

The following text is a bi-product of the closed captioning of this program's broadcast, and should not be considered a verbatim transcript of the event.

THIS IS A NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC TELEVISION SPECIAL PRESENTATION. THE NEW HAMPSHIRE POLITICAL LIBRARY AND NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL PRESENTS POLITICS AND EGGS, 2007 CANDIDATE SERIES, WITH FORMER NORTH CAROLINA SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS. WITH SUPPORT FROM B.A.E. SYSTEMS, CLEAN HARBORS ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND FIDELITY INVESTMENTS.

>>> WELCOME TO THIS THIS MORNING'S INSTALLMENT OF POLITICS AND EGGS WITH SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS: OUR PROGRAM NOTE, THIS PROGRAM WILL AIR ON NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC TELEVISION ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8. THAT'S TOMORROW AT 9:00 P.M. IT WILL BE WEB CAST AS OF TOMORROW AT WWW.POLITICALLIBRARY.ORG

AS ALWAYS WE NEED TO THANK OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS OF THIS EVENT WITHOUT WHOM WE COULD NOT WELCOME EVERY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TO THIS FORUM. THEIR NAMES ARE PRINTED ON THE CARDS IN FRONT OF YOU AND FLY ON THE BANNERS AROUND THE ROOM. ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR PARTNERS IN THE NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL, JIM BRETT, LARRY DAYBAR, HERE TODAY. I'M GOING TO BE VERY BRIEF BECAUSE YOU CAME TO HEAR THE SENATOR. WE ALWAYS LIKE TO PROVIDE CONTEXT.

JOHN EDWARDS WAS RAISED IN ROBBINS, NORTH CAROLINA. HE WORKED HIS WAY THROUGH NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY, GRADUATING WITH HIGH HONORS IN 1974. EARNED A LAW DEGREE IN 1977 FROM UNIVERSITY EVER NORTH CAROLINA. FROM THERE HE SPENT A 20-YEAR CAREER IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION AND THEN MOVED ON TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE IN 1998, WHERE HE SERVED A TERM. IN CONGRESS SENATOR EDWARDS QUICKLY EMERGED AS A CHAMPION FOR THE ISSUES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO FAMILIES. QUALITY HEALTH CARE, BETTER SCHOOLS, CIVIL LIBERTIES, PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT, SAVING SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE AND REFORMING THE WAYS THAT CAMPAIGNS ARE FINANCED.

SENATOR EDWARDS BROUGHT A POSITIVE MESSAGE OF CHANGE TO THE 2004 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY CYCLE. DURING THAT SEASON HE SPOKE ABOUT THE TWO AMERICAS THAT EXIST IN OUR COUNTRY TODAY. ONE FOR THE PEOPLE AT THE TOP, WHO HAVE EVERYTHING THEY NEED, AND ONE FOR EVERYBODY ELSE, WHO STRUGGLE TO GET BY. THIS POWERFUL MESSAGE RESONATED IN THAT CAMPAIGN. SENATOR KERRY PICKED SENATOR EDWARDS TO SERVE AS HIS RUNNING MATE IN 2004. THE SENATOR AND HIS WIFE ARE WELL KNOWN TO NEW HAMPSHIRE AUDIENCES BECAUSE THEY CAMPAIGN IN NEW HAMPSHIRE IN A WAY

THAT IS EXPECTED BY NEW HAMPSHIRE VOTERS, WHICH IS TO BE HERE TO ENGAGE IN DEBATE.

WITH THAT, WELCOME, SENATOR EDWARDS.

[APPLAUSE]

>>> THANK YOU. GOOD MORNING TO EVERYONE. GLAD TO BE HERE WITH YOU. I ACTUALLY AM GOING TO KEEP THIS SPEECH SHORT. I CAN SPEND MOST OF MY TIME ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS. I WANT TO TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHAT I SEE HAPPENING IN AMERICA TODAY, WHAT I HEAR AS I CAMPAIGN. IT'S TRUE I HAVE SPENT AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF TIME IN NEW HAMPSHIRE, NOT JUST TALKING, LISTENING TO VOTERS.

I HAVE HAD A COUPLE HUNDRED, PROBABLY MORE, TOWN HALL MEETINGS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE OVER THE YEARS. WHAT I HEAR, I HEAR THIS NOT JUST IN NEW HAMPSHIRE BUT OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, I HEAR A LOT OF RUMBLING FROM REGULAR PEOPLE, MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES, LOWER INCOME FAMILIES, A LOT OF WORRY AND CONCERN, UNCERTAINTY IS PROBABLY THE BEST WORD, THAT WE MAY BE THE FIRST GENERATION OF AMERICANS THAT DON'T LEAVE OUR CHILDREN A BETTER LIFE THAN WE HAVE HAD. I THINK THAT UNCERTAINTY GROWS OUT OF A LOT OF SUBSTANTIVE CONCERNS, WORRIED ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT, GLOBAL WARMING, WORRIED ABOUT THE NEED TO RAISE THEIR INCOME. THERE ARE A LOT OF SUBSTANTIVE COMPONENTS, BUT THAT CONCERN IS AT THE HEART OF WHAT LOTS OF AMERICANS ARE WORRY ABOUT.

WE ALL GREW UP, INCLUDING EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM, GREW UP WITH THE BELIEF THAT WE HAVE AS AMERICANS A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT OUR CHILDREN DO HAVE A BETTER LIFE THAN WE HAVE HAD. 40 GENERATIONS OF AMERICANS BEFORE US HAVE DONE IT. THE QUESTION IS WHY DO PEOPLE FEEL THAT WAY? WHY DO THEY FEEL THAT UNCERTAINTY? SECOND, AND I THINK THIS IS RELATED, IS THERE IS IN FACT A DISCONNECT BETWEEN THE EXTRAORDINARY QUALITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT THAT IS SUPPOSED TO SERVE THOSE PEOPLE? I BELIEVE THERE IS A GREAT DISCONNECT. I THINK THAT DISCONNECT DIDN'T JUST -- I'M VERY CRITICAL OF THIS PRESIDENT, BUT DIDN'T JUST DEVELOP WITH THIS PRESIDENT. I THINK IT'S BEEN BUILDING OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME, AT LEAST 20, 25 YEARS. I THINK WHAT'S HAPPENED, THERE'S CERTAINLY A LEVEL OF INCOMPETENCE WHICH WE HAVE SEEN REPEATEDLY IN IRAQ, WITH RESPONSE TO NEW ORLEANS, TWO OBVIOUS EXAMPLES, BUT IT GOES BEYOND THAT.

