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## LYNN SWEET

### The scoop from Washington

#### Fox News South Carolina Jan. 16, 2012 debate. Transcript

By [Lynn Sweet](#) on January 17, 2012 9:28 AM | [No Comments](#)

TRANSCRIPT: Fox News Channel & Wall Street Journal Debate in South Carolina by Fox News Insider Posted in: Bret Baier, Gerald Seib, Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich, Rick Perry, Rick Santorum, Ron Paul, South Carolina GOP Debate, Transcript

Here's a full transcript from tonight's GOP debate in South Carolina:

BAIER: Thanks, Bill, and welcome to the Myrtle Beach Convention Center and the Republican presidential debate. It's being sponsored by Fox News, the Wall Street Journal, and the South Carolina Republican Party.

Now let's meet the five remaining candidates. Texas Governor Rick Perry.

(APPLAUSE)

Former Senator Rick Santorum.

(APPLAUSE)

Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney.

(APPLAUSE)

Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich.

(APPLAUSE)

And Congressman Ron Paul.

(APPLAUSE)

And, of course, our stage is down one podium, with Governor Jon Huntsman's announcement today that he is leaving the race. You at home can participate through Twitter tonight. You can weigh in on how well the candidates are answering the questions. Tweet the candidate's last name and hashtag answer if you think he's tackling the question or hashtag dodge if you think he's avoiding the question.

Then you can go to [foxnews.com/debate](http://foxnews.com/debate) to see the results during the break. You can head there and check it out.

Now let's meet our panelists tonight. Fox News political analyst and my colleague, Juan Williams.

(APPLAUSE)

And from the Wall Street Journal, economics correspondent Kelly Evans.

(APPLAUSE)

And Washington bureau chief Jerry Seib.

Our rules are similar to our previous Fox debates, except now answers will be 1 minute and 30 seconds to allow for a fuller discussion of the issues. But follow-ups will still be 30 seconds.

Now, in past debates, we've reminded candidates it's time to wrap up with various sounds. We started with a doorbell. That didn't work for dog-owners. And then we had a digital sound, which seemed rarely -- pretty ineffective.

Tonight, after a long string of debates and with longer answer time, we're going to try to not use any sound. You all have done this now 15 times. I'm sure you know the drill. But warning: We do reserve the right to bring back the bell if we have to.

Today, as you know, is Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. As we look live at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial in Washington, its first year on the mall, we're reminded of one of the many notable quotes from the late Dr. King. "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in a moment of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

This campaign has been filled with challenge and controversy. The challenges are large. Here in South Carolina, the unemployment rate is near 10 percent, well above the national average. And on this MLK Day, unemployment in African-American communities is near 16 percent.

But the controversy on the campaign trail in recent days has been about Governor Romney's record. We are going to talk extensively about jobs, federal debt, world hotspots, and social issues, but, first, let's clear the air.

Speaker Gingrich, on a debate stage in September, you vowed to, quote, "repudiate every effort of the news media to get Republicans to fight each other to protect Barack Obama, who deserves to be defeated," close quote. And yet in recent days, you and your campaign have cited numerous outlets, from the New York Times to Salon.com, to attack Governor Romney's business record, the exact line of attack the Obama campaign is using. Why?

GINGRICH: Well, first of all, I think that the staying positive through Iowa, through \$3.5 million of negative attacks, proved you either have to unilaterally disarm and leave the race or you have to at least bring up your competitor's record.

Second, I think it's very important for us to look at job creation. As a young member of Congress, I worked with President Ronald Reagan. We passed an economic growth package. We created 16 million jobs. The American people within a framework that Reagan had established created 16 million jobs.

As speaker I came back -- working with President Bill Clinton, we passed a very Reagan-like program, less regulation, lower taxes. Unemployment dropped to 4.2 percent. We created 11 million jobs. Now, those are real numbers that people can verify out in the open.

GINGRICH: Governor Romney as governor raised taxes and Massachusetts was 47th in job creation, fourth from the bottom. That's a public record difference.

The second part of his campaign is citing his experience in business, which is perfectly legitimate, but if that's a part of your campaign, then questioning it has to be equally legitimate.

And it struck me raising those questions, giving me an opportunity to answer them is exactly what campaigns ought to be about. And we need to satisfy the country that whoever we nominate has a record that can stand up to Barack Obama in a very effective way.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Governor Romney, I will give you time to respond in just a minute. Speaker Gingrich, the Wall Street Journal editorial page calls your attacks crude and damaging caricatures of modern business and capitalism. And they write that you are embarrassing yourself by taking the Obama line.

How do you respond to that?

GINGRICH: Well, first of all, I don't think raising questions is a prerogative only of Barack Obama and I don't think Republicans should allow themselves to automatically be intimidated because every time you raise a question somebody yells you are doing something the Democrats will do.

I raise questions that I think are legitimate questions. The questions, some of which came straight out of Wall Street Journal articles. The governor has every opportunity to answer those questions to give us facts and data and I think that's part of his responsibility as a candidate and I think that's part of what a campaign is about, is to raise question and see whether or not whether or not your competitor can answer them effectively before you get to a general election where you know those questions are going to be asked.

BAIER: One more time. You said last week if somebody comes in and takes all the money out of your company and leaves you bankrupt while they go off with millions, that's not traditional capitalism. That doesn't sound like a question.

GINGRICH: I think if you look at the record, part of which is published in the Wall Street Journal, remember its very limited public record because he was in a very private company. But there was a pattern in some companies, a handful of them, of leaving them with enormous debt and then within a year or two or three having them go broke. I think that is something he ought to answer.

BAIER: Governor Romney, your response.

ROMNEY: Well, I appreciate the chance to talk about my record and the private sector and also the governmental sector. And I appreciate the speaker's work working in the Reagan years and in the Clinton years. We did see good growth in this country. I want to see that come back again.

My experience in the private sector took me, one to be head of a consulting firm that got in trouble and work to create jobs there and hold on to jobs. We were in tough times.

And then I got the chance to start a business of my own.

And four of the companies that we invested in, they weren't businesses I ran, but we invested in, ended up today having some 120,000 jobs. Some of the business we invested weren't successful and lost jobs. And I'm very proud of the fact that we learned from the

experience.

We invested in well over 100 different businesses. And the people have looked at the places that have added jobs and lost jobs and that record is pretty much available for people to take a close look at.

But my record as the governor of Massachusetts and as the person that led the Olympics flowed from the fact that I had experience turning around tough situations, that I worked in the private sector, demonstrated a record of success. By virtue of that I was asked to come out and organize the Olympic Games in Salt Lake City.

And then was asked after the success of that experience to come back to Massachusetts by a number of people there, encouraged me to come back, run for governor. I did. We were fortunate to have an unemployment rate by the time I left office of 4.7 percent. Sounds pretty good today.

And I was also proud of the fact that we balanced the budget every year I was in office. We reduced taxes 19 times, put in place a rainy day fund of over \$2 billion by the time I left.

And so my record is out there, proud of it, and I think if team want to have someone who understand how the economy works, having worked in the real economy, that I'm the guy that can best post up against Barack Obama.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Governor Perry, you have gone so far as to call what Mitt Romney did at Bain vulture capitalism. But you've also said regulations in America are killing America. In fact, you said we should repeal the most recent financial regulations law, Dodd-Frank. So what specific regulations would you put in place to curb vulture capitalism?

PERRY: Well, let me go back and say that having been the governor of the state that created over a million net new jobs, that we are all about capitalism, and I think our record proves that we are all about capitalism.

But I visited Georgetown, South Carolina. It was one of those towns where there was a steel mill that Bain swept in, they picked that company over and a lot of people lost jobs there.

And the fact of the matter is we've got records. We've got records. My record is one of those that's been open to the public for quite a few years. And as a matter of fact, my income tax have been out every year.

Newt, I think you will let your income tax come out Thursday.

And Mitt, we need for you to release your income tax so the people of this country can see how you made your money. And -- and I think that's a -- I think that's a fair thing.

Listen, here's the real issue for us, as -- as -- as Republicans, we cannot fire our nominee in September. We need to know now. So I hope you'll put your tax records out there this week so the people of South Carolina can take a look and decide if, you know, we've got a flawed candidate or not.

But the fact is on the regulatory side, Dodd-Frank does need to -- to be gone. We've got too many regulations. Everyone knows that. We are strangling this country with regulations.

(APPLAUSE)

And we as a country, need to get rid of Dodd-Frank. We've got plenty -- matter of fact, I would get rid of a substantial amount of those financial regulators so that we can in fact, get back to capitalism without Washington strangling it.

BAIER: Governor Romney, 30 seconds.

(APPLAUSE)

ROMNEY: Well, Brett I need a little longer than that, we had a couple of...

BAIER: Well there will be plenty of time.

ROMNEY: Well...

BAIER: Thirty seconds for this time.

ROMNEY: Lets take a little more time than that. First -- first of all, I think -- I think Governor Perry makes a -- a very good point about -- about Georgetown. For those that don't know, it was a steel mill and -- and my firm invested in that steel mill and another one in Kansas City, tried to make them successful. Invested there for seven or eight years. And ultimately what happened from abroad, dumping steel into this country lead to some 40 different steel mills being closed.

