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Driving the Conversation:

Arena Ref: David Mark

Can Paul Ryan boost Romney's poll numbers?

- Roger Pilon Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute :

Ryan is the shot in the arm that Romney needed.

If last night's "60 Minutes" interview of the two is any indication, Romney is finally focused on the big issues. It's rare that a vice-presidential pick adds much to a ticket, but this case may be the exception. So, yes, Ryan can boost Romney's poll numbers. Just look at the weekend crowds.

Ryan put it simply: The country is going broke. You'd never know that from listening to the Democratic response to the pick. For that side, it's all about what the Romney-Ryan team will take away from seniors, women, students, and the middle class - as if all of that "stuff" were free from government. They're counting on seniors being too senile, women being too emotional, young people being too uneducated, and the middle-class being too focused on their mortgages to understand the situation we're in, where we borrow 40 percent of what we spend and add trillions to the national debt every year. The Ryan budget won't push Granny over the cliff. The Obama team's head-in-the-sand will.

And it isn't as if the Obama team doesn't know exactly what they're doing. In Obama's latest ad, run last night during the Olympics closing ceremonies, he himself states plainly that the nation faces two fundamentally different visions of where we're going. But he talks only about government benefits, not about costs - the "Life of Julia" nonsense. It's a cynical view of the American public - a view that this election, more than any in recent memory, will put to the test.