WHAT WE HAVE SEEN IS A CORRUPTING INFLUENCE IN OUR GOVERNMENT. I THINK THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SEE THAT, THEY ARE NOT SURE WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT, BUT IT WORRIES THEM. THEY THINK IT AFFECTS A LOT OF WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO DO ON THEIR

BEHALF. I BELIEVE THAT WE ACTUALLY HAVE AN ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY. THE PRESIDENT CLEARLY DOES. BUT I THINK AS A NATION WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ACTUALLY MAKE THIS GOVERNMENT WORK FOR EVERYBODY, NOT JUST FOR A FEW. TO WEED OUT THE CORRUPTION THAT I THINK HAS MADE ITS WAY INTO GOVERNMENT. A LOT OF IT WE HAVE JUST BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO, SO IT MAY SEEM LIKE A REALLY STRONG WORD, BUT FOR MOST AMERICANS THAT'S JUST THE CASE.

WHAT HAPPENS IS MONEY AND POWERFUL INFLUENCE INSIDE THE BELTWAY IN WASHINGTON D.C. TENDS TO CONTROL WHAT HAPPENS. WHETHER IT'S ON THE ISSUE OF HEALTH CARE, WHETHER IT'S ON THE ISSUE OF GLOBAL WARMING, WHETHER IT'S ON TAX REFORM, WHATEVER THE ISSUE IS IT SEEMS TO AFFECT AND CONTROL THE DECISIONS ACTUALLY BEING MADE. THE QUESTION IS WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT. I THINK THERE ARE A WHOLE RANGE OF THINGS INCLUDING PUBLICLY FINANCING OUR CAMPAIGNS TO REDUCE THE INFLUENCE OF MONEY. BUT THE STARTING PLACE IS TO RECOGNIZE THAT IT'S HAPPENING. TO GALVANIZE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AROUND THE IDEA OF DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT. WE HAVE GOTTEN AN EXTRAORDINARY RESPONSE NOT JUST HERE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE BUT ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN TALKING ABOUT THIS ISSUE, TALKING ABOUT IT, GETTING PEOPLE'S RESPONSE TO IT.

I WANT TO TALK ABOUT ONE OTHER THING, AND THEN I'LL OPEN THE FLOOR TO QUESTIONS. PEOPLE TALK A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY, BUT USUALLY THAT DISCUSSION COMES FROM THE CANDIDATES WHO ARE PANDERING TO VOTE NEARS NEW HAMPSHIRE. WHAT THEY SAY IS, YOU'RE SO IMPORTANT, YOU'RE SO IMPORTANT, YOU'RE FIRST IN THE NATION, ET CETERA, BUT IF YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY TO WHAT THEY SAY, WHAT THEIR CANDIDATE IS SAYING IS YOU'RE IMPORTANT TO MY BEING ELECTED PRESIDENT. I WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT IN A DIFFERENT CONTEXT. I THINK THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY IS ENORMOUSLY IMPORTANT FOR OUR COUNTRY. FORGET ABOUT THE CANDIDATES FOR JUST A MINUTE. HERE'S WHY I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT. BECAUSE I THINK THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT DESTRUCTION OF THE TRUST RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMERICA AND ITS PRESIDENT OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS. I THINK THERE'S ACTUALLY BEEN ALSO GREAT DESTRUCTION OF THE TRUST RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE REST THE WORLD. WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT FOR THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARIES?

UNLIKE MOST OF AMERICA, MOST OF AMERICA WILL SEE THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN 30-60 SECOND SOUND BITES ON TELEVISION. THAT'S THE NATURE OF PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS. THEY WILL SEE US IN SHORT SNIPPETS. HERE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE, BECAUSE OF THE WAY WE CAMPAIGN IN A GRASS ROOTS WAY, BECAUSE WE SHOULD AND

ARE REQUIRED TO STAND IN FRONT OF AUDIENCES OVER AND OVER AND OVER IN PERSON AND ANSWER DIFFICULT QUESTIONS, NEW HAMPSHIRE VOTERS ARE IN A POSITION TO ACTUALLY EVALUATE THE QUALITY THAT CAN RESTORE THE TRUST RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMERICA AND ITS PRESIDENT. HONESTY, SINCERITY, INTEGRITY, AND TRUSTWORTHINESS. BECAUSE UNLIKE MOST OF AMERICA THAT WILL SEE US IN 30-60 SECOND SOUND BITES, WE WILL HAVE TO STAND IN YOUR LIVING ROOMS, IN YOUR TOWN HALLS, AND YOU GET AN HOUR, HOUR AND A HALF BLOCK OF TIME, ACTUALLY GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO EVALUATE US. IN MANY WAYS, NEW HAMPSHIRE VOTERS, IOWA CAUCUS GOERS, THE EARLY STATES, PARTICULARLY THE STATES THAT HAVE A REAL HISTORY OF DOING THIS, AND HAVE EXPERIENCE IN DOING IT, YOU ARE IN A DIFFERENT PLACE. YOU ARE IN MANY WAYS THE GUARDIANS NOT JUST OF WHO WILL BE THE PRESIDENT BUT WHAT KIND OF (PRESIDENT HE/SHE WILL BE?)

THE POLICIES ARE IMPORTANT. I'M SURE WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT WHEN YOU ASK QUESTIONS, BUT THE TRUTH IS IF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DON'T TRUST THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, THE POLICIES BECOME MUCH LESS IMPORTANT. YOU ARE IN A POSITION AND ALL NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY VOTERS TO MAKE THAT EVALUATION. IN A MUCH BETTER WAY THAN MOST OF AMERICA IS. YOU'LL SEE US UP CLOSE AND PERSON. WHAT I WOULD SAY TO NEW HAMPSHIRE VOTERS WHO WATCH THIS ON PUBLIC TELEVISION OR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE HERE THIS MORNING IS, FOR OUR COUNTRY, FOR OUR COUNTRY, FORGET MY CAMPAIGN, FOR OUR COUNTRY, MAKE THAT EVALUATION. IT'S SO IMPORTANT. YOU ARE IN A POSITION THAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS YOU TO MAKE THAT EVALUATION. FOR ALL OF US INCLUDING ME. UP OR DOWN. FOR EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US. BECAUSE WE MUST HAVE A PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES STARTING IN JANUARY OF 2009 THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE CAN TRUST AND THE REST OF THE WORLD CAN TRUST.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. I'M GLAD TO TAKE YOUR QUESTIONS.