And -- and that was one of those. I understand what happens when China cheats, or when others cheat and dump products into this country. That's one of the reasons I'm running is to make sure we crack down on cheaters. By the way, we also started a new steel mill with new technology in Indiana. That one's growing and thriving. I -- I think that experience is what America needs in a president. Secondly I -- I agree with the governor with regards to regulations. Regulations are choking off this economy.

I will do everything in my power to put a halt to all the Obama era regulations, review those that kill jobs and get rid of those so we can get the private sector working again.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Gerald Seib with the Wall Street Journal.

SEIB: Governor Romney, let's look a little deeper at the business record that you're talking about. In a nutshell, what your opponents here are saying is that Bain Capital and other private equity firms, buy companies, load them up with debt, take the profits and then head for the exits. Let's look at another example and allow you to respond through that. America Pad and Paper is a company that Bain Capital bought with \$5 million, took on more debt to expand, couldn't pay back the loans, went bankrupt and several hundred people lost their jobs.

Bain Capital though, took \$100 million in profits and fees. Does that show a flaw in the Bain Capital model? Or is that just the rough and tumble of America capitalism?

ROMNEY: Well, first of all you never want to see an enterprise go bankrupt. And you never want to see anyone lose a job. At the time I was at Bain Capital, the business was still going and didn't go bankrupt. What the company did, is they had one paper company and then they bought another one down the road and they said, we don't need to have, in -- in an industry that's shrinking, two different plants making the same product, so let's consolidate the two plants together.

And all the people in the plant that was closed were offered jobs in the new plant. Now they were union workers. They didn't all want that non-union plant work rule setting. But ultimately, do I believe that -- that free enterprise works? And that -- and that private equity and the various features of our economy work to actually improve our economy? To make America more productive with higher incomes and a brighter future? Absolutely. The -- the -- this is a major part of our economy, has been for a long time. Free enterprise, with all of its different dimensions and players, makes America the -- the strongest economic nation in the world.

The GDP per capita in this country, income per capita in this country, is about 50 percent higher than the average in Europe. Every time we invested, we tried to grow an enterprise, add jobs to make it more successful. And -- and I know that people are going to come after me. I know President Obama is going to come after me. But the record is pretty darn good. You look at places like Staples, Bright Horizons, that steel company I talked about, the Sports Authority. They alone added 120,000 jobs as of today. And -- and those kinds of experiences are the kinds of things that allow me to know what it takes to get this economy working and to put people back to work. We've got a president in office three years, and he does not have a jobs plan yet. I've got one out there already and I'm not even president, yet. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Kelly Evans from the Wall Street Journal.

EVANS: Congressman Paul -- Congressman Paul, this morning when he suspended his campaign, Governor Huntsman said the Republican presidential race has, quote "degenerated into an onslaught of negative and personal attacks, not worthy of the American people." You have been particularly scathing in your ads against the other candidates up here on stage tonight. Do you agree with Governor Huntsman that these attacks should be abandoned?

PAUL: Well, they should be abandoned if you're not telling the truth. But if you're exposing a voting record I think it's quite proper. There was one ad that we used against Senator Santorum, and I was only -- I only had one problem, is I couldn't get all the things in I wanted to say in one minute.

(APPLAUSE)

PAUL: But, you know, we mentioned No Child Left Behind and that he supported deficits times five, raising the national debt, and that he voted for prescription drug programs, as well as he voted against right-to-work. And I could have added, you know, things like -- he voted for Sarbanes-Oxley. So my only regret is that I couldn't get enough in in that one minute that I should have.

(UNKNOWN): Congressman Paul?

QUESTION: Hold up. Senator Santorum, you are going to get a question next, but respond, please, to Congressman Paul.

SANTORUM: Look, Congressman Paul has been quoting sources like CREW, which is a George Soros or a left-wing-backed organization, saying that I was corrupt. And in fact, throughout his entire ad, he quotes a lot of left-wing organizations.

Well, of course, left-wing organization say a lot of bad things about me. I would expect them. And that's -- I wear that as a badge of honor, not something that I'm ashamed of. With respect to some of the votes that they elicit, I admit, I'm a strong conservative, but I'm not perfect. President Bush's signature initiative of No Child Left Behind, I voted for it, I shouldn't have. It was something that I said, and I will say publicly, that we should repeal. In fact, we should repeal all of federal government's role in primary and secondary education, and if you give me the opportunity, I'll do that.

(APPLAUSE)

QUESTION: We have a question for you (inaudible) -

(CROSSTALK)

QUESTION: -- go ahead; finish your thought.

SANTORUM: And with right-to-work, look, I represented the state of Pennsylvania, which is one of the -- which is not a right-to-work state. If you look at who voted for the right-to-work bill in the Congress, those who came from right-to-work states voted for it. Those who came from non-right-to-work states represented their states. I wasn't going to vote in Washington, D.C., to change the law in my state.

I support right-to-work. I actually, as president, will sign and advocate for a right-to-work bill, but when I represented the people of Pennsylvania, I made the decision that I wasn't going to do in Washington and change the law in my state when my state didn't want to have that provision in their laws.

QUESTION: Juan Williams.

WILLIAMS: Senator Santorum, today you said Governor Romney is guilty of distorting your record as well as, quote, "lies and hypocrisy." You said this behavior is classic Romney, and no one is holding him accountable.

So the same question that Kelly asked, this time to you, should these barbed personal attacks against fellow Republicans be abandoned by the candidates?

SANTORUM: I -- look, I have run a very strong and positive campaign. My ads have been positive. The only ad that I've ever put up that has contrasted myself with the other candidates, and does so in a way talking about issues.

Governor Romney's super PAC has put an ad out there suggesting that I voted to allow felons to be able to vote from prison, because they said I'm allowing felons to vote, and they put a prisoner -- a person in a prison jumpsuit.

I would ask Governor Romney, do you believe people who have -- who were felons, who served their time, who have extended -- exhausted their parole and probation, should they be given the right to vote?

WILLIAMS: Governor Romney?

ROMNEY: First of all, as you know, the PACs that run ads on various candidates, as we unfortunately know in this -

SANTORUM: I'm looking for a question -- an answer to the question first.

(APPLAUSE)

ROMNEY: We have plenty of time. I'll get there. I'll do it in the order I want to do. I believe that, as you realize that the super PACs run ads. And if they ever run an ad or say something that is not accurate, I hope they either take off the ad or make it -- or make it correct. I guess that you said that they -- they said that you voted to make felons vote? Is that it?

SANTORUM: That's correct. That's what the ad says.

ROMNEY: And you're saying that you didn't?

SANTORUM: Well, first, I'm asking you to answer the question, because that's how you got the time. It's actually my time. So if you can answer the question, do you believe, do you believe that felons who have served their time, gone through probation and parole, exhausted their entire sentence, should they be given the right to have a vote?

This is Martin Luther King Day. This is a huge deal in the African-American community, because we have very high rates of incarceration, disproportionately high rates, particularly with drug crimes, in the African-American community.

The bill I voted on was the Martin Luther King Voting Rights bill. And this was a provision that said, particularly targeted African-Americans. And I voted to allow -- to allow them to have their voting rights back once they completed their sentence.

(CROSSTALK)

QUESTION: Governor Romney, 30 seconds to respond.

ROMNEY: Yes. I don't think people who have committed violent crimes should be allowed to vote again. That's my own view.

(APPLAUSE)

SANTORUM: That's very -

QUESTION: Last thing, Senator.

SANTORUM: You know, it's very interesting you should say that, Governor Romney, because in the state of Massachusetts, when you were governor, the law was that not only could violent felons vote after they exhausted their sentences, but they could vote while they were on probation and parole, which was a more liberal position than I took when I voted for the bill in the -- in the Congress. So...

(CROSSTALK)

BAIER: Governor?

SANTORUM: If, in fact -- let me finish -- if, in fact, you felt so passionately about this that you are now going to go out and have somebody criticize me for restoring voting rights to people who have -- who have exhausted their sentence and served their time and paid their debt to society, then why didn't you try to change that when you were governor of Massachusetts?

ROMNEY: Well, first of all, as...

(APPLAUSE)

As governor of Massachusetts, I had an 85 percent Democratic legislature. This is something we discussed. My view was people who committed violent crimes should not be able to vote, even upon coming out of office.

Secondly, I did not have a super PAC run an ad against you. That's -- as you know, that's something which is completely out of the control of candidates.

One of the things I decried in the current financial system that gets behind campaigns is that we have these voting requirements that put these super PACs in power that say things we disagree with. And I'll tell you, there have been some -- there have been some attacks on me, I mean, that -- that have just been outrageous and completely inaccurate and have been shown to be inaccurate. That's the nature of the process. I hope...

BAIER: We have a...

ROMNEY: I hope -- I hope it ends. I hope it ends.

(CROSSTALK)

BAIER: We have a lot of questions.

SANTORUM: I need to -- I need to respond to this. What the governor said is he didn't propose anything to change that law, and what he's saying is that the -- the ad that says that I said that -- or I voted to allow felons to vote is inaccurate. And it is inaccurate. And if I had something -- the super PAC that was supporting me that was inaccurate, I would go out and say, "Stop it," that you're representing me and you're representing my campaign. Stop it.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Governor -- Governor Perry, go ahead.

