem. We've got all these government regulators, and all they're doing is running around looking for people to fine. And we've got 645 different federal agencies and sub-agencies. Way, way too many, and they don't have anything else to do.

I think what we really need to do is start trimming the regulatory agencies rather than going after the people who are trying to increase the viability, economic viability of our society. Now, that doesn't mean there aren't some people out there who are doing bad things. But I'm not sure that the way to solve that problem is by increasing all the regulatory burden. You know, when you consider how much regulations cost us each year, you know? \$2 trillion dollars per family, \$24,000 per family, that happens to be the same level as the poverty level...

(BELL RINGING)

CARSON: ... for a family of four. If you want to get rid of poverty, get rid of all the regulations.

DICKERSON: Senator Cruz, I have a question for you. Speaker Paul Ryan has made a big commitment to trying to lift the 50 million poor out of poverty. Arthur Brooks, who is the president of the American Enterprise Institute, says, quote, "If we are not warriors for the poor every day, free enterprise has no matter." How you have been, in your campaign, a warrior for the poor?

CRUZ: I think it is a very important question because the people who have been hurt the most in the Obama economy had been the most vulnerable. It's been young people. It's been Hispanics. It's been African-Americans. It's been single moms. We have the lowest percentage of Americans working today in any year since 1977.

And the sad reality is big government, massive taxes, massive regulation, doesn't work. What we need to do instead is bring back booming economic growth, let — small businesses are the heart of the economy. Two-thirds of all new jobs come from small businesses. If we want to lift people out of poverty — you know, I think of these issues from the perspective of my dad.

My dad fled Cuba in 1957. He was just 18. He couldn't speak English. He had nothing. He had \$100 in his underwear. And he washed dishes making 50 cents an hour and paid his way through school. Today, my dad is a pastor. He travels the country preaching the gospel.

Now, I think about all of these issues. How would it impact my dad when he was washing dishes? If we had Obamacare in place right now, the odds are very high my father would have been laid off, because it's teenaged kids like my dad who have gotten laid off. If he didn't get laid off, the odds are high he would have had his hours forcibly reduced to 28, 29 hours a week.

We need to lift the burdens on small businesses so you have jobs, and we need welfare reform that gets people off of welfare and back to work.

GARRETT: Mr. Trump — Mr. Trump.

(APPLAUSE)

I was with you in Pendleton, South Carolina, earlier this week at the Rodeo Arena. It was a bit chilly there. You promised the crowd, and they rose to their feet, that if Ford or a company like

were to move a factory to Mexico, you would try to stop it or threaten them with a 35 percent tax or tariff on every car sold.

TRUMP: Or a tax.

GARRETT: Right. So my question is, based on your understanding of the presidency, where do you derive that power? Would you need the consent of Congress to go along? And do you see the presidency as a perch from which you can cajole and/or threaten private industry to do something you think is better for the U.S. economy?

TRUMP: I would build consensus with Congress, and Congress would agree with me. I'll give you an example, because I don't like the idea of using executive orders like our president. It is a disaster what he's doing. I would build consensus, but consensus means you have to work hard. You have to cajole. You have to get them into the Oval Office and get them all together, and you have to make deals.

Let me just tell you, I mentioned before, China — big Chinese company bought the Chicago Exchange. Kerry is moving — and if you saw the people, because they have a video of the announcement that Carrier is moving to Mexico, O.K.?

Well, I'll tell you what. I would go right now to Carrier and I would say I am going to work awfully hard. You're going to make air conditioners now in Mexico. You're going to get all of these 1,400 people that are being laid off — they're laid off. They were crying. They were — it was a very sad situation. You're going to go to Mexico. You're going to make air conditioners in Mexico, you're going to put them across our border with no tax.

I'm going to tell them right now, I am going to get consensus from Congress and we're going to tax you when those air conditioners come. So stay where you are or build in the United States, because we are killing ourselves with trade pacts that are no good for us and no good for our workers.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: All right. Mr. Trump, thank you so much. We're going to take a break for a moment. We'll be back in a moment with the CBS News Republican debate.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DICKERSON: We're back now from Greenville, South Carolina, with the candidates for the Republican presidential nomination.

Mr. Trump, I have a question for you. Presidents have to, on the one hand, be firm, but also be flexible.