[APPLAUSE]

>>> I'M DIRECTOR OF TRIO PROGRAMS AT KEENE STATE COLLEGE IN THE SOUTHWESTERN CORNER OF THE STATE. YOU SAID SOMETHING THAT RESONATED WITH ME WHEN YOU TALKED ABOUT WHAT WE'RE EXPERIENCING NOW IS THE RESULT OF MAYBE 20, 25 YEARS OF RECENT HISTORY. SO WITH REGARD TO LOW INCOME AND FIRST GENERATION NEW HAMPSHIRE STUDENTS, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, STUDENTS WHO MIGHT BECOME COLLEGE STUDENTS, THE PELL GRANT HAS ERODED IN TERMS OF SPENDING POWER SINCE 1980. THAT WAS A CRITICAL YEAR WHEN I BEGAN MY JOB IN '79, THEY SERVED 10 TO 12% OF THE ELIGIBLE POPULATION PREPARING AND MOTIVATING STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE AND

HOPING THEY GRADUATE. MY QUESTION -- NOW 6 TO 7% OF THE ELIGIBLE POPULATION. HOW DO YOU REVERSE THAT?

>> WELL, FIRST THANK YOU FOR WHAT YOU DO. THE PROGRAM HAS HAD A HUGELY POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE. YOU SHOULD BE PROUD OF THE WORK YOU'RE DOING. THE SECOND THING I WOULD SAY IS WHAT'S HAPPENED, AND THIS IS PART OF THE BIGGER FRAME I TALKED ABOUT EARLIER, WHAT'S HAPPENED WITH A LOT OF AMERICANS, YOU COME FROM A FAMILY LIKE MINE, WHERE EVERYONE REMEMBERS I'M THE SON OF A MILL WORKER, BUT IF YOU COME FROM A FAMILY LIKE MINE WHERE I'M THE FIRST PERSON TO GO TO COLLEGE, THAT ACCESS WHICH A LOT OF PEOPLE TAKE FOR GRANTED IS A BIG DEAL, A REALLY BIG DEAL. THE OBSTACLES THAT EXIST TODAY BECAUSE OF RISING TUITION, BECAUSE OF IN MANY LOW INCOME FAMILIES PARTICULARLY THE INESCHA OF PEOPLE WANTING TO GO TO WORK TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES, A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE CHOOSE NOT TO GO TO COLLEGE. THE BUREAUCRACY IS BIG, THE COST IS HIGH, IT'S TOO DIFFICULT TO GET THE HELP AND FINANCING THAT THEY NEED. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A PATHWAY LAID OUT FOR YOU BY YOUR FAMILY FOR MANY GENERATIONS IT'S A BIG JUMP TO BE THE FIRST PERSON IN YOUR FAMILY TO GO TO COLLEGE. I KNOW. I WENT THROUGH IT MYSELF. THE QUESTION IS HOW DO WE MAKE IT EASIER?

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING RECENTLY, I THINK, IS EXTRAORDINARILY FOOLISH. BILLIONS OF DOLLARS HAVE BEEN TAKEN OUT OF THE FEDERAL BUDGET FOR TRIO PROGRAMS, FOR FINANCIAL AID FOR KIDS TO GO TO COLLEGE. THIS IS INSANITY. COMPLETE INSANITY. ANYONE WHO UNDERSTANDS ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD TODAY UNDERSTANDS THE MOST CRUCIAL PIECE, YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT, WHICH I HOPE WE DO CARE ABOUT, BUT IF YOU CARE ABOUT AMERICA, THE MOST CRITICAL PIECE OF AMERICA BEING COMPETITIVE OVER THE LONG TERM IS WE HAVE TO BE THE BEST EDUCATED, MOST CREATIVE, MOST INNOVATIVE WORK FORCE ON THE PLANET. IT'S THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING. HOW DO WE ACCOMPLISH THAT? I WON'T GO INTO PUBLIC SCHOOLS RIGHT NOW. I'LL BE GLAD TO TELL YOU WHAT I THINK WE SHOULD DO ABOUT THAT. WE HAVE MORE KIDS GETTING THE POSSIBLE EDUCATION THEY COULD HAVE. WE HOPE WE DRIVE KIDS INTO GRADUATE EDUCATION, PARTICULARLY IN SCIENCE, MATH, TECHNOLOGY, AREAS WHERE AMERICA NEEDS TO BE PUSHING THE ENVELOPE.

THEN I HOPE WE GET A CHANCE TO TALK ABOUT THIS. WE ALSO SHOULD BE THINKING WAY OUTSIDE THE BOX ABOUT HOW WE CONTINUE AND CREATE AN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR CONTINUED LEARNING SO WHEN WE'RE 35, 45, 55 YEARS OLD, INSTEAD OF DEPENDING ON THE AD HOC NATURE OF CONTINUED LEARNING WE HAVE TODAY, HUMAN CAPITAL IS THE MOST VALUABLE THING WE HAVE, AND I ABSOLUTELY BELIEVE IT IS,

WE HAVE TO ENSURE OUR 45-YEAR-OLD WORKERS ARE UP TO DATE, UP TO SPEED APPEARED CAPABLE OF DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE. THAT MEANS WE NEED AN INFRASTRUCTURE TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN. WE DON'T HAVE THAT TODAY. WE COUNT ON EMPLOYERS OR PEOPLE TO SELF-LEARN. THAT'S WHAT IT BOILS DOWN TO.

HERE'S MY IDEA FOR KIDS. IT'S CALLED COLLEGE FOR EVERYONE. IT'S STRAIGHTFORWARD, PRETTY SIMPLE. THE IDEA IS FOR EVERY YOUNG PERSON IN AMERICA TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE AND THEY COMMIT TO WORK WHEN THEY ARE THERE. YOU DON'T GIVE IT TO THEM. THIS VETO WORK AT LEAST TEN HOURS A WEEK, THAT AMERICA PAYS THE TUITION EITHER AT A STATE UNIVERSITY OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE. NO BUREAUCRACY. VERY STRAIGHTFORWARD. WE HAVE ACTUALLY DONE IT. WE STARTED IN THE LOW INCOME AREA IN EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA, ELIZABETH AND I DID, RAISED THE MONEY PRIVATELY FOR T. SO FAR IT'S BEEN HUGELY SUCCESSFUL. HERE'S WHY. THE COMMUNITY GOT BEHIND IT. YOU DON'T GIVE IT TO THE KIDS. A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM, INCLUDING ME, WORKED WHEN WE WERE IN COLLEGE. ONE OF THE JOBS I HAD I STILL REMEMBER VIVIDLY, UNLOADING TRACTOR TRAILERS FOR U.P.S. EVER SPENT A HOT NIGHT IN THE SUMMER UNLOADING TRACTOR TRAILERS IN NORTH CAROLINA, YOU'LL STUDY. PARENTS LIKE THE IDEA THAT KIDS HAVE TO EARN IT. WHEN THEY GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE THEY DON'T HAVE THIS CRUSHING BURDEN OF DEBT SO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FACED WITH TODAY. THE IDEA IS ESSENTIALLY -- I BELIEVE LAST YEAR ABOUT 70% OF KIDS GRADUATING SIGNED UP FOR IT. THIS IS SOMETHING WE SHOULD BE DOING NATIONALLY. IT HELPS KNOCK DOWN THE BARRIERS THAT WE'RE CONCERNED ABOUT, AND I THINK IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT LONG TERM FOR AMERICA. HOW ABOUT IN THE BACK.