PERRY: Here's -- here's the issue.

ROMNEY: I actually think...

PERRY: And this is a great -- this is a great example of the insiders that are having the conversation up here. And the fact of the matter is this.

(APPLAUSE)

Washington, D.C., needs to leave the states alone and let the states decide these issues and don't do it from Washington, D.C. That's what needs to happen.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Governor Romney, any response to either one of those?

ROMNEY: I -- I agree with Governor Perry, that it should be decided at the state level. I also agree with -- with Congressman Paul that -- that a number of the positions that were described that Governor -- or that Senator Santorum took were -- were positions that were very different than the conservative views that he would suggest today.

I think the decision on -- on voting against right-to-work was a bad decision and was made -- as he indicated -- based upon the -- the reflection of the people of the state he was representing. It's politics, if you will.

In my state, I had a state that -- that said that they did not favor my position. I'm not letting felons who had committed violent crimes vote. I think it's a -- a position that's reasonable, and that's the position I've got.

BAIER: We may have to rethink that whole bell thing, but we're going to take a break right here. Remember to send your thoughts on how the candidates are answering the questions via Twitter. Tweet the candidate's last name and hashtag answer or hashtag dodge. Send me questions at [bretbaier](#). Include that hashtag [scdebate](#).

After the break, key issues and some more fireworks. We'll see. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BAIER: Welcome back to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and the Republican presidential debate.

We are getting questions from Twitter. Governor Romney -- Governor Huntsman endorsed you today. But in New Hampshire he called you a, quote, "perfectly lubricated weather vein on the important issues of the day." And just last week, Governor Huntsman charged that it's hard to find your core. Which leads to our first Twitter question.

From [MissinDixie](#) (ph), quote, "I want to support Mitt Romney, but considering his changing views, convince me you won't change again."

ROMNEY: You know, the issue where I change my mind, which obviously draws a lot of attention was that when I was running for governor, I said I would leave the law in place as it related to abortion. And I thought I could go in that narrow path between my personal belief and letting government stay out of the issue.

Then a piece of legislation came to my desk and it said we would begin to create embryos for the purpose of destroying those embryos, and I said I simply couldn't sign something like that. And I penned an op-ed in the Boston Globe and said I'm pro-life, described my view and served as a pro-life governor.

The Massachusetts Citizens for Life have just written a letter last week describing my record and saying this is a solid record of a very pro-life governor. I'm proud of that record.

My view on other social issues such as gay marriage, I've always opposed gay marriage. I believe that we should provide equal rights to people regardless of their sexual orientation but I do not believe that marriage should be between two people of the same gender.

My care by getting in this race is about my belief in America and my concern that what we're seeing with this president is a change in course for America to become something we wouldn't recognize. I think he is drawing us into becoming more like a European social welfare state. I think he wants us to become an entitlement society where people in this country feel they're entitled to something from government and where government takes from some to give to others.

I'm running to make sure that we don't transform America into something we don't recognize, but instead we restore the principles that made America the hope of the Earth.

.ROMNEY: I believe in free enterprise, I believe in freedom, I believe in liberty, I believe in an opportunity society. And everything I do will be designed to strengthen the values of this country, to strengthen the families of this country, to strengthen our economy and to keep a military that is second to none in the world.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Juan Williams, Juan?

WILLIAMS: Governor Perry, last month the Department of Justice challenged South Carolina's new law requiring registered voters to show state issued identification before they can vote. Governor Haley has pledged to fight the federal government all the way to the Supreme Court. You sided with the government.

(APPLAUSE)

WILLIAMS: Now, Governor Perry, are you suggesting on this Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, that the federal government has no business scrutinizing the voting laws of states where minorities were once denied the right to vote?

PERRY: I'm saying -- I'm saying that the state of -- of Texas is under assault by federal government. I'm saying also that South Carolina is at war with this federal government and with this administration.

(APPLAUSE)

PERRY: If you look at what this Justice Department has done, not only have they taken them to task on voter ID, they've also taken them to task on their immigration law and in then the most egregious thing obviously is this National Labor Relations Board, where they come into a right to work state and tell the state of South Carolina...

(APPLAUSE)

PERRY: ...we're not going to let a private company come in here. That is irresponsible. I would suggest to you it's unconstitutional. And when I'm the president of the United States, the states are going to have substantially more right to take care of their business. And not be forced by the EPA, or by the Justice Department for that matter, to do things that are against the will of the people.

Look, I've said this administration is at war against organized religion. And when you look at what they've done, going after churches because churches have that ministerial exception in there and can decide who they were going to hire at -- at their churches. The idea that the Catholic charities cannot take money or the federal government, this administration won't give them those dollars for sexually trafficked individuals because this administration doesn't agree with the Catholic church on the issue of abortion. If that's not a war on religion, I don't know what it is. And this administration is out of control.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Senator Santorum, we talked about the high unemployment rate here in South Carolina, almost 10 percent, well above the national average. We've talked about the skyrocketing national debt. In December, Congress authorized an additional 20 weeks of jobless benefits. Benefits being paid by the federal government in many cases because states can't afford them. Do you support extending these benefits when they expire at the end of the month? Why or why not?

SANTORUM: Well, I think we have to look at having a reasonable time for people to be able to come back, get a job and then turn their lives around. But, what we've seen in -- in the past under this administration, is extending benefits up to 99 weeks. I don't support that. I think if you have people who are out of work that -- that long a period of time, it's -- it's without question it makes it harder to find work when you come back. When you're that far long away from a job, then you lose certain skills. You lose -- you lose a lot of things when you're out of work.

And that's -- there's a lot of research that show that to be the case. And so what I believe is, just like I did with welfare reform when we reformed welfare, we sent it back to the states. And we gave the states the flexibility to design these programs. Just as I would do here with unemployment insurance. It should go back to the states. Let the states design it. If South Carolina because of a unique situation, wants to have a longer unemployment

period of time because of a unique situation here, fine. But to have a federal program that roughly and crudely tries to assess the problem of unemployment from state to state and area to area, is the wrong approach.

What we should do, is have it just like welfare. Give it to the states, put a time limit. In the case of welfare, it was 40 weeks. Give flexibility to the states to -- to -- to operate those programs and even in unemployment, I mean, you can -- you can have as we did on welfare, have some sort of either work requirement of job training required as a condition. We're not doing people any favors by keeping them on unemployment insurance for a long period of time.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Speaker Gingrich, Senator Santorum just mentioned it, the surge in unemployment has created these so-called 99'ers, people who collect benefits for the maximum 99 weeks offered now. What is the maximum length anyone should be able to collect unemployment checks?

GINGRICH: Well, you know Brett, I think there's a better way to -- to think about this. All unemployment compensation should be tied to a job training requirement. If somebody can't find a job...

(APPLAUSE)

... and they show up, and they say, "You know, I need help," the help we ought to give them is to get them connected to a business-run training program to acquire the skills to be employable. Now the fact is, 99 weeks is an associate degree.

(APPLAUSE)

It -- it tells you -- I think it tells you everything. I -- I hope my four colleagues would agree here. It tells you everything you need to know about the difference between Barack Obama and the five of us, that we actually think work is good.

(APPLAUSE)

We actually -- we actually think saying to somebody, "I'll help you if you're willing to help yourself," is good.

(APPLAUSE)

And we think unconditional efforts by the best food stamp president in American history to maximize dependency is terrible for the future of this country.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Kelly Evans?

EVANS: Governor Romney -- Governor Romney, core European nations have just been downgraded, and several are only able to raise funds because of help from central banks. As president, you could immediately be faced with another financial crisis, perhaps this time sparked in Europe. This is not some imaginary event. How far would you be willing to go to keep the financial system functioning?

ROMNEY: Well, of course you want to keep our financial system functioning, but we've learned some lessons from the experience of the last several years. What you don't want to do is to give the president or anyone else a blank check or a slush fund to take care of their friends or take care of industries or companies they think they want to save. What we have to do...

(APPLAUSE)

What we have to do is to recognize that -- that bankruptcy can be a process, reorganization for banks, as well as other institutions, that allow them to get rid of their excess costs, to re-establish a sound foundation, and to emerge stronger. We're seeing that as a result of the bankruptcy in the auto industry. We could see that in our banking sector, as well, if a bank or two get in trouble.

And so the right course for us is not to think we have to go run over to Europe to try and save their banking system or to try and pump money into the banks here in this country. This is time for us to recognize that the system of laws we have and the free enterprise system works and we don't need government stepping in with regulations and higher taxes and telling us what we can and cannot do as a society to try and keep America strong.

The best way to get America's economy going is not to think about how much we can push government into the American economy, but instead how much we can get government out of the American economy.

(APPLAUSE)

And our -- our tax rates -- our tax rates are too high on individuals, as well as on our employers. Our regulations are too burdensome. Regulators see themselves as the -- the opponents of free enterprise as opposed to those that encourage it.

We have an energy policy that doesn't take advantage of our natural resources. That makes no sense. We need our oil, our coal, our gas, our nuclear.