You have been flexible and changed your opinion on a number of things, from abortion to Hillary Clinton. But you have said, rightly, that it's just like Ronald Reagan, who changed his mind on things.

But at the same time, you're criticizing Senator Cruz for what you say is a change on immigration. He disputes that, of course.

So, why is your change of opinion make you like Reagan, and when he changes his opinion, it's a huge character flaw?

(LAUGHTER)

TRUMP: John, in life you have flexibility. You do have flexibility. When you're fighting wars, you're going one way, you have a plan. It's a beautiful plan. It can't lose. The enemy makes a change, and all of a sudden you have to change.

You have to have flexibility. In Ronald Reagan, though, in terms of what we're talking about, was the great example. He was a somewhat liberal Democrat who became a somewhat, pretty strong conservative. He became — most importantly, he became a great president. He made many of the changes that I've made — I mean, I've seen as I grew up, I've seen, and as I get older and wiser, and I feel that I am a conservative.

Now, I also feel I'm a common-sense conservative, because some of the views I don't agree with. And I think a lot of people agree with me, obviously, based on what's happening.

DICKERSON: Which conservative idea don't you agree with?

TRUMP: Well, I think these people always hit me with eminent domain, and frankly, I'm not in love with eminent domain. But eminent domain is something you need very strongly.

When Jeb had said, "You used eminent domain privately for a parking lot." It wasn't for a parking lot. The state of New Jersey — too bad Chris Christie is not here, he could tell you — the state of New Jersey went to build a very large tower that was going to employ thousands of people.

I mean, it was going to really do a big job in terms of economic development. Now, just so you understand, I got hit very hard. It's private, it's private eminent domain. You understand that they took over a stadium in Texas, and they used private eminent domain, but he just found that out after he made the charge.

DICKERSON: All right. Governor Bush, I think by "they," he is referring to your brother, these on the hook for your brother.

TRUMP: Yeah. Well, Jeb wouldn't have known about it.

BUSH: So, there — so, there is all sorts of intrigue about where I disagree with my brother, there would be one right there. You should not use eminent domain for private purposes.

A baseball stadium or a parking lot for a limo...

(LAUGHTER)

TRUMP: You shouldn't have used it then, Jeb.

DICKERSON: But that was his brother.

BUSH: It's very different. Transmission lines, pipe lines, bridges and highways. All of that is proper use of eminent domain. Not to take an elderly woman's home to build a parking lot so that high-rollers can come from New York City to build casinos in Atlantic City.

STRASSEL: Senator Cruz, you were mentioned in the mix here, your response?

CRUZ: You know, flexibility is a good thing, but it shouldn't — you shouldn't be flexible on core principles. I like Donald, he is an amazing entertainer, but his policies for most of his life...

TRUMP: Thank you very much, I appreciate it.

CRUZ: For most of his life, his policies have been very, very liberal. For most of his life, he has described himself as very pro-choice and as a supporter of partial birth abortion. Right now, today, as a candidate, he supports federal taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood. I disagree with him on that.

That's a matter of principle, and I'll tell you...

TRUMP: You probably are worse than Jeb Bush. You are single biggest liar. This guy's lied — let me just tell you, this guy lied about Ben Carson when he took votes away from Ben Carson in Iowa, and he just continues. Today, we had robo-calls saying, "Donald Trump is not going to run in South Carolina," where I'm leading by a lot.

I'm not going to vote for Ted Cruz. This is the same thing he did to Ben Carson. This guy will say anything, nasty guy. Now I know why he doesn't have one endorsement from any of his colleagues.

CRUZ: Don, I need to go on...

TRUMP: He's a nasty guy.

CRUZ: I will say, it is fairly remarkable to see Donald defending Ben after he called, "pathological," and compared him to a child molester. Both of which were offensive and wrong.

But let me say this — you notice Donald didn't disagree with the substance that he supports taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood. And Donald has this weird pattern, when you point to his own record, he screams, "Liar, liar, liar." You want to go...

TRUMP: Where did I support it? Where did I...

CRUZ: You want to go...

(CROSSTALK)

TRUMP: Again, where did I support it?

CRUZ: If you want to watch the video, go to our website at Tedcruz.org.

TRUMP: Hey Ted, where I support it?

CRUZ: You can see it out of Donald's own mouth.

TRUMP: Where did I support?

CRUZ: You supported it when we were battling over defunding Planned Parenthood. You went on...