>> SEVERAL TIMES, AS YOU KNOW, THE POLLS SHOW IT'S THE TOP DOMESTIC CONCERN OF AMERICANS. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE MAJOR ISSUES IN TERMS OF HEALTH CARE AND WHAT WOULD YOU DO AS PRESIDENT TO ADDRESS THEM?

>> ACCESS. WE HAVE 47 MILLION PEOPLE WITH NO HEALTH CARE COVERAGE ACCORDING TO THE CENSUS THAT WAS DONE LAST YEAR. WE ADDED 2 MILLION PEOPLE TO THAT JUST IN THE COURSE OF THE LAST YEAR. IT'S NOT JUST PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE COVERAGE. COST IS EXTRAORDINARY. THE PREMIUMS ARE UP OVER 100% OVER THE COURSE OF THE LAST DECADE OR SO. SO PEOPLE -- AND PEOPLE -- WE HAVE EXTRAORDINARY AMOUNT OF JOB LOSS. WHERE PEOPLE ARE LOCKED INTO THEIR PARTICULAR JOBS BECAUSE THEY ARE TERRIFIED IF THEY MOVE OR CHANGE OR TAKE A RISK THAT THEY ARE GOING TO LOSE THEIR HEALTH CARE COVERAGE. PARTICULARLY IF THEY HAVE A

CHRONIC MEDICAL CONDITION OR PREEXISTING CONDITION. THE QUESTION IS WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

I MIGHT ADD WE ALSO PUT MORE MONEY INTO HEALTH CARE THAN ANY COUNTRY IN THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD AND WE GET NOT A GOOD PRODUCT AT THE END. INCLUDING LOTS OF PEOPLE WITH NO HEALTH CARE COVERAGE WHO DON'T TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES, DON'T GO TO THE DOCTOR, MEDICAL PROBLEMS DEVELOP, THEY WAIT UNTIL IT GETS TO A CATASTROPHIC STAGE, THEN THEY GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM. COULD NOT BE MORE COST INEFFICIENT THAN IT IS, BESIDES THE MORAL ISSUE THAT PEOPLE ARE GETTING SICKER AND SICKER AND NOT BEING TAKEN CARE OF. WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?

WHAT I HAVE PROPOSED IS THAT WE HAVE A UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM THAT REQUIRES BY LAW THAT EVERYBODY IN AMERICA BE COVERED. THAT WE SET UP A STRUCTURE WHERE WHAT I'M PROPOSING IS NOT A SINGLE PAYER SYSTEM. WE SET UP A STRUCTURE WHERE THE CHOICE OF EVERY CONSUMER IN AMERICA WILL BE -- EVERYBODY WILL HAVE TO HAVE COVERAGE. EVERYONE HAS TO MAKE THIS CHOICE. THE CHOICE WILL BE BETWEEN PRIVATE INSURANCE, FAIRLY HEAVILY REGULATED. I'LL COME BACK TO THAT. OR THE GOVERNMENT. THAT CHOICE IS ESSENTIALLY MEDICARE PLUS. SO EVERY AMERICAN NO MATTER WHAT YOUR AGE WILL HAVE A CHOICE BETWEEN PRIVATE INSURANCE AND A GOVERNMENT PLAN.

I DID IT THAT WAY FOR A VERY SPECIFIC REASON. THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY IN MY PARTY, WHO BELIEVE THAT SINGLE PAYER IS THE ANSWER, BUT THERE ARE ALSO A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO LIKE THE HEALTH CARE COVERAGE THEY HAVE NOW. THEY ARE JUST AFRAID OF LOSING IT AND AFRAID OF THE COST OF IT. I HAVE SET UP A COMPETITION WHERE PRIVATE INSURERS ARE GOING TO BE REQUIRED TO COMPETE WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL MAKE THE CHOICE. THEY WILL CHOOSE WHAT ACTUALLY MAKES SENSE FOR THEM OVER THE LONG TERM.

WE ALSO FILL IN GAPS THAT EXIST IN TODAY'S SYSTEM, WHICH MEANS WE BAN PREEXISTING CONDITIONS. IT MEANS IN MENTAL -- MENTAL HEALTH PARITY, THINGS LIKE PREVENTIVE CARE, WHICH GETS VERY LITTLE COVERAGE NOW BECAUSE THERE'S NO FINANCIAL INCENTIVE FOR CARRIERS TO COVER IT BECAUSE PEOPLE MOVE AROUND SO MUCH. DENTAL AND VISION CARE IS COVERED AND YOU TAKE YOUR HEALTH CARE WITH YOU. YOU CHANGE JOBS, MOVE TO ANOTHER PLACE IN THE COUNTRY. IT'S NOT FREE. UNFORTUNATELY IT COSTS 90 TO \$120 BILLION A YEAR. THE WAY I FUNDED IT IS TO PAROLE BACK PRESIDENT BUSH'S TAX CUTS TO PEOPLE THAT MAKE OVER \$200,000 A YEAR TO THE SAME LEVEL THAT EXISTED WHEN BILL CLINTON WAS PRESIDENT. THAT'S THE BASIC STRUCTURE. IN ADDITION THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT COST SAVING MECHANISMS. USE OF TECHNOLOGY, ELECTRONIC RECORD KEEPING, HEAVY REGULATION OF THE INSURANCE COMPANIES, WHICH SHOULD

SAVE AROUND \$125 BILLION A YEAR SYSTEM-WIDE. SO THE IDEA IS GET EVERYBODY COVERED, GET EVERYBODY IN THE SYSTEM, MAKE THE SYSTEM MORE COST EFFICIENT. AND CREATE SOME OTHER KIND OF EFFICIENCIES THAT ARE IMPORTANT. I'LL MENTION ONE AND THEN I'LL BE THROUGH.

ONE THING WE DO IS SET UP A SYSTEMATIC WAY -- LET ME GIVE YOU A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE. IF -- YOU'RE MY WIFE ELIZABETH AND YOU'VE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER. ELIZABETH WAS LUCKY THAT WE COULD PICK THE PLACE IN AMERICA WHERE WE COULD GET THE BEST CARE. ONE OF THE PLACE THAT WE WENT TO FOR TREATMENT WAS MEMORIAL SLOAN KETTERING IN NEW YORK, WHERE THEY DO CUTTING EDGE WORK ON CANCER AND THE SUBSPECIALTY OF BREAST CANCER. WE HAVE SET UP A WAY THAT THERE'S SOMETHING THAT'S SORT OF ON THE EDGE, CUTTING EDGE WORK THAT'S BEING DONE AT MEMORIAL SLOAN KETTERING OR MAYO OR WHEREVER

WE SET UP A SYSTEMATIC WAY TO MAKE SURE THAT INFORMATION AND TREATMENT IS AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE, AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS IN MONTANA, SO THAT THE QUALITY OF THE CARE THAT YOU GET IS NOT DEPENDENT ON WHERE YOU LIVE AND NOT DEPENDENT ON THE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER WHO EXISTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY BECAUSE WE SYSTEMATICALLY PROVIDE THAT CARE NATIONWIDE. SO THE IDEA IS WE DON'T JUST REDUCE COSTS TO COVER EVERYBODY, WE ACTUALLY, WE HOPE, IMPROVE QUALITY OF CARE FOR EVERYBODY NATIONWIDE. YOU'RE WELCOME.