And, finally, we need to open up new markets. This president has opened up no new markets for American goods around the world in his three years, even as European nations and China have opened up 44. We have to have a policy to open markets, put

Americans to work. That's the answer, not bailouts.

BAIER: Jerry Seib has the next question.

SEIB: Congressman Paul, South Carolina has seven major military bases, and thousands of people employed in the defense industry. But you want to make major cuts in defense spending, several hundred billion dollars in the coming years, that inevitably would cost South Carolina jobs. What do you say to people in this state who worry that your military plans would hurt the national security and cost South Carolina jobs?

PAUL: I would say your -- your question suggests you're very confused about my position. (APPLAUSE)

I want to cut money, overseas money. That's what I want to do. I want to cut military money. I don't want to cut defense money. I want to bring the troops home. I'd probably have more bases here at home. We were closing them down in the 1990s and building them overseas. That's how we got into trouble.

PAUL: So we would save a lot more money and have a stronger national defense, and that's what we should do. But to say that we would be weaker is absolutely wrong, because -- and -- and -- and another important thing you should consider is the fact that the military is behind me more than the others. I get twice as much money from the... (APPLAUSE)

... from the active military duties than all the other candidates put together. So they're saying that I'm on the right track. They're sick and tired of those wars. They're sick and tired of the nation- building and the policing activity.

But to say that we would have less money for defense, we'd actually have more money. And if I may, I'd like to go back to the international financial thing.

SEIB: Congressman, just to be clear, your plan calls for freezing defense spending at 2006 levels, which is where -

PAUL: No, see, I -- you still don't understand.

BAIER: What is he missing, Congressman?

PAUL: You don't understand there's a difference between military spending and defense spending. Just because you spend a billion dollars on an embassy in Baghdad, bigger than the Vatican, you consider that defense spending. I consider that waste. (APPLAUSE)

PAUL: So if you want to -- a little while ago we were talking about funding the unemployed -- and of course that should be privatized and I don't support it -- but I don't support cutting it off like that. I would cut some of this military spending like Eisenhower advises, watch out for the military industrial complex. Defend this country. We have to have a strong national defense, but we don't get strength by diluting ourselves in 900 bases in 130 countries. That is where the problem is.

But you need to understand that there is a difference between just military spending and defense spending, just to spend money. We understand this domestically. If you spend more money domestically, we know it's wrong, but we are supposed to spend more money and that's conservative. I've never quite understood this. We are supposed to be conservatives. Spend less money.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: I'd like to ask a question about keeping money for all of the candidates down the line. What is the highest federal income tax any American should have to pay? We are looking for a number. Governor?

PERRY: Seven 7 percent flat tax. Simple. Keep it simple.

BAIER: Senator Santorum?

SANTORUM: Well, my plan has two rates, 10 and 28 percent, which is the highest rate under Ronald Reagan when he cut taxes.

BAIER: Governor Romney.

ROMNEY: I would like 25 percent, but right now it's at 35, so people better pay what is legally required. But ultimately let's get it down to as low as we possibly can, if it's 20, if it's 25 but paying more than 25 percent, I think, is taking too much out of our pockets.

BAIER: So the highest you had was 35?

ROMNEY: Well, that's what the law is right now, but 25 is where I would like to see us go.

BAIER: Speaker Gingrich.

GINGRICH: I would like to see it be a flat tax at 15 percent and I would like to see us reduce government to meet the revenue, not raise revenue to meet the government.

BAIER: Congressman Paul.

PAUL: Well, we should have the lowest tax that we've ever had, and up until 1913 it was 0 percent. What's so bad about that?

(APPLAUSE)

PAUL: Now, I would like to follow up on that, because I think the question on taxes is generally misleading, because anytime you spend money, it's a tax. You might tax, you

might borrow, you might inflate. The vicious tax, that's attacking the American people, the retired people today, is the inflation tax, the devaluation of the currency, the standard of living is going down, and you need to address that. And that's why I want to make the inflation tax zero, as well.

BAIER: So your answer is zero?

PAUL: Zero.

BAIER: OK. About taxes. Kelly?

EVANS: Governor Romney, Speaker Gingrich, Senator Santorum and now vocally tonight Senator Perry -- Governor Perry -- are calling for you to release your tax records. The Obama campaign is asking for the same thing. Governor, will you release your income tax records?

ROMNEY: You know, I looked at what has been done in campaigns in the past with Senator McCain and President George W. Bush and others. They have tended to release tax records in April or tax season. I hadn't planned on releasing tax records because the law requires us to release all of our assets, all the things we own. That I have already released. It's a pretty full disclosure. But, you know, if that's been the tradition and I'm not opposed to doing that, time will tell. But I anticipate that most likely I am going to get asked to do that around the April time period and I'll keep that open.

EVANS: Governor, you will plan then to release your income tax records around April?

ROMNEY: I think I've heard enough from folks saying, look, let's see your tax records. I have nothing in them that suggests there's any problem and I'm happy to do so. I sort of feel like we are showing a lot of exposure at this point. And if I become our nominee, and what's happened in history is people have released them in about April of the coming year and that's probably what I would do.

BAIER: OK. Next round of questions, Juan Williams.

WILLIAMS: Governor Romney, your father was born in Mexico. You still have family there, yet you have taken the hardest line of anyone on this stage on immigration reform, including opposition to key parts of the DREAM Act, which is supported by 80 percent of Latinos in this country. Are you alienating Latino voters that Republicans will need to win the general election?

ROMNEY: You know, I think Latino voters, like all voters in this country, are interested in America being an opportunity nation. People come here because they believe they want to have a brighter future and that's been the story of America. The president looks out across the country and says it could be worse. I can't believe saying that. The American people recognize it's got to be better.

In my view, as long as we communicate to the people of all backgrounds in this country that it can be better, and that America is a land of opportunity, we will get those votes. Now with regards to immigration policy, I absolutely believe that those who come here illegally should not be given favoritism or a special route to becoming permanent residents or citizens that's not given to those people who have stayed in line legally. I just think we have to follow the law, I think that's the right course.

(APPLAUSE)

ROMNEY: And I have indicated I would veto the DREAM Act if provisions included in that act to say that people who are here illegally, if they go to school here long enough, get a degree here that they can become permanent residents.

I think that's a mistake. I think we have to follow the law and insist those who come here illegally, ultimately return home, apply, and get in line with everyone else.

Look, I want people to know I love legal immigration. Almost all of us in this room are descendants of immigrants or are immigrants ourselves. Our nation is stronger and more vibrant by virtue of a strong legal immigration system.

But to protect our legal immigration system we have got to protect our borders and stop the flood of illegal immigration and I will not do anything that opens up another wave of illegal immigration.

WILLIAMS: Senator Santorum, the Obama administration has not specifically addressed high levels of joblessness and a 25 percent poverty rate in black America. They say they want to fix the economy for all, but given the crisis situation among a group of historically disadvantaged Americans, do you feel the time has come to take special steps to deal with the extraordinary level of poverty afflicting one race of America?

SANTORUM: It's very interesting, if you look at a study that was done by the Brookings Institute back in 2009, they determined that if Americans do three things, they can avoid poverty. Three things. Work, graduate from high school, and get married before you have children. Those three things...

(APPLAUSE)

SANTORUM: Those three things, if you do, according to Brookings, results in only 2 percent of people who do all those things ending up in poverty, and 77 percent above the

national average in income. It's a huge, huge opportunity for us.

But what is the Obama administration doing? Elaine Bennett runs a program called Best Friends, the wife of Bill Bennett. And she told me through Bill that the Obama administration now has a policy, and this program is a program targeted at at-risk youth, specifically in many case necessary the African-American community, who are at-risk young girls. The Obama administration now has regulations that tells them that they can no longer promote marriage to these young girls. They can no longer promote marriage as a way of avoiding poverty and bad choices that they make in their life. They can no longer even teach abstinence education. They have to be neutral with respect to how people behave.

The problem is neutrality ends in poverty, neutrality ends in choices that hurt people's lives. This administration is deliberately telling organizations that are there to help young girls make good choices, not to tell them what the good choice is. That is absolutely unconscionable.

(APPLAUSE)

WILLIAMS: Congressman Paul. An analysis by the Prison Policy Initiative finds that blacks who are jailed at four times the rate of whites in South Carolina are most often convicted on drug offenses. Do you see racial disparities in drug-related arrests and convictions as a problem? And if so, how would you fix it?

PAUL: Yes. Definitely. There is a disparity. It's not that it is my opinion, it is very clear. Blacks and minorities who are involved with drugs, are arrested disproportionately. They are tried and imprisoned disproportionately. They suffer the consequence of the death penalty disproportionately. Rich white people don't get the death penalty very often. And most of these are victimless crimes. Sometimes people can use drugs and arrested three times and never committed a violent act and they can go to prison for life. And yet we see times just recently we heard where actually murders get out of prison in shorter periods of time. So I think it's way -- way disproportionate.

I don't think we can do a whole lot about it. I think there's discrimination in the system, but you have to address the drug war. You know, the drug war is -- is very violent on our borders. We have the immigration problem, and I'm all for having, you know, tight immigration policies, but we can't ignore the border without looking at the drug war. In the last five years, 47,500 people died in the drug war down there. This is a major thing going on. And it unfairly hits the minorities.