TRUMP: That's a lot of lies.

CRUZ: You said, "Planned Parenthood does wonderful things and we should not defund it."

TRUMP: It does do wonderful things, but not as it relates to abortion.

CRUZ: So I'll tell you what...

TRUMP: Excuse me. Excuse me, there are wonderful things having to do with women's health.

CRUZ: You see, you and I...

TRUMP: But not when it comes to abortion.

CRUZ: Don, the reasoned principle matters. The reasoned principle matters, sadly was illustrated by the first questions today. The next president is going to appoint one, two, three, four Supreme Court justices.

If Donald Trump is president, he will appoint liberals. If Donald Trump is president, your Second Amendment will gone...

(CROSSTALK)

TRUMP: Hold on...

CRUZL You know how I know that?

DICKERSON: Hold on, gentleman, I'm going to turn this car around.

TRUMP: Ted Cruz told your brother that he wanted John Roberts to be on the United States Supreme Court. They both pushed him, he twice approved Obamacare.

DICKERSON: All right, gentlemen.

BUSH: My name was mentioned twice.

DICKERSON: Well, hold on. We're going to — gentlemen, we're in danger of driving this into the dirt.

DICKERSON: Senator Rubio, I'd like you to jump in here...

BUSH: He called me a liar.

DICKERSON: I understand, you're on deck, governor.

BUSH: Also, he talked about one of my heroes, Ronald Reagan.

Ronald Reagan was a liberal maybe in the 1950s. He was a conservative reformed governor for eight years before he became president, and no one should suggest he made an evolution for political purposes. He was a conservative, and he didn't tear down people like Donald Trump is. He tore down the Berlin Wall.

TRUMP: O.K., governor.

BUSH: He was a great guy.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Senator Cruz, 30 seconds on this one.

CRUZ: I did not nominate John Roberts. I would not have nominated John Roberts.

TRUMP: You pushed him. You pushed him.

CRUZ: I supported...

TRUMP: You worked with him and you pushed him. Why do you lie?

CRUZ: You need to learn to not interrupt people.

TRUMP: Why do you lie?

CRUZ: Donald, adults learn...

TRUMP: You pushed him.

CRUZ: Adults learn not to interrupt people.

TRUMP: Yeah, yeah, I know, you're an adult.

CRUZ: I did not nominate him. I would not have nominated him. I would've nominated my former boss Liberman, who was Justice Scalia's first law clerk. And you know how I know that Donald's Supreme Court justices will be liberals? Because his entire life, he support liberals from Jimmy Carter, to Hillary Clinton, to John Kerry.

In 2004, he contributed to John Kerry. Nobody who cares about judges would contribute to John Kerry, Hillary Clinton, Chuck Schumer and Harry Reid.

DICKERSON: We're going to switch...

CRUZ: That's what Donald Trump does.

DICKERSON: We're going to switch here to Senator Marco Rubio.

Senator Marco Rubio, please weigh in.

RUBIO: On anything I want?

DICKERSON: I thought you had a point?

RUBIO: Well, let me talk about poverty.

DICKERSON: I thought you had a point you wanted to make.

RUBIO: I do.

BUSH: That was me.

RUBIO: I had something important.

DICKERSON: You're on deck, sir.

RUBIO: The issue of poverty is critical, because for me, poverty is the — is — is free enterprise not reaching people. Today, we have antipoverty programs that don't cure poverty. We don't cure poverty in America. Our antipoverty programs have become, in some instances, a way of life, a lifestyle.

Now, we do need antipoverty programs, you can't have free enterprise programs without them, but not as a way of life. And so I have a very specific proposal on this and I don't — in 60 seconds, I can't describe it all, but it basically turns the program over to states. It allows states to

design innovative programs that cure poverty, because I think Nikki Haley will do a better job curing poverty than Barack Obama.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Senator, I wanted to ask you, just going back to immigration, in the last debate, you listed your series of accomplishments in the Senate. One thing you left off was — was immigration reform. Is it the case that in your list of accomplishments you can't mention that?

RUBIO: Well, no. It's not the case. It didn't pass, and we haven't solved immigration in this country. It's still a problem. It is worse today than it was three years ago, which is worse than it was five years ago. And it has to be confronted and solved.