>> HOW TO MAKE AMERICA STRONGER, AND THE ROLE OBVIOUSLY OF THE ECONOMY AND SECURITY IN THAT, BUT THERE ARE OTHER AREAS YOU TOUCHED ON TODAY LIKE HUMAN SERVICE NEEDS, HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION, THE ENVIRONMENT, ARTS AND CULTURE THAT ARE A KEY IMPORTANCE TO OUR COUNTRY AND OUR NATION AND LARGELY QUARTER OUT BY THE NONPROFIT SECTOR. TELL US WHAT VALUE YOU PLACE ON THE NONPROFIT SECTOR, WHAT YOU WOULD DO TO HELP STRENGTHEN AND PROMOTE IT AS AN IMPORTANCE.

>> I PERSONALLY THINK IT'S ENORMOUSLY IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE ISSUES THAT I AM -- OUTSIDE POLITICS THAT I'M PERSONALLY COMMITTED TO DOING SOMETHING ABOUT, POVERTY, HUMANITARIAN RELIEF, NOT JUST IN AMERICA BUT IN THE REST OF THE WORLD, I MEAN, MOST OF THAT WORK IS BEING CARRIED OUT BY NONPROFITS. I'LL GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE. I WAS THIS PAST WEEKEND IN NEW ORLEANS WITH A GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH HABITAT FOR HUMANITY. USING THE NEW ORLEANS AS A MICROCOSM OF WHAT YEAR DISCUSSING, IF YOU GO TO NEW ORLEANS, WHAT YOU WILL FIND IS THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE HURRICANE HITTING NEW ORLEANS HAS BEEN A

COMPLETE NIGHTMARE. THE PEOPLE THERE ARE STRUGGLING. BUT THERE IS AN EXTRAORDINARY RESPONSE FROM THE NONPROFIT COMMUNITY. PEOPLE ARE DOWN THERE VOLUNTEERING. MOST OF THE WORK BEING DONE IS BEING DONE EITHER BY FAITH-BASED GROUPS OR NONPROFITS. THAT'S THE REBUILDING THAT'S BEING DONE.

SO I THINK THE NONPROFIT COMMUNITY IS ENORMOUSLY IMPORTANT. ABOUT A YEAR AGO, ROUGHLY, I WENT TO AFRICA TO DO WORK WITH THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, WHICH IS AN EXTRAORDINARY NONPROFIT THAT BASICALLY GOES TO THE MOST DIFFICULT PLACES IN THE WORLD WHERE THERE ARE HUGE CRISIS OCCURRING. IN THIS CASE WE WERE IN UGANDA WHERE THEY HAVE HAD A 20-YEAR CIVIL WAR, 2 MILLION PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HERDED INTO CAMPS. IT'S HEART BREAKING. ABSENT THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE AND GROUPS LIKE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO HELP FOR THESE PEOPLE. IT'S PRETTY MUCH THAT SIMPLE.

NOW, I ACTUALLY BELIEVE THAT IN ADDITION TO SUPPORTING NONPROFITS, WHICH I THINK WE SHOULD DO, PROMOTE, SUPPORT, DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO EMPOWER BECAUSE I HAVE SEEN THE EXTRAORDINARY WORK THAT THEY DO, I ACTUALLY THINK THAT THE GOVERNMENT CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE TOO. I WILL GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. WHAT WE DO TODAY IS ON THE SUBJECT I JUST TALKED ABOUT, WHAT WE DO TODAY IS WE ESSENTIALLY COUNT ON OUR MILITARY THAT'S NOT TRAINED FOR IT AND SHOULDN'T BE DOING IT TO PROVIDE A LOT OF THE HUMANITARIAN WORK THAT'S DONE AROUND THE WORLD. IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE. WE ALREADY HAVE A MILITARY, WE HAVEN'T TALKED ABOUT IRAQ, A MILITARY EXTRAORDINARILY OVER STRETCHED, WORN OUT. NOW IN ADDITION TO THEIR SECURITY FUNCTIONS WE'RE ASKING THEM TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN HELP AROUND THE WORLD. THAT NEEDS TO STOP.

WHAT I THINK WE SHOULD DO IS SET UP WHAT I WOULD CALL A MARTIAL CORPS OF 10,000 CIVILIAN WORKERS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITY WOULD BE -- FIRST OF ALL, WE WOULD MAKE SURE HE ARE TRAINED AND THEY ARE EXPERT IN PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN RELIEF, AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITY WOULD BE TO TRAVEL THE WORLD AND DO WHAT IN MANY WAYS IS BEING DONE BY OUR MILITARY TODAY. THEIR JOB WOULD BE TO ADMINISTER AND PROVIDE HELP TO PEOPLE LIKE THE PEOPLE OF UGANDA OR THE ONGOING GENOCIDE IN WESTERN SUDAN AND DARFUR. THESE HOT SPOTS. SO THAT AMERICA -- THEY WOULD BE SORT OF AN AMBASSADOR FOR LACK OF A BETTER DESCRIPTION FOR AMERICA, IN A POSITIVE WAY, NOT SOME OF THE NEGATIVE WAYS WE HAVE SEEN OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS. I THINK NONPROFITS ARE ENORMOUSLY IMPORTANT AND THE NONPROFIT COMMUNITY IS ENORMOUSLY IMPORTANT. I THINK THE PRIMARY JOB OF THE PRESIDENT IN THAT REGARD IS PROBABLY TO USE THE BULLY PULPIT TO MAKE IT CLEAR HOW IMPORTANT THEY ARE. BUT I THINK THE GOVERNMENT CAN

PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE, ESPECIALLY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NONPROFITS. WHO IS NEXT?

>> WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS THAT YOU WOULD DO TO EMPOWER NONPROFITS? WE KNOW HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO RUN ONE AND BE A PART OF IT. WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THE GOVERNMENT COULD DO TO SUPPORT THEM?