This is one thing I am quite sure that Martin Luther King would be in agreement with me on this. As a matter of fact, Martin Luther King he would be in agreement with me on the wars, as well, because he was a strong opponent to the Vietnam War.

So I -- I -- I would say, yes, the judicial system is probably one of the worst places where -- where prejudice and -- and discrimination still exists in this country.

WILLIAMS: Speaker Gingrich, you recently said black Americans should demand jobs, not food stamps. You also said poor kids lack a strong work ethic and proposed having them work as janitors in their schools. Can't you see that this is viewed, at a minimum, as insulting to all Americans, but particularly to black Americans?

GINGRICH: No. I don't see that.

(APPLAUSE)

You know, my daughter, Jackie, who's sitting back there, Jackie Cushman, reminded me that her first job was at First Baptist Church in Carrollton, Georgia, doing janitorial work at 13. And she liked earning the money. She liked learning that if you worked, you got paid. She liked being in charge of her own money, and she thought it was a good start. I had a young man in New Hampshire who walked up to me. I've written two newsletters now about this topic. I've had over 50 people write me about the jobs they got at 11, 12, 13 years of age. Ran into a young man who started a doughnut company at 11. He's now 16. He has several restaurants that take his doughnuts. His father is thrilled that he's 16 because he can now deliver his own doughnuts.

(LAUGHTER)

What I tried to say -- and I think it's fascinating, because Joe Klein reminded me that this started with an article he wrote 20 years ago. New York City pays their janitors an absurd amount of money because of the union. You could take one janitor and hire 30-some kids to work in the school for the price of one janitor, and those 30 kids would be a lot less likely to drop out. They would actually have money in their pocket. They'd learn to show up for work. They could do light janitorial duty. They could work in the cafeteria. They could work in the front office. They could work in the library. They'd be getting money, which is a good thing if you're poor. Only the elites despise earning money.

(APPLAUSE)

WILLIAMS: Well...

(APPLAUSE)

(CROSSTALK)

WILLIAMS: The suggestion that he made was about a lack of work ethic. And I've got to tell you, my e-mail account, my Twitter account has been inundated with people of all races who are asking if your comments are not intended to belittle the poor and racial minorities.

You saw some of this reaction during your visit...

(BOOING)

... to a black church in South Carolina. You saw some of this during your visit to a black church in South Carolina, where a woman asked you why you refer to President Obama as "the food stamp president." It sounds as if you are seeking to belittle people.

(BOOING)

GINGRICH: Well, first of all, Juan, the fact is that more people have been put on food stamps by Barack Obama than any president in American history.

(APPLAUSE)

Now, I know among the politically correct, you're not supposed to use facts that are uncomfortable.

(LAUGHTER)

(APPLAUSE)

Second, you're the one who earlier raised a key point. There's -- the area that ought to be I-73 was called by Barack Obama a corridor of shame because of unemployment. Has it improved in three years? No. They haven't built the road. They haven't helped the people. They haven't done anything.

(APPLAUSE)

So...

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Finish your thought, Mr. Speaker.

GINGRICH: One last thing.

BAIER: Yes, sir.

GINGRICH: So here's my point. I believe every American of every background has been endowed by their creator with the right to pursue happiness. And if that makes liberals unhappy, I'm going to continue to find ways to help poor people learn how to get a job, learn how to get a better job and learn some day to own the job.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Okay. When we come back -- they can't hear me, but I'll talk to you, foreign policy. Bring me your questions, BretBair, include hash tag SCdebates after this break.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BAIER: Welcome back to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. That was a time lapsed video of a sand sculpture right outside the convention center here. It does still have Governor Huntsman on that sand sculpture. He's not here tonight. Next round of questions is on foreign policy. And we'll begin with Congressman Paul. In a recent interview, Congressman Paul with a Des Moines radio station you said you were against the operation that killed Osama bin Laden. You said the U.S. operation that took out the terrorist responsible for killing 3,000 people on American soil, quote, showed no respect for the rule of law, international law.

So to be clear, you believe international law should have constrained us from tracking down and killing the man responsible for the most brazen attack on the U.S. since Pearl Harbor?

PAUL: Obviously no. And that's what -- I did not say that.

What I -- as a matter of fact, after 9/11 I voted for the authority to go after him. And my frustration was that we didn't go after him. It took us ten years. We had him trapped at Tora Bora and I thought we should have trapped him there. I even introduced another resolution on the principle of market reprisal to keep our eye on target rather than getting involved in nation building.

BAIER: But no respect for international law was the question about the quote that you used in Des Moines.

PAUL: Well, you know, I can't say -- his colleague was in Pakistan, and we communicated, you know, with the government of Pakistan and they turned him over. And what I suggested there was that if we have no respect for the sovereignty of another nation that it will lead to disruption of that nation.

Here we have a nation that we are becoming constantly trying to kill people who we consider our enemies. At the same time we are giving the government of Pakistan billions of dollars. Now there's a civil war going on, the people are mad at us but yet the government is getting money from us and I think it's a deeply flawed policy.

But to not go after him -- and if I voted for the authority, obviously I think it was proper.

But once they waited ten years, I don't see any reason why they couldn't have done it like they did after Khalid Sheikh Aman (ph). And that would have been a more proper way.

If somebody in this country, say a Chinese dissident come over here, we wouldn't endorse the idea, well, they can come over here and bomb us and do whatever. I'm just trying to suggest that respect for other nation's sovereignty -- and look at the chaos in Pakistan now. We are at war in Pakistan, but to say that I didn't want him killed...

BAIER: No, I just quoted from your radio.

PAUL: I'm just suggesting that there are processes that if you could follow and that you should do it. There is proper procedures rather than digging bigger holes for ourselves. That's what we have been doing in the Middle East, digging bigger and bigger holes for ourselves and it's so hard for us to get out of that mess. And we have a long ways to go. We are still in Iraq and that's getting worse and we are not leaving Afghanistan and the American people are sick and tired of it. 80 percent of the American people want us out of there. I am just suggesting that we work within the rule of law.

Like only going to war when you declare the law, then we wouldn't be...

BAIER: International law. I understand.

I guess U.S. intelligence officials say they had documents recovered in the compound in Abbottabad that that shows that al Qaeda was planning other attacks, perhaps bigger than 9/11. I asked you in our debate in Sioux City on the topic of Iran about this. But on this topic, GOP nominee Ron Paul would be running far to the left of President Obama on the issue of tracking down and killing terrorists who want to attack the U.S.

PAUL: I would say that if you do your best and you can't do anything, yes, we had the authority, we voted for it, you got it from the congress, you do it. I just didn't think they had gone through the process enough to actually, you know, capture him in a different way.

I mean, think about Saddam Hussein. We did that. We captured him. We tried him. I mean the government tried him and he got hung. What's so terrible about this?

This whole idea that you can't capture -- just a minute. This whole idea you can't capture people...

BAIER: but you voted against the war in Iraq.

BAIER: Adolf Eichmann was captured. He was given a trial. What is wrong with capturing people? Why didn't we try to get some information from him? You know, we are accustomed to asking people questions, but all of a sudden gone, you know, that's it. So I would say that there are different ways without trying to turn around and say, oh, for some reason this doesn't mean he's supporting America.

BAIER: Speaker Gingrich?

If you received, Speaker Gingrich actionable intelligence about the location of Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar inside Pakistan would you authorize a unilateral operation, much like the one that killed bin Laden, with or without the Pakistani government knowing, even if the consequence was an end to all U.S.-Pakistani cooperation?

GINGRICH: well, let me go back to set the stage as you did awhile ago. Bin Laden plotted deliberately, bombing American embassies, bombings the USS Cole, and killing 3,100 Americans, and his only regret was he didn't kill more. Now, he's not a Chinese dissident.

(APPLAUSE)

You know, the analogy that Congressman Paul used was -- was utterly irrational. A Chinese dissident who comes in here -- a Chinese dissident who comes here seeking freedom is not the same as a terrorist who goes to Pakistan seeking asylum. Furthermore, when you give a country \$20 billion, and you learn that they have been hiding -- I mean, nobody in their -- nobody believes that bin Laden was sitting in a compound in a military city one mile from the national defense university and the Pakistanis didn't know it. Now...

(APPLAUSE)

We're in South Carolina. South Carolina in the Revolutionary War had a young 13-year-old named Andrew Jackson. He was sabred by a British officer and wore a scar his whole life. Andrew Jackson had a pretty clear-cut idea about America's enemies: Kill them.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Congressman Paul, 30 seconds, please, 30 seconds to respond, since you were mentioned.

PAUL: My -- my -- my point is, if another country does to us what we do others, we're not going to like it very much. So I would say that maybe we ought to consider a golden rule in -- in foreign policy. Don't do to other nations...

(BOOING)

... what we don't want to have them do to us. So we -- we endlessly bomb -- we endlessly these countries and then we wonder -- wonder why they get upset with us? And -- and yet it -- it continues on and on. I mean, this -- this idea...

BAIER: That's time.