But the only way forward on this issue — you asked a question about flexibility. Let me tell you about that. One of the things that you need in leadership is the ability to understand that to get things done, you must figure out the way to get it done. You will not pass comprehensive immigration reform. People do not trust the federal government.

They want to see the law being enforced. They want to see illegal immigration come under control. They want to see that wall. They want to see E-Verify. They want to see all of these things working, and then they will have a conversation with you about what do you do with people that have been here a long time that are otherwise, you know, not criminals. But they're not going to do it until you first enforce the law.

DICKERSON: Dr. Carson, I have...

(APPLAUSE)

Dr. Carson, I have a question for you. Candidates are...

CARSON: Before you ask the question, can I respond to the — you know, they mentioned my name a couple of times.

DICKERSON: All right. You have 30 seconds, Doctor.

CARSON: All right. Well, first of all, you know, so many people have said to me, "You need to scream and jump and down — jump up and down like everybody else." Is that really what you want? What we just saw? I don't think so.

And you know, I — when I got into this race, I decided to look under the hood of the engine of what runs Washington, D.C., and my first inclination was to run away, but I didn't do it because I'm thinking about our children and the fact that we are the United States of America. And anybody up here is going to be much better than what's going to come on the other side. And what happened tonight with — with Justice Scalia tells you that we cannot afford to lose this election, and we cannot be tearing each other down.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Dr. Carson, I — let me ask you a different question. When you were — you were the first one, really, to talk about political correctness. Everybody now talks about it, but that was really what sparked your — your rise. Politicians are often accused of glossing over any hard choices people have to make, just always selling happy, nice things. So in the — in the spirit of saying something that might be politically incorrect, tell the voters something that they need to hear but that might be politically incorrect?

CARSON: Well, first of all, I'm not a politician, so I'm never going to become a politician. But here's what — here's what people need to know. People need to know that free college is not — it's a non-starter. You know, you have to look at our economic situation. We're on the verge of economic collapse and, you know, we're — it's not just the \$19 trillion, but it's also the \$200 trillion in unfunded liabilities.

What we need to think about is, what does that do to the average person? When we have a debt of that nature, it causes the Fed to change their policy, it causes the central bank to keep the — the rates low, and who does that affect? Mr. Average, who used to go to the bank every Friday and put part of his check in the bank and watch it grow over three decades and be able to retire with a nice nest egg, that's gone. That part of the American dream is gone.

All of these things are disappearing, and Bernie Sanders and people like Hillary Clinton blame it on the rich. They say those evil rich people, if we take their money we can solve the problem. It's not the evil rich people. It's the irresponsible, evil government.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Governor Kasich. Governor Kasich, you've been described as the Democrats' favorite Republican. You talked about in New Hampshire, Democrats would come up to you and say, "I hope you win." Why will that help you win a Republican nomination?

KASICH: You know, John, I think all people are the same. Look, I did 106 town halls, and I've been doing them left and right here in South Carolina. The first thing we have to do is grow the economy, and I know the formula because I was chairman in Washington when we balanced the budget and created so many jobs, and the same that we've been able to do in Ohio. You need common-sense regulations so small business can flourish, you need lower taxes both on business and individuals, and you need a fiscal plan to be able to get ourselves in a situation where people can predict a little bit about the future when it comes to the fiscal issues.

And when you have that formula, combined with work force that's trained, you can explode the economy and create many jobs. I have done it twice, and I want to go back to Washington and do it again.

John, the thing is, is I think that there are people now, these blue-collar Democrats — my dad was a blue-collar Democrat — the Democratic Party has left them. When they're arguing about being socialists, they've left — they have lost those blue-collar Democrats.

And you know what I think they get out of me — is my sense of what they get out of me, and it's embarrassment about campaigns, you brag about yourself.

But I think I'm a uniter, I think people sense it. I think they know I have the experience, and that I'm a man that can give people hope and a sense that they have the opportunity rise. And I'll tell you, I love these blue-collar Democrats, because they're going to vote for us come next fall, promise you that.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Mr. Trump, let me ask you a question. Presidents in both parties say that the one thing you need in your administration is somebody who can tell you you're wrong.

You don't necessarily seem like somebody who has somebody who tells you you're wrong a lot. Can you tell us of an instance where somebody has said, "Donald Trump, you're wrong," and you listened to them?

TRUMP: Well, I would say my wife tells me I'm wrong all the time. And I listen.