>> FIRST OF ALL, WE CAN USE OUR TAX SYSTEM TO PROVIDE MORE HELP TO NONPROFITS THAN WE'RE PROVIDING TODAY. SECOND, OUR SOCIAL SAFETY NET, WHICH HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY ERODING OVER THE LAST 20 TO 25 YEARS, AND WHICH IS ANOTHER MECHANISM -- IF YOU GO TO THE NONPROFITS AROUND THE COUNTRY, WHICH I HAVE DONE A LOT OF, ESPECIALLY ON MY POVERTY WORK, WHAT YOU FIND IS THEY HAVE MORE AND MORE DIFFICULTY HAVING THE FUNDING TO PROVIDE THE HELP THAT THEY NEED.

THE GOVERNMENT IS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF THAT FUNDING. SO WHAT I WOULD -- A LOT OF IT HAS TO DO WITH YOUR BASIC ATTITUDE ABOUT HOW WE DELIVER SERVICES TO PEOPLE. BUT WHAT YOU FIND IS PARTICULARLY FOR THOSE WHO ARE MOST IN NEED IN AMERICA, 37 MILLION PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN POVERTY, LOTS OF SINGLE MOTHERS, IS THE PLACES LIKE -- JUST AN EXAMPLE ON AN ISSUE I CARE MOST ABOUT, COMMUNITY ACTION CENTERS. THE PLACE THAT PROVIDE SHELTER. THE PLACE THAT PROVIDE TRANSITION HOUSING. THOSE PLACES ARE ALMOST ENTIRELY RUN BY NONPROFITS. WHEN THE FUNDING IS CUT FROM THE GOVERNMENT, IT HAS A DIRECT EFFECT ON THEIR CAPACITY TO PROVIDE SERVICE.

I WAS INVOLVED MYSELF BEFORE I EVER GOT INVOLVED IN POLITICS WITH URBAN MINISTRIES IN NORTH CAROLINA. OUR JOB WAS BASICALLY TO DEAL WITH THE HOMELESS. WE DEALT WITH THE POOREST OF THE 19 POOR. I SAW WHAT HAPPENED WHEN FROM THE TOP DOWN THE FEDERAL BUDGET BEGAN TO BE CUT, AND THE DIRECT IMPACT IT HAD ON THE SERVICES WE WERE ABLE TO PROVIDE. THERE WAS A DIRECT CORRELATION BETWEEN THE CUTTING OF THE FEDERAL BUDGET AND OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE FOOD TO THE HOMELESS. IT'S JUST THAT SIMPLE. I THINK A LOT OF AMERICANS DON'T THINK ABOUT IT. THEY THINK ABOUT THE BUDGET AND THESE CUTS IN AN ABSTRACT WAY. THEY DON'T MAKE THE CONNECTION DIRECTLY TO PEOPLE'S LIVES. I THINK IF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES MAKES THAT CONNECTION -- THE AMERICAN PEOPLE -- I BELIEVE IN THE GOODNESS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. I JUST DO. I HAVE SEEN THEM RESPOND OVER AND OVER AND OVER WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN. INCLUDING WHAT I WAS JUST TALKING ABOUT IN NEW ORLEANS. BUT SOMEBODY HAS TO MAKE THEM AWARE OF WHAT'S OCCURRING. THE PRESIDENT OF THE

UNITED STATES IS IN A PLACE TO DO THAT AND SHOULD DO THAT IN MY JUDGMENT.

I'M GOING TO DO A COUPLE MORE. THIS GENTLEMAN RIGHT BACK HERE.

>> NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE RAN A COVER STORY I THINK ENTITLED THE MOST DANGEROUS COUNTRY IN THE WORLD. IT WASN'T IRAQ, WANE IRAN, IT WAS PAKISTAN. FIVE DAYS AGO GENERAL MUSHARRAF SET ASIDE THE CONSTITUTION AND IMPOSED EMERGENCY RULE. MY QUESTION IS, HOW WOULD YOU HAVE REACTED TO THAT SITUATION DIFFERENTLY THAN PRESIDENT BUSH HAS DONE?

>> WELL, I CAN TELL YOU EXACTLY WHAT I WOULD HAVE DONE, AND THEN I ALSO WANT TO TELL YOU WHAT I THINK AMERICA SHOULD BE DOING OVER THE LONG TERM ABOUT PAKISTAN AND COUNTRIES LIKE PAKISTAN. FIRST, REACTION TO THIS CRISIS. WE KNOW THAT THERE IS ENORMOUS RISK ASSOCIATED WITH ANY ACTIVITY IN PAKISTAN. THEY HAVE NUCLEAR WEAPON. THEY HAVE A SIGNIFICANT RADICAL ELEMENT WITHIN THE POPULATION IN PAKISTAN. THEY HAVE AN UNSTABLE LEADER, MUSHARRAF. SO THAT COMBINATION OF CONDITIONS IS COMBUSTIBLE.

THE QUESTION IS, WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN MUSHARRAF DOES WHAT HE JUST DID, DECLARES MARTIAL LAW EFFECTIVELY, CLAMPS DOWN ON ALL OPPOSITION, AND CREATES A CHAOTIC, DANGEROUS SITUATION?

WELL, THE BEST TOOL AMERICA HAS TO DEAL WITH THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT IS THEY ARE HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON AMERICA FOR AID. WHAT I WOULD DO IS MAKE IT ABSOLUTELY CLEAR TO MUSHARRAF THAT THAT MONEY DOES NOT COME WITHOUT ANY CONDITIONS. THAT IN FACT, IF HE DOESN'T DO THE THINGS THAT HE HAS BEEN PROMISING HE WILL DO, WHICH IS ACTUALLY HAVE FAIR ELECTIONS, TO OPEN UP THE GOVERNMENT, MOVE TOWARD DEMOCRATIC REFORM, MOVE THE COUNTRY TOWARD ECONOMIC REFORM, AND IN THIS CASE REVERSE SOME OF THE ACTIONS THAT HE'S TAKEN, THAT WE WILL IN FACT START WITHDRAWING SOME OF THAT MONEY BECAUSE HE NEEDS TO FEEL THE PRESSURE, NOT JUST DIPLOMATIC, NOT JUST WORDS.

HE NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND THERE WILL BE ABSOLUTELY BE FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES IF HE CONTINUES THIS BEHAVIOR. BUT YOU HAVE TO BE SENSITIVE TO THE FACT THAT THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT POSSIBILITY -- IT'S A VERY DIFFICULT LINE TO WALK. THE PRESIDENT HAS TO OF COURSE UNDERSTAND THAT. THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT POSSIBILITY THAT HE COULD BE DEPOSED, SOME RADICAL GOVERNMENT COULD TAKE OVER, IN WHICH CASE THEY WOULD HAVE A NUCLEAR WEAPON, IN CONSTANT CONFLICT WITH INDIA OVER KASHMIR, THEY COULD TURN IT

OVER TO A TERRORIST GROUP. IT'S A VERY, VERY DANGEROUS, VOLATILE SITUATION.