PAUL: This idea that we can't debate foreign policy, then all we have to do is start another war? I mean, it's -- it's warmongering. They're building up for another war against

Iran, and people can't wait to get in another war. This country doesn't need another war. We need to quit the ones we're in. We need to save the money and bring our troops home.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Governor Romney? And, again, the bell may be making a comeback.

(LAUGHTER)

Governor Romney, should the United States negotiate with the Taliban to end the fighting in Afghanistan?

ROMNEY: Of course not. And Speaker Gingrich is right. Of course you take out our enemies, wherever they are. These people declared war on us. They've killed Americans. We go anywhere they are, and we kill them. And the -- the right thing for...

(APPLAUSE)

The right thing for Osama bin Laden was the bullet in the -- in the head that he received. That's the right thing for people who kill American citizens.

(APPLAUSE)

Now, the Taliban is killing Americans. This president has done an extraordinary thing. He announced the date of our withdrawal. He announced the date of the withdrawal of our surge forces based upon a political calendar, not the calendar that the commanders on the ground said it was based for our mission. That was wrong.

(APPLAUSE)

And then he announced the day that we're going to pull out of the country all together. And now he wants to negotiate from a position of extraordinary weakness? You don't negotiate from -- with your enemy from a position of weakness as this president has done.

The right course for America is to recognize we're under attack. We're under attack by people, whether they're Al Qaida or other radical violent jihadists around the world, and we're going to have to take action around the world to protect ourselves.

And hopefully we can do it as we did with Osama bin Laden, as opposed to going to war as we had to do in -- in the case of -- of Iraq. The right way, Congressman Paul, in my view, is -- to keep us from having to go to those wars is to have a military so strong that no one would ever think of testing it. That's the kind of military we have to have, and we have to pursue our interests around the world.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Governor Romney, Mitchell Rice (ph) -- Mitchell Rice (ph), who I believe is one of your top foreign policy advisers, said that the Taliban may well be, quote, "our enemy and our negotiating partner." He said this means that some type of negotiated solution is the best near-term bet to halt the fighting. Is he wrong?

ROMNEY: Yes. The -- the right course for America is not to negotiate with the Taliban while the Taliban are killing our soldiers. The right course is to recognize they're the enemy of the United States. It's the vice president who said they're not the enemy of the United States. The vice president's wrong. They are the enemy. They're killing American soldiers.

We don't negotiate from a position of weakness as we're pulling our troops out. The right course for us is to strengthen the Afghan military force so they can reject the Taliban. Think what it says to the people in Afghanistan and the military in Afghanistan, when we're asking them to stand up and fight to protect the sovereignty of their people, if they see us, their ally, turning and negotiating with the very people they're going to have to protect their nation from. It's the wrong course. The vice president's wrong. We should not negotiate with the Taliban. We should defeat the Taliban.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Senator Santorum, you said earlier, in the Libyan operation that President Obama missed an opportunity to capitalize on rebel offensives. Now, in Syria at the hands of Bashar al Assad, it's estimated that some 5,000 people have been killed. The country appears to be sliding into civil war and Arab League peace monitors seem to be failing. How would President Santorum, deal with this international crisis?

SANTORUM: Well, the -- first off President Obama has dealt with it about as badly as possible. First he emboldened Assad by coming into office and establishing an embassy there, reestablishing diplomatic relationships, going through the process of trying to rehabilitate this tyrant. All, I'm sure, to the consternation of our friend, Israel who has consistently done the opposite, tried to step away and isolate Israel while at the time they're trying to negotiate in a very difficult situation in their country.

With respect to -- to -- to Syria, look, Syria and Assad are a threat to Israel. I was the author of a bill when I was in the United States Senate to put sanctions on Syria. And in fact, they worked to get Syria out of Lebanon, which was -- which was step number one. That's no longer a viable option. We need to rally the international community, work and cooperate with removing Assad and work in -- in concert with the Arab League, work with others.

As far as a military mission on our own, no I do not support a military mission into Syria, but we should be much more aggressive in following through with policies that effectuate the removal of Assad for the benefit of the Syrian people and for our neighbor -- and for their neighbor, Israel.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Governor Perry, since the Islamist-oriented party took over in Turkey, the murder rate of women has increased 1,400 percent there. Press freedom has declined to the level of Russia. The prime minister of Turkey has embraced Hamas and Turkey has threatened military force against both Israel and Cypress. Given Turkey's turn, do you believe Turkey still belongs in NATO?

PERRY: Well, obviously when you have a country that is being ruled by, what many would perceive to be Islamic terrorists, when you start seeing that type of activity against their own citizens, then yes. Not only is it time for us to have a conversation about whether or not they belong to be in NATO, but it's time for the United States, when we look at their foreign aid, to go to zero with it.

(APPLAUSE)

PERRY: And you go to zero with foreign aid for all of those countries. And it doesn't make any difference who they are. You go to zero with that foreign aid and then you have the conversation about, do they have America's best interest in mind? And when you have countries like Turkey that are moving far away from the country that I lived in back in the 1970's as a pilot in the United States Air Force that was our ally, that worked with us, but today we don't see that.

Our -- our -- our president, has a foreign policy that makes our allies very nervous and emboldens our enemies. And we have to have a president of the United States that clearly sends the message, whether it's to Israel, our friend and there should be no space between the United States and Israel, period.

(APPLAUSE)

PERRY: And we need to send a powerful message to countries like Iran, and Syria and Turkey that the United States is serious and that we're going to have to be dealt with.

BAIER: Governor Perry, you sounded like you wanted to get in when Congressman Paul was talking at the beginning of this round on foreign policy.

PERRY: Well, I was just saying that I thought maybe that the noise that you were looking for was a gong.

(LAUGHTER)

BAIER: Do you have any reaction to what Congressman Paul said?

(APPLAUSE)

PERRY: Listen, as -- you know, I volunteered to wear the uniform of our country. And what bothers me more than anything, is this administration and this administration's disdain all too often for our men and women in uniform. Whether it was what they've said about the Marines -- now these young men made a mistake. They obviously made a - a mistake.

BAIER: You're talking about urinating on the corpses?

PERRY: They -- they made a -- a mistake that the military needs to deal with. And they need to be punished. But the fact of the matter -- the fact of the matter is this, when the Secretary of Defense calls that a despicable act, when he calls that utterly despicable. Let me tell you what's utterly despicable, cutting Danny Pearl's head off and showing the video of it.

(APPLAUSE)

PERRY: Hanging our contractors from bridges. That's utterly despicable. For our president for the Secretary of State, for the Department of Defense secretary to make those kinds of statements about those young Marines -- yes, they need to be punished, but when you see this president with that type of disdain for our country, taking a trillion dollars out of our defense budget, 100,000 of our military off of our front lines, and a reduction of forces, I lived through a reduction of force once and I saw the result of it in the sands of Iran in 1979. Never again.

BAIER: Kelly.

Yes, sir.

Congressman Paul.

PAUL: Just a very brief statement. I, too, served in the air force for five years during the height of the Cold War from '62 to '68 so I've had a little bit of experience. In a matter of fact, I was over in the Afghanistan, Pakistan region.

But I would like to point out one thing about the Taliban. The Taliban used to be our allies when we were fighting the Russians. So Taliban are people who want -- their main goal is to keep foreigners off their land. It's the al Qaeda you can't mix the two. The al Qaeda want to come here to kill us. The Taliban just says we don't want foreigners. We need to understand that, or we can't resolve this problem in the Middle East. We are going to spend a lot of lives and a lot of money for a long time to come.

BAIER: Kelly Evans.

EBANS: Governor Romney, when President Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act into law, he enacted a provision allowing him to indefinitely detain American citizens in U.S. military custody, many, including Congressman Paul, have called it unconstitutional. At the same time the bill did provide money to continue funding U.S. troops.

Governor Romney, as president, would you have signed the National Defense Act as written?

ROMNEY: Yes, I would have. And I do believe that it is appropriate to have in our nation the capacity to detain people who are threats to this country, who are members of al Qaeda.

Look, you have every right in this country to protest and to express your views on a wide range of issues but you don't have a right to join a group that is killed Americans, and has declared war against America. That's treason. In this country we have a right to take those people and put them in jail.

And I recognize, I recognize that in a setting where they are enemy combatants and on our own soil, that could possibly be abused. There are a lot of things I think this president does wrong, lots of them, but I don't think he is going to abuse this power and I that if I were president I would not abuse this power. And I can also tell you that in my view you have to choose people who you believe have sufficient character not to abuse the power of the presidency and to make sure that we do not violate our constitutional principles.

But let me tell you, people who join al Qaeda are not entitled to rights of due process under our normal legal code. They are entitled instead to be treated as enemy combatants.

EVANS: Senator Santorum...

ROMNEY: I've still got time. So as long as I still have time I just want to go back and agree with what Governor Perry said, the most extraordinary thing that's happened with this military authorization is the president is planning on cutting \$1 trillion out of military spending. Our navy is smaller than it's been since 1917. Our air force is smaller and older than any time since 1947.

We are cutting our number of troops. We are not giving the veterans the care they deserve. We simply cannot continue to cut our Department of Defense budget if we are going to remain the hope of the Earth. And I will fight to make sure America retains military superiority.

EVANS: Senator Santorum, 30 seconds to you, sir. Same question would you have signed, as president would you have signed the National Defense Authorization Act into law as written?