(LAUGHTER)

DICKERSON: About what?

TRUMP: Oh, let me just say — look, I am very open — I hired top people. I've had great success. I built a great, great company. I don't need to do this. I'm self-funding. I'm spending a lot of money. I've spent — like in New Hampshire, I spent \$3 million. Jeb bush spent \$44 million. He came in five, and I came in No. 1.

That's what the country needs, folks. I spent 3, he spends 42 of their money, of special interest money. And it's just — this is not going to make — excuse me. This is not going to make our country great again.

This is not what we need in our country. We need people that know what the hell they're doing. And politicians, they're all talk, they're no action. And that's why people are supporting me.

I do listen to people. I hire experts. I hire top, top people. And I do listen. And you know what? Sometimes they're wrong. You have to know what to do, when to do it. But sometimes they're wrong.

DICKERSON: Let me — something, in talking to voters that they wish somebody would tell you to cut it out is the profanity. What's your reaction to that?

(APPLAUSE)

TRUMP: Well, I'll tell you — over the years, I've made many speeches. People have asked me, big companies have asked me to make speeches, and friends of mine that run big companies on success.

And occasion, in order to sort of really highlight something, I'll use a profanity. One of the profanities that I got credited with using, that I didn't use, was a very bad word, two weeks ago, that I never used.

I said, "You." And everybody said "Oh, he didn't say anything wrong." But you bleeped it, so everyone thinks I said the — I didn't say anything. I never said the word.

It is very unfair, that criticism. Now, I will say this, with all of that being said, I have said I will not do it at all, because if I say a word that's a little bit off color, a little bit, it ends up being a headline.

I will not do it again. I was a very good student at a great school not using — by the way — not using profanity is very easy.

DICKERSON: All right. O.K. Governor Bush, I'd like to ask you...

BUSH: Yeah, well, I have got to respond to this.

DICKERSON: Well, can I — how about you respond, and then you can answer the question I'm about to ask you.

BUSH: Sounds like a good plan.

DICKERSON: It'll be...

BUSH: Or you could ask me two questions, so I could get two minutes instead of one.

DICKERSON: If we adjudicate this, the night will be over.

Governor, in 2012, you said that your father and Ronald Reagan would have a hard time in today's Republican Party, based on their records of trying to find accommodation and finding some degree of common ground.

Do you still feel that way?

BUSH: I think the dysfunction in Washington is really dangerous, that's what I think. And we need a proven leader that has a record of solving problems, someone who doesn't cut and run; someone who could be a commander in chief to unite our country around common purposes; someone who doesn't disparage people.

Someone that doesn't brag, for example, that he has been bankrupt four times and it was great, because he could use the legal system.

Someone...

TRUMP: That's not — let me respond. That's another lie. I never went bankrupt!

(CROSSTALK)

DICKERSON: Hold on, Mr. Trump.

(CROSSTALK)

TRUMP: No, but it's another lie.

DICKERSON: Hold on, Mr. Trump.

TRUMP: No, but it's another lie. This guy doesn't know what he's talking about. Just a lie.

BUSH: We need someone with a proven record to be able to forge consensus to solve problems.

And right now, both Republicans and Democrats in Washington don't get it. People are struggling — 63 percent of Americans can't make a \$500 car payment. Most Americans are living paycheck to paycheck. And we need someone has a proven record of growing the economy, reforming the things that are broken.

And I'm that person.

DICKERSON: O.K., Mr. Trump, your response.

(APPLAUSE)

TRUMP: Let me just tell you. Jeb goes around saying, just like the biggest business leaders in this country, I've used the laws of the land to chapter — I bought a company, I threw it immediately into a chapter, I made a great deal. I uses the laws to my benefit, because I run a company.

BUSH: Yeah...

TRUMP: Excuse me, Jeb!

BUSH: Yeah.

TRUMP: I never went bankrupt, never.

Now — but you don't want to say that. Now, let me just say, I've used it, just like the biggest leaders in the country. Let me tell you something — Florida. Florida, he put so much debt on

Florida. You know, we keep saying he's a wonderful governor, wonderful governor. He put so much debt on Florida, and he increased spending so much that as soon as he got out of office, Florida crashed.

I happened to be there. It's my second home. Florida crashed. He didn't do a good job as governor.

BUSH: Here we go.

