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Presidential debate: 7 questions that should be asked ... and probably won't

By: Allen McDuffee on October 3, 2012

Today's presidential debate in Denver on domestic policy will hit six topics over the course of an hour and a half. Moderator Jim Lehrer of the PBS NewsHour can't possibly get in all the questions on the minds of Americans.

Here are seven questions that policy experts think should be asked, but probably won't:

Tara McGuinness, CAP Action Fund: American women are a majority, and will likely swing the outcome of this election, I hope the debate will ask what will the candidates do to change that women make 77 cents for every dollar that men earn (and Latino women make closer to 50 cents on the dollar)? What would you do to address this pay inequity and make workplaces work for working moms?

Nicholas Eberstadt, American Enterprise Institute: Over the past 50 years, the number of working age American drawing government disability payments has exploded. According to government statistics, in fact, there may now be more working age beneficiaries of disability programs than employees in the entire U.S. manufacturing sector. All this despite the fact that Americans of working age are healthier than ever before in history. The Social Security Program alone is paying out more than \$100 billion each year to such disability claims. What will you, as president, do to reduce or eliminate abuse of our federal disability entitlement programs?

John Hudak, Brookings Institution: Transportation systems and infrastructure in the U.S. support the economic lives of businesses and consumers. Lately, infighting in Congress has changed a formerly bipartisan issue into a highly partisan one, leaving

transportation underfunded and in need of assistance. What role do you see for the federal government in the context of transportation and what specific plans do you have to fulfill that role?

Mike Gonzalez, Heritage Foundation: Conservatives see this country as an historic experiment in which government has let families and individuals pursue their dreams, whether they fail or succeed. Do you see this view as accurate or inaccurate, and if the former, do you want to preserve this America or change it?

David Callahan, Demos: Do you think economic inequality in America is a problem and, if so, how would you address it?

Melissa Boteach, Center for American Progress: What would you do in your first 100 days to address child poverty?

Tim Lynch, Cato Institute: Do you think the president has the power to hold an American citizen incommunicado as an “enemy combatant” and keep that person from meeting with an attorney? As you know, President Bush asserted such a power when he was in office.