SANTORUM: So he gets two minutes and I get 30 seconds?

BAIER: Take whatever time you want.

SANTORUM: OK.

First off, I would say this, what the law should be and what the law has been is that if you are a United States citizen and you are detained as an enemy combatant, then you have the right to go to federal court and file a habeas corpus position and be provided a lawyer. That was the state of the law before the National Defense Authorization Act and that should be the state of the law today.

You should not have -- you should not have -- if you are not an American citizen, that's one thing. But if you are a citizen and you are being held indefinitely, then you have the right to go to a federal court -- and again, the law prior to the National Defense Authorization Act was that you had the right to go to a court, and for that court to determine by a preponderance of the evidence whether you could continue to be held. That is a standard that should be maintained and I would maintain that standard as president.

EVANS: Congressman Paul, different question.

22:19:43 PAUL: Why can't I answer about that one?

BAIER: You were included in the question in the first place. Do you want 30 seconds to respond to this?

PAUL: I need a minute.

No, I think we are going in the wrong direction for the protection of our liberties here at home. They are under deep threat. The PATRIOT Act has eliminated the fourth amendment. We now have a policy of preemptive war, you don't have to declare war and you don't even have to have an enemy. We can start the wars, that's what preemptive war is all about.

Now with the military appropriations defense act, this -- this is -- this is major. This says that the military can arrest an American citizen for under suspicion, and he can be held indefinitely, without habeas corpus, and be denied a lawyer indefinitely even in a prison here.

Let me give you one statistic. You're worrying about all these -- all these -- where we're going to try people, where are they going to do it, we have to do it secretly, because our rule of law is so flawed. We have arrested 362 people related to Al Qaida-type operation; 260 of them are in prison. They've been tried and convicted. So don't give up on our American judicial system so easily, I beg of you.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Kelly?

EVANS: All right. Change of topic. This question to Governor Perry. What measures would you immediately take to improve the housing market? Or do you consider any such intervention to be an overreach of government?

PERRY: Well, obviously, the first thing we need to do in this country is cut the tax rate down to where the people feel confident that they can risk their capital and have a return on their investment. That's the reason I laid out a simple and -- and flat tax of 20 percent with their home mortgage deduction and charitable expenses and local taxes, get rid of capital gains tax, get rid of the benefits tax, get rid of the tax on Social Security benefits, and then take 20 percent of that and mail your check in. I mean, even Timothy Geithner can get his taxes in on time with that type of a system.

(APPLAUSE)

And -- and -- and that is where we need to be focused, is creating jobs. As -- pulling back those regulations that we talk about since '08, that this administration have pushed into place that have strangled jobs, getting America back to work again. That's what I've done for 11 years as the governor of the 13th-largest economy in the world. A million jobs have been created in our state. And our housing market not only is -- is pretty solid, it's growing, and it's doing because we have created that climate where job creators know that they can go out and risk their capital and have a return on investment.

As the president of the United States, that's what I'm going to do, is to walk into Washington, D.C., work towards a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution, and try to pass a constitutional amendment, if the people will accept and work with me, to make Congress a part-time body, so they stay less time in Washington, D.C., they go back home and get a real job, like everybody else has, and live under the laws that they passed.

(APPLAUSE)

EVANS: Governor, so beyond moving to a part-time Congress and encouraging the rest of the nation to follow Texas in terms of job creation, you would take no pointed measures aimed at helping the U.S. housing market?

PERRY: I think I said two things that are pretty powerful: cut the taxes and cut the regulations, and -- which will increase the jobs and people will have the income to come in.

It is -- I don't think it is the government's responsibility. Look, we've already seen that with Freddie and Fannie. We don't need the federal government in the housing market anymore. They need to be out of the housing market.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Jerry Seib?

SEIB: Governor Romney, in the book you wrote just before this campaign began, you said you were surprised that the press in the last campaign didn't press for more specifics on how to fix Social Security and Medicare, so let's fix that tonight. Let me ask you specifically: Would you reduce the cost of these programs by raising the retirement age for Social Security, by raising the eligibility age for Medicare, or by reducing benefits for seniors with higher incomes?

ROMNEY: Let me lay it out. First of all, for the people who are already retired or 55 years of age and older, nothing changes. It's very important, because I know the Democrats are going to be showing videos of, you know, old people being thrown off cliffs and so forth. But don't forget...

(APPLAUSE)

Don't forget who it was that cut Medicare by \$500 billion, and that was President Obama to pay for Obamacare. So let's not forget that.

(APPLAUSE)

What -- what I would do with Social Security is that I would lower -- if you will, the 2.0, the version for the next generations coming up, I'd lower the rate of inflation growth in the benefits received by higher-income recipients and keep the rate as it is now pretty high for lower income recipients. And I'd also add a year or two to the retirement age under Social Security. That balances Social Security.

ROMNEY: With regards to Medicare, I would lay out the plan that -- well, I actually did a couple of months ago that said, again, for higher-income recipients, lower benefit, a premium support program which allows people to buy either current standard Medicare or a private plan.

And this is the proposal which Congressman Paul Ryan has adopted. It's a proposal which I believe is absolutely right on. We have a premium support program. Give people choice. Let competition exist in our Medicare program by virtue of the two things that I've described: higher benefits for lower-income people, lower benefits for higher-income people and making a premium support program in Medicare and in -- and Social Security a slightly higher retirement age. You balance those two programs.

By the way, the third major entitlement, Medicaid, you send back to the states. And the fourth new entitlement, ObamaCare, you repeal that one and finally get our balance sheet right.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Speaker Gingrich. Speaker Gingrich, the plan that you have endorsed for addressing Social Security, you suggest also that younger workers should be allowed to put their tax money into private accounts rather than into the government program. But that plan also says that if those private accounts don't pay out as much as the government program would, Washington should cut a check to make up the difference. Is that really a free market outcome if the government guarantees the outcome?

GINGRICH: Well, it is, as a historian, a fact-based model that has Galveston, Texas, and the entire country of Chile as testing grounds. Chile has done this. Jose Pinera's (ph) glad to talk about it, the guy who created it, they have done it for over 30 years.

First of all, it's totally voluntary. If you want to stay in the current system, stay in it. If you are younger and you want to go and take a personal savings account, which would be a Social Security savings account, you can take it.

Your share of the tax goes into that. The employer's share goes into the regular fund to pay for the regular fund. The historic record in Chile is the average young person gets two to three times the retirement income. In 30 years they have never written a single check, because nobody has fallen below the minimum payment of Social Security, and these are historic facts.

They now have 74 percent of the GDP in their savings fund, so much that they now allow people to actually invest outside the country. The principal group in Des Moines, Iowa, actually runs part of this program, and I actually interviewed the person who is in charge of it for the principal group.

So the Social Security actuary estimate if you make it a voluntary program, 95 to 97 percent of young people will take the program, because it is such a big return on your investment, you'd be relatively stupid not to do it. OK.

(APPLAUSE)

GINGRICH: Now, what does it do? It gets the government out of telling you when to retire. It gets the government out of picking winners and losers. You save -- it makes every American an investor when they first go to work. They all have a buildup of an estate, which you do not get in the current system.

And the estimate by Martin Prostein (ph) at Harvard is, who was Reagan's chief counsel and economic advisors, was you actually reduce wealth inequality in America by 50 percent over the next generation because everybody becomes a saver and an investor and you have a universal investing nation.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Senator Santorum, Senator Santorum, in your jobs program you propose to eliminate the corporate income tax for manufacturers, but not for other businesses. Isn't that picking winners and losers in the same way the Obama administration did when it gave grants to one solar energy company, Solyndra, and it went bankrupt?

SANTORUM: No, it's not. What we do is cut corporate taxes for everybody. We cut it from 35 percent to 17.5 percent, make it a -- basically a net profits tax. And then we take the area of the economy that's under competition from overseas for our jobs. The rest of the economy is not being shipped off like the mills here in South Carolina were to other countries around the world because of foreign competition.

Why? The foreign competition that we are dealing with right now is much cheaper to do business, excluding labor costs than we are, about 20 percent more, and that 20 percent differential is government. It's government regulation and it's also government taxation. So part of what we are trying to do is to have a government system that can compete with who our competitor is. The competitor at the local drugstore is not China. The competitor is other people.

And as long as that is level and everybody's paying, the big corporations and the little ones -- and that's why we have a flat 17 1/2 percent -- so we keep the little guys paying the same rate as the big guys who have -- right now, with this very complex code, a lot of folks in there trying to reduce rates by using the tax code to shrink their tax liability. So we've leveled the playing field for the guys here in this country and we've created a competitive environment for the manufacturer. I want to make a point about Newt and his plans because they are not bold. And they're not -- in the case of Governor Romney.

SANTORUM: And they are -- and they're irresponsible. And I say that against Newt

because there's nobody for the last 15 years that's been more in favor of personal savings accounts than I have for Social Security. But we were doing that when we had a surplus in Social Security. We are now running a deficit in Social Security. We are now running a huge deficit in this country.