THAT'S HOW I WOULD DEAL WITH THE SHORT TERM CRISIS, BUT I THINK THERE'S A LONGER TERM ISSUE WITH RESPECT TO PAKISTAN THAT HAS TO REALLY BE TO THE THROUGH.

WHEN I WAS -- LAST TIME I WAS IN ISLAMABAD AND MET WITH MUSHARRAF I ASKED DIRECTLY, WHY DO YOUR PEOPLE HATE AMERICA SO MUCH AND WHAT CAN WE DO TO AFFECT IT? THEY HAVE REALLY -- THE PAKISTANI PEOPLE THINK LESS OF US THAN ALMOST ANY PEOPLE IN THE WORLD. HIS ANSWER WAS, WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT IS WE HAVE NO PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM EFFECTIVELY. THE RESULT IS OUR KIDS ARE EDUCATED IN THESE MEDROSSIS, AND THEY ARE TAUGHT TO HATE WHAT AMERICA IS AND REPRESENTS. THESE YOUNG CHILDREN, IT'S DRILLED INTO THEM, DRILLED INTO THEM. WE CANNOT TURN THAT AROUND. HE SAID, EDUCATION. GIVE US A CHANCE TO EDUCATE OUR KIDS IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM. THAT WAS ACTUALLY ONE OF THE INCENTIVES FOR ME IN PROPOSING THAT AMERICA -- WE TALKED A FEW MINUTES AGO ABOUT NONPROFIT, BUT AMERICA LEADING AN EFFORT TO MAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION AVAILABLE TO 100 MILLION CHILDREN IN THE WORLD WHO DON'T HAVE IT INCLUDING IN PLACES LIKE AFRICA AND PAKISTAN. IT WOULD LITERALLY -- BY THE WAY, IT'S NOT CHEAP. IT COSTS ABOUT \$3.5 BILLION A YEAR, BUT COMPARED TO THE MONEY WE'RE SPENDING IN PAKISTAN AND IRAQ IT'S A RELATIVELY SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY. IT COULD LITERALLY BE TRANSFORMATION. IT WOULD CHANGE EVERYTHING. ALL OF A SUDDEN AMERICA IS A SOURCE OF OPPORTUNITY. WHEN THE EARTHQUAKE HIT IN PAKISTAN AND AMERICA PROVIDED HELP, IN THAT PART OF PAKISTAN ATTITUDES TOWARD AMERICA SHIFTED DRAMATICALLY. THEY SAW AMERICA AS A FORCE FOR GOOD IN THE WORLD -- FOR GOOD IN THE WORLD.

AND THE LAST THING I WANT TO SAY, I THINK WE ARE LIVING IN A FANTASY. THIS MAY BE THE MOST RADICAL THING YOU'VE HEARD FROM ME. WE'RE LIVING IN A FANTASY WORLD IF WE BELIEVE OVER THE LONG TERM WE CAN STOP THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY. LOOK WHAT THE WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE TO SPREAD NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY AROUND THE WORLD. DEALING WITH THIS PROBLEM AND THE EXTRAORDINARY RISK ASSOCIATED WITH IT ON AN AD HOC BASIS, WHICH IS WHAT WE'RE DOING NOW, IS ABSOLUTELY FOOLISH. IT IS IMPORTANT, YOU KNOW, IT'S IMPORTANT TO STOP THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO THE EXTENT WE CAN. DON'T MISUNDERSTAND ME. THERE ARE SHORT TERM ISSUES THAT WE HAVE TO ADDRESS AGGRESSIVELY, BUT OVER THE LONG TERM, THE NOTION THAT WE'RE GOING TO CONTROL THIS IS I THINK COMPLETELY NOT PLAUSIBLE. IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.

I ACTUALLY BELIEVE THAT WHAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO DO AND WHAT I WOULD DO IS TO LEAD A

LONG-TERM INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE TO RID THE WORLD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THAT IS THE ONLY WAY WE'RE GOING TO OVER THE LONG TERM CREATE A SAFE AND SECURE WORLD. AND BY THE WAY, IN THAT WORLD, NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AMERICA WOULD BE THE STRONGEST COUNTRY ON EARTH. NO ONE IS CLOSE TO US. NOT EVEN IN THE BALLPARK IN TERMS OF CONVENTIONAL MILITARY STRENGTH. SO I THINK THAT WHAT WE HAVE TO RECOGNIZE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF A BAD REGIME OR A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION GETTING CONTROL OF A NUCLEAR WEAPON IS ONE OF THE GREATEST THREATS AMERICA FACES. WHAT WE HAVE TO DO OVER THE LONG TERM TO HELP PROVIDE SAFETY AND SECURITY IN THE WORLD IS START THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATING NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THAT'S WHAT I WOULD DO.

I'M GOING TO DO ONE MORE. I KNOW YOU'RE TRYING TO STOP ME. HOW ABOUT THIS GENTLEMAN RIGHT HERE.

>> HEAD OF THE G.A.O. HAS BEEN FAIRLY OUTSPOKEN ABOUT THE FACT THAT WE'RE SPENDING TOO MUCH MONEY. FEDERAL DEFICIT IS INCREASING, THE FEDERAL DEBT IS INCREASING. AS AN INDIVIDUAL, THE ULTIMATE REMEDY IS BANKRUPTCY. I'M NOT SURE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS THAT REMEDY AVAILABLE TO THEM. HOW DO WE DO ALL OF THESE THINGS AND KEEP IT WITHIN A BUDGET SO WE CAN PAY OFF OUR DEBT?

>> VERY GOOD QUESTION. COULD EVERYBODY HEAR THE QUESTION IN THE BACK? WAS THAT YES OR NO? COULD HEAR OR COULDN'T HEAR? BASICALLY HE'S ASKING ABOUT THE FEDERAL DEFICIT. HOW DO WE DO ALL OF THE THINGS INCLUDING SOME OF THE THINGS I HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT TODAY AND NOT MAKE THE DEFICIT WORSE, IN FACT IMPROVE THAT FISCAL SITUATION. FIRST OF ALL, IN CONTEXT, WE ARE -- OUR FEDERAL DEFICIT BUYS 2% OF G.D.P., AND WHEN BILL CLINTON TOOK OFFICE HE MADE IT A PRIORITY WHEN HE WAS RUNNING, THE FEDERAL DEFICIT WAS ABOUT 5% OF G.D.P., SO IT'S BAD BUT RELATIVELY SPEAKING NOT AS BAD AS IT WAS AT THAT TIME.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO? I THINK THERE'S A THREAT -- THIS IS ONE OF THOSE TRUTH MOMENTS. THERE'S A THRESHOLD QUESTION THAT ANY PRESIDENT HAS TO MAKE A JUDGMENT ABOUT. THAT THRESHOLD QUESTION IS WHETHER YOU BELIEVE THAT DEFICIT REDUCTION IS THE SINGLE GREATEST PRIORITY FOR AMERICA'S ECONOMY OR WHETHER YOU BELIEVE THERE ARE OTHER STRUCTURAL DEFICIENCIES IN THE ECONOMY THAT HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED ALONG WITH DEFICIT REDUCTION. I'M IN THE SECOND CAMP.

