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Posted at 04:33 PM ET, 09/12/2011

## 6 Questions for tonight's CNN Tea Party Debate

By Allen McDuffee

At 8PM EST, Republican candidates will square off in Tampa, FL in the first ever CNN Tea Party Debate.

No moderator can do everything perfectly or ask the questions on all of our minds. Here are six questions on the minds of think tankers. (Of course, some couldn't limit themselves to just one.)

•**Matt Yglesias**, [Center for American Progress](#): Should we eliminate the minimum wage? And if not, where's Congress' authority in the Constitution to establish one?

•**David Boaz**, [Cato Institute](#): The national debt has increased from \$1 trillion in 1980 to \$5.7 trillion when George W. Bush took office to \$10.6 trillion when Barack Obama became president to \$14.7 trillion now, and it's scheduled to reach \$24 trillion in 2021. Assuming you think this is a bad thing, what would you do about it? Is trimming one or two trillion dollars off a \$24 trillion national debt sufficient to create a sustainable economic future?

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And...

Many of you have professed your devotion to the Tenth Amendment, which declares that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution...are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people." Can such a commitment to federalism and decentralized government be reconciled with a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage in all 50 states? Or, come to think of it, with the No Child Left Behind Act and federal education regulations generally?

•**Elisabeth Jacobs**, [Brookings Institution](#): Economists concur that income inequality has skyrocketed over the last thirty years, and the recent recession has done little to slow the trend. The rich are richer, the poor are poorer, and the middle class has atrophied. Is this a problem for American society? If so, what should the federal government do about it?

And...

The United States is often heralded as the "land of opportunity," but we now fall behind many European countries when it comes to economic mobility from one generation to the next. What should the federal government's role be in promoting economic opportunity for workers and their families?

•**David Callahan**, [Demos](#): If you were president in the 1950s, would you have supported huge public spending on the Interstate Highway System? And do you support major infrastructure investments today given that China and other competitors are creating today's equivalent of modern highways as they invest in high speed rail, modern airports, and faster broadband?

By Allen McDuffee | 04:33 PM ET, 09/12/2011

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