TRUMP: And you haven't — excuse me, you haven't heard that. You listen to the good record in Florida. You take a look at what happened, as soon as that year ended he got out, Florida crashed. Too much debt.

He loaded it up with debt, and his spending went through the roof.

(CROSSTALK)

TRUMP: By the way...

DICKERSON: The bells are ringing, sir.

TRUMP: ... he was not a good governor.

BUSH: Here's the record. Here's the record. We led the nation in job growth seven out of eight years. When I left there was \$9 billion of reserves, 35 percent of general revenue. No state came close to that.

TRUMP: Take a look at your numbers.

BUSH: When I — during my time, we were one of the two states to go to AAA bond rating. We didn't go bankrupt like Trump did and call it success when people are laid off, when vendors don't get paid. That's not success.

What we did was create an environment where people had a chance to have income. Personal income during my time went up by 4.4 percent.

TRUMP: Florida went down the tubes right after he got out of office.

BUSH: The government grew by...

TRUMP: Went right down because of what he did to it.

BUSH: ... half of that.

DICKERSON: All right. Thank you.

Senator Rubio, I want to ask you a 30-second question, no president can...

RUBIO: Thirty seconds.

DICKERSON: No — well, I'll ask the question, you do what you want.

RUBIO: I speak fast.

(LAUGHTER)

DICKERSON: No president can know everything, right? So a smart leader knows how to ask questions. So if you could talk to any previous president, what's the smart question you would ask about that job that you would want to know?

RUBIO: Well, I think one of the presidents — well, the president I grew up under was Ronald Reagan. And Reagan had a vision for America's future. And if you think about what Ronald Reagan inherited, it's not unlike what the next president is going to inherit.

This is the worst president we've had in 35 years, 35 years back would have made it Jimmy Carter. That's what Ronald Reagan inherited. And I think the question you would ask is, how did you inspire again the American people to believe in the future?

How did you — what did it take to ensure that the American people, despite all of the difficulties of the time — you know, you look back at that time, the American military was in decline. Our standing in the world was in decline. We had hostages being held in Iran. Our economy was in bad shape.

The American people were scared about the future. They were scared about what kind of country their children were going to live in and inherit. And yet somehow Ronald Reagan was able to instill in our nation and in our people a sense of optimism.

And he turned America around because of that vision and ultimately because of that leadership. I wish Ronald Reagan was still around. This country needs someone just like that.

And if our next president is even half the president Ronald Reagan was, America is going to be greater than it has ever been.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: All right. That's going to have to be it there, Senator Rubio. We have got to go to a break. We will be right back with the CBS News Republican debate in Greenville, South Carolina.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DICKERSON: Time now for closing statements. You will each have one minute, and we'll begin with Governor Kasich.

KASICH: Well, I want to thank the people of South Carolina. You've been fantastic. And look, what I want you to know is I'm going to send a lot of power, money and influence back to where we all live. But as I've traveled around South Carolina, I've noticed something. You know, it's that people have a sense that you're not going to wait on a president. You know, when I was a kid, we didn't wait on presidents to come to that little blue-collar town and fix things.

You know, the Lord made all of us special. The Lord wants us to be connected. I believe we're part of a very big mosaic. And I'll send the power back. And whoever gets elected president here, hopefully will take care of the issue of jobs and wages and Social Security and the border.

But the spirit of the America rests in all of us. It's in our guts. It's taking care of our children. It's taking care of the lady next door who just lost her husband. It's fixing the schools where we live and telling kids to stay off drugs. You see, I think what the Lord wants is for us to engage, and in America, the spirit of America doesn't come from the top down. The spirit of America rests in us. And I want to call on everyone in America to double down and realize that you were made special to heal this country and lift it for everyone.

Thank you all very much. And I hope I can have your vote in South Carolina.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Dr. Carson — Dr. Carson, you're next.

CARSON: This is the first generation not expected to do better than their parents. Some people say it's the new normal, but there's nothing normal about it in an exceptional American. I, like you, am a member of we, the people, and we know that our country is heading off the cliff.

Joseph Stalin said if you want to bring America down you, have to undermine three things: our spiritual life, our patriotism and our morality. We, the people, can stop that decline, starting right here in South Carolina. If all the people who say, "I love Ben Carson and his policies, but he can't win," vote for me, not only can we win, but we can turn this thing around.