I THINK IF WE -- WE HAVE AN ALBATROSS AROUND OUR NEXT IN AMERICA. THOSE ALBATROSSES, THERE'S NOT JUST ONE,

UNFORTUNATELY, ARE HEALTH CARE, DYSFUNCTIONAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM, WE ARE DEPENDENT ON OIL AND CARBON-BASED FUEL IS KILLING AMERICA AND KILLING THE AMERICAN ECONOMY.

I THINK THE EXTRAORDINARY INEQUALITY WHICH SOMETIMES WE TALK ABOUT INCLUDING ME AS A MORAL ISSUE IS ALSO AN ENORMOUS ECONOMIC ISSUE BECAUSE IF YOU LOOK AT THE TIMES IN AMERICAN HISTORY WHERE WE HAVE SUSTAINED LONG TERM ECONOMIC GROWTH, THOSE TIMES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WHEN THE MIDDLE CLASS IS GROWING AND BECOMING MORE SOLID.

WE'RE IN A PLACE TODAY WHERE THAT'S NOT HAPPENING. MIDDLE CLASS WAGES ARE LARGELY STAGNANT, ESPECIALLY INFLATION ADJUSTED, AND THE COST OF EVERYTHING THAT THE MIDDLE CLASS IS SPENDING MONEY ON IS GOING UP. THIS CONCERN AND UNCERTAINTY THAT I SPOKE ABOUT AT THE BEGINNING THIS MORNING, THAT'S WHERE IT COMES FROM. PEOPLE DON'T SEE THEIR INCOMES GOING UP AND THEY SEE THE COST EVERYTHING GOING UP AND THEY FEEL MORE AND MORE INSECURE.

BY THE WAY, THERE'S ANOTHER REASON FOR THIS, WHICH IS A WOMAN NAMED ELIZABETH WARREN AT HARVARD WROTE A GREAT BOOK CALLED THE TWO INCOME TRAP. WHEN I WAS GROWING UP, USUALLY ONE OF THE TWO PARENTS WAS WORKING, SO IF SOMETHING WENT WRONG, SOME SORT OF FINANCIAL PROBLEM, THE OTHER PARENT WENT TO WORK FOR A WHILE. THERE WAS EXCESS CAPACITY. THAT EXCESS CAPACITY DOESN'T EXIST TODAY BECAUSE BOTH PARENTS ARE WORKING AND BECAUSE WE HAVE ONE OF THE WORST -- PROBABLY THE WORST SAVINGS RATE IN THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD.

THERE'S NOTHING TO FALL BACK ON. THAT FEEDS THE INSECURITY OF MIDDLE CLASS WORKING FAMILIES IN THIS COUNTRY. SO I BELIEVE THAT WHAT WE HAVE TO DO IS DEAL WITH THE STRUCTURAL DEFICIENCIES IN THE AMERICAN ECONOMY INCLUDING A HEALTH CARE SYSTEM THAT NEEDS TO BE REFORMED, IT INCLUDES GETTING AMERICA OFF ITS ADDICTION TO CARBON-BASED FUELS, AND THROUGH A WHOLE SERIES OF MECHANISMS STRENGTHENING AND GROWING THE MIDDLE CLASS. IT IS THE STRENGTHENING AND GROWING OF THE MIDDLE CLASS THAT WILL SUSTAIN LONG TERM ECONOMIC GROWTH.

THERE ARE A LOT OF OTHER GOOD PEOPLE, JOE STEIGLER, NOBEL PRIZE WINNING ECONOMIST, WHO THINK THE SAME THING. IF WE DO THOSE THINGS IT WILL GROW THE ECONOMY AND DRIVE THE DEFICIT DOWN. IT WILL DRIVE IT DOWN SIGNIFICANTLY. THAT'S THE BIG PICTURE. THAT'S WHAT WE HAVE TO DO IN A BIG PICTURE WAY. THERE'S A LOT OF SMALLER THINGS THAT ABSOLUTELY SHOULD BE DONE. THE PORK BARREL SPENDING THAT GOES ON IN THIS CONGRESS IS AN ABOMINATION. AN EMBARRASSMENT. AMERICANS SHOULDN'T BE EMBARRASSED BY WHAT'S HAPPENING. I VOTED ON A BILL, SELF-GUILT

HERE, I VOTED ON A BILL ONE TIME, FOUND OUT LATER I HAD VOTED FOR FUNDING FOR REINDEER RANCHES. TAXPAYER MONEY GOING TO REINDEER RANCHING. THIS WAS SO OFFENSIVE. THESE THINGS GET SLIPPED INTO THESE BILLS OVER AND OVER AND OVER. IT HAS TO BE STOPPED. THERE HAS TO BE ACCOUNTABILITY. THESE POLITICIANS NEED TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE BECAUSE TODAY THAT'S NOT HAPPENING.

SO THERE ARE SOME VERY SPECIFIC THINGS WE CAN DO TO CONTROL SOME OF THE SPENDING THAT'S GOING ON, ESPECIALLY SOME OF THE ABUSES GOING ON WITH RESPECT TO SPENDING. BUT OVER THE LONG TERM, THE BIG PICTURE ANSWER IS WE HAVE TO GROW AND STRENGTHEN THE AMERICAN ECONOMY. TO DO THAT WE HAVE TO GET RID OF THESE STRUCTURAL DISTINGUISH IS IN THE AMERICAN ECONOMY. THOSE ARE THE THINGS I WOULD DO.

I'M STOPPING NOW.

THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH.

[APPLAUSE]

>> SENATOR EDWARDS, THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR WORKING US OINTO YOUR VERY BUSY SCHEDULE THIS MORNING. WE WANT TO SEND YOU OFF WITH THE FAMOUS POLITICS AND EGGS MUG. YOU WERE MUGGED IN NEW HAMPSHIRE BY THE NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL AND THE NEW HAMPSHIRE POLITICAL LIBRARY.

>> THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH.

[APPLAUSE]

NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC TELEVISION IS PROUD TO BE A PRODUCTION PARTNER OF THIS POLITICS AND EGGS WEBCAST AND THE VIDEO ARCHIVES PROJECT. IT'S A PROJECT OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE POLITICAL LIBRARY AND NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL WITH SUPPORT FROM BAE SYSTEMS. CLEAN HARBORS ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND FIDELITY INVESTMENTS.