You know, we have this manipulation by the political class and by the media telling us who we're supposed to pick and how we're supposed to live. We, the people, are the only people who will determine that. And if you elect me as your next president, I promise you that you will get somebody who is accountable to everybody and beholden to no one. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Governor — Governor Bush.

BUSH: Thank you all very much. The next president is going to be confronted with an unforeseen challenge. That's almost certain. It could be a pandemic, a major natural disaster or an attack on our country. The question for South Carolinians and Americans is who do you want to have sitting behind the big desk in the Oval Office? Because that's the question. It's not the

things we're talking about today. It's the great challenge that may happen. I believe I will have a steady hand as commander in chief and president of the United States. I will unite this country around common purposes because I did it as governor of the state of Florida.

When I was governor, we had eight hurricanes and four tropical storms in 16 months. Our state was on its back. We recovered far faster than what people thought because we led.

We want to challenge rather than cutting and running. That's what we need in Washington, D.C. We need someone with a servant's heart that has a backbone, that isn't going to focus on polls and focus groups. The focus will be on the American people to keep them safe and secure.

I ask for your vote next Saturday.

(APPLAUSE)

GARRETT: Thank you, governor.

STRASSEL: And now, Marco Rubio.

RUBIO: Thank you, and thank you for watching tonight.

This is a difficult time in our country. Our economy's flat, it's not creating the jobs it once did, and people struggle living paycheck to paycheck. Our culture's in trouble. Wrong is considered right and right is considered wrong.

All the things that once held our families together are now under constant assault. And around the world, America's reputation is in decline. Our allies don't trust us, our adversaries don't fear us, Iran captures our sailors and parades them before the world on video.

These are difficult times, but 2016 can be a turning point. That's why I'm running for president, and that's why I'm here today to ask you for your vote. If you elect me president, we are going to re-embrace free enterprise so that everyone can go as far as their talent and their work will take them.

We are going to be a country that says that "life begins at conception and life is worthy of the protection of our laws." We're going to be a country that says "that marriage is between one man and one woman." We are going to be a country that says, "The constitution and the rights that it talks about do not come from our president, they come from our creator." We are going to be loyal to our allies like Israel, not enemies like Iran. And we will rebuild the U.S. military so no one will there test it.

Vote for me. I will unify this party. I will grow it. We will win this election, and we will make the 21st century a new American century.

(APPLAUSE)

DICKERSON: Senator Cruz? Senator Cruz, your closing statement?

CRUZ: South Carolina, you have a critical choice to make. Our country literally hangs in the balance.

Do you want another Washington deal maker who will do business as usual, cut deals with the Democrats, grow government, grow debt and give up our fundamental liberties? Or do you want a conservative, a proven conservative that will stand and fight with you each and every day?

Listen, repealing Obamacare is not going to be easy. Passing a simple flat tax that abolishes the I.R.S. is not going to be easy, but if we stand with the American people, we can do it.

And today, we saw just how great the stakes are. Two branches of government hang in the balance. Not just the presidency but the Supreme Court. If we get this wrong, if we nominate the wrong candidates, the Second Amendment, life, marriage, religious liberty — every one of those hangs in the balance.

My little girls are here. I don't want to look my daughters in the eyes and say, "We lost their liberties." Who do you know will defend the Constitution and Bill of Rights? And as a commander in chief, who do you know will stand up to our enemies as the clam, steady, deliberate, strength to defeat our enemies, to secure our borders and to keep America safe.

DICKERSON: Mr. Trump, your closing statements?

TRUMP: Thank you.

Politicians are all talk, no action. You've seen where they've take you to. We are 19 trillion dollars right now. It's going to be increased with that horrible budget from a month ago that was just approved by politicians.

We need a change. We need a very big change. We're going to make our country great again.

I say this every night, every day, every afternoon, and it's so true — we don't win anymore. We don't win with health care, we don't win with ISIS and the military, we don't take care of our vets, we don't care of our borders, we don't win. We are going to start winning again. We are not going to be controlled by people that are special interests and lobbyists that everybody here has contributed to. And you know what, they do exactly what those folks want them to do.

We are going to make our country great, and we're going to do the right thing. I'm working for you. I'm not working for anybody else.

Thank you very much.

STRASSEL: We'll be back with a few final thoughts in a moment.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DICKERSON: So that's nine Republican debates knocked down and at least three to go.

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