Under Congressman Gingrich's proposals, if he's right, that 95 percent of younger workers taken, there will be hundreds of billions of dollars in increased debt, hundreds of billions of more debt being put on the books, which we can't simply -- we're going to be borrowing money from China to fund these accounts, which is wrong. I'm for those accounts, but first we have to get our fiscal house in order, balance this budget and then create the opportunity that Newt wants. But the idea of doing that now, is fiscal insanity.

BAIER: Speaker Gingrich?

SANTORUM: And Mitt Romney's plan is simply not bold. We have a deficit now in Social Security. We have deficits now in Medicare. And he wants to say, well we're not going to touch anybody now. There's 60,000 people in this country who are earning over \$1 million a year as a senior and he's saying, no let's not touch them. I'm saying, yes. We should absolutely do something about people who don't need Social Security when we're borrowing money from China to pay those millionaires.

BAIER: Okay, first Speaker Gingrich, your response?

GINGRICH: Well if you actually look at the plan at newt.org, you'll see that one of the ways we pay for it is we take 185 different federal bureaucracies that deal with low income Americans. Think about this, there are 185 separate bureaucracies with separate regulations, all dealing with low income Americans. We can consolidate them into a single block grant. We send it back to the states and we take the billions of dollars in federal overhead that saves and put that into Social Security in order to make up the difference.

So in fact Rick, it is a very sound plan and I say this as somebody who helped balance the budget four times in a row.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Quickly. Quickly.

SANTORUM: Newt, I support that idea. But we need that to reduce the deficit we have now, not doing what you're suggesting, which is ballooning the deficit by hundreds of billions of dollars more and then using things that we should be doing now to strengthen this budget deficit, to add more fiscal -- financial responsibility on to the federal government.

BAIER: Last one.

GINGRICH: Okay, Martin Feldstein estimates that if you have a personal savings account model, you increase the size of the economy by \$7 to \$8 trillion over a generation because of the massive reinvestment. In addition, I would just suggest having helped balance the budget for four consecutive years, for the only time in your lifetime, I'm reasonably confident I can find ways to balance the budget.

(APPLAUSE)

GINGRICH: Without hurting young people and blocking them from Social Security.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Governor Romney, do you want your 30 seconds? Or are you just enjoying this back and forth? Would you like to weigh in?

ROMNEY: Rick is right. I -- I know it's popular here to say, oh we could just -- we can do this and it's not going to cost anything. But look, it's going to get tough to get our federal spending from the current 25 percent of the GDP down to 20, down to 18 percent, which has been our history. We've got a huge number of obligations in this country and cutting back is going to have to happen. I know something about balancing budgets.

In the private sector, you don't have a choice. You balance your budget, or you go out of business. And we -- we simply can't say we're going to go out and borrow more money to let people set up new accounts that take money away from Social Security and Medicare today. Therefore, we should allow people to have a voluntary account, a voluntary savings program, tax free. That's why I've said anybody middle income should be able to save their money tax free. No tax on interest, dividends or capital gains.

That will get American's saving and accomplishes your objective, Mr. Speaker, without threatening the future of America's vitality by virtue of fiscal insanity.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Coming up, social issues. And a reminder, go to [foxnews.com/debate](http://foxnews.com/debate) to see how well the candidates are answering the questions with your votes. Keep it here.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BAIER: Welcome back to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. And now for the next round of questions, my colleague Juan Williams.

WILLIAMS: Gov Romney, Speaker Gingrich says your record of support for gun owners is

weak. You signed the nation's first ban on assault weapons in Massachusetts and steeply increased fees on gun owners in that state, in fact by 400 percent. How can you convince gun owners that you will be an advocate for them as president?

ROMNEY: Well, Juan, in my state we had a piece of legislation that was crafted both by the pro gun lobby and the anti-gun lobby. Massachusetts has some very restrictive rules and the pro gun lobby said, you know what, this legislation is good for us, it includes provisions that we want that allows us, for instance, to crossroads with weapons when we're hunting that had not been previously allowed.

And so the pro gun folks in our state, the the Gun Owners Action League and others said, look, we would like you to sign this legislation. And the day when we announced our signing, we had both the pro gun owners and anti-bun folks all together on the stage because it worked. We worked together. We found common ground.

My view is that we have the second amendment right to bear arms and in this country my view is also that we should not add new legislation. I know that there are people that think we need new laws, we need to find new ways to restrict gun ownership. And there is in Washington a non-stop effort on the part of some legislators, and I believe the president, to restrict the right of law-abiding American citizens from owning a gun. I disagree with that. I believe we have in place all the laws we need. We should enforce those laws. I do not believe in new laws restricting gun ownership and gun use.

WILLIAMS: By the way, governor, I remember that you were teased mightily a few years ago to say you hundred varmints. I'm just wondering if you have gone hunting since '07.

ROMNEY: I'm not going to describe all of my great exploits. But I went moose hunting actually -- not moose hunting, I'm sorry, elk hunting with friends in Montana. I've been pheasant hunting. I'm not the great hunter that some on this stage, probably Rick Perry, my guess is you are a serious hunter. I'm not a serious hunter, but I must admit -- I guess I enjoy the sport and when I get invited I'm delighted to be able to go hunting.

WILLIAMS: Senator Santorum, you voted in support of requiring trigger locks on handguns. You also voted for background checks on firearm purchases made at gun shows. These positions have led your rivals to question your second amendment bona fides. What can you say tonight to reassure gun owners that you will stand with them?

SANTORUM: Both of those things were supported by the National Rifle Association. I worked with them to craft a bill. This was during the Clinton administration, where I voted against the gun ban, voted against the assault weapons ban, voted -- voted 100 percent with the NRA. And this was a piece of legislation that was crafted that they endorsed, they supported, and worked with me to make sure that we could -- we'd not have something far worse pass.

And so sometimes you have to pass something that can get enough votes to be able to satisfy folks that they won't pass something that's much worse. And so that's what you have to do to make sure that rights aren't taken away.

I've been a strong -- again, lifetime A-plus record with the NRA, worked with them. They came to me repeatedly when I was in the Senate to help them and -- and -- and sponsor legislation and work toward making sure in ensuring gun rights.

Contrast that with Congressman Paul. And one of the most important things that we did in -- in -- in protecting the Second Amendment -- and I provided a leadership role on it -- was the gun manufacturers' liability bill. There were a lot of lawyers out there who were trying to sue gun manufacturers and hold them liable for anybody who was harmed as a result of the gun properly functioning.

And we -- we went forward and passed, with the NRA's backing, a bill that put a ban on those types of lawsuits. If that ban had not been passed, if that gun manufacturer's liability bill, removing them from liability from that, had that not been passed, there would have been no gun industry in this country and there would have de facto been no Second Amendment right.

Congressman Paul voted against that bill. And -- and that's a very big difference between someone who actually works with the gun -- Second Amendment groups for -- for legislation that can protect that right and someone who says they're for Second Amendment, has attacked me on my Second Amendment issues, which you just referred to, and here's a man that would have wiped out the Second Amendment by -- if his vote would have been -- carried the day.

BAIER: Congressman Paul?

PAUL: Hardly would that wipe out the Second Amendment. But the jurisdiction is obviously with the state. Even when tort law is involved with medical malpractice, which is a real problem, now, our governor worked on and our state has done a little bit on medical liability. I think that's the way it should be handled.

You don't have -- you don't have national tort law. That's not part of the process. That should be at the state level. So to argue the case that that does away with the Second Amendment, when I'm the one that offers all -- all the legislation to repeal the gun bans

that have been going on (inaudible) everything else.

(APPLAUSE)

I mean, I've introduced legislation like that. So that's a bit -- a bit of an overstretch to -- to say that I've done away with the Second Amendment.

SANTORUM: No, I need to respond to that, because the fact is, if we did not have a national liability bill, then people would have been able to go to states like, say, Massachusetts or New York and sue gun manufacturers where they would not pass a gun liability bill. So unless you have a national standard to protect guns -- manufacturers of guns, you would create the opportunity for the elimination of guns being manufactured in this country and de facto elimination of the right to bear arms.

(APPLAUSE)

PAUL: Well, this is the way -- this is the way our Constitution disappears. It's nibbled away. You say, well, I can give up on this, and therefore, I'll give that, and so eventually there's nothing left. But, no, tort law should be a state function, not a federal function.

BAIER: Jerry Seib?

SEIB: Speaker Gingrich, a super PAC supporting Governor Romney is running an ad here citing a pro-life's group charge that you voted for a bill in Congress, co-sponsored by Nancy Pelosi, that supported China's one-child policy. And they say that means you provided government funding for abortion, but you oppose abortion. What's your response to that charge?

GINGRICH: Well, this is typical of what both Senator Santorum and I have complained about with Governor Romney's super PAC, over which he apparently has no influence, which makes you wonder how much influence he'd have if he were president.

(APPLAUSE)

Well, let me take that particular bill. That bill was introduced by Claudine Schneider, who is a Republican from Rhode Island. It was introduced at a time when Ronald Reagan's Mexico City policy was enforced. The Mexico City policy said no U.S. funding will be used to fund any activity that relates to abortion.

So it is explicitly a falsehood to suggest that a bill introduced under Mexico City policy would have paid for China's one-child policy. In fact, I have explicitly opposed it. I have a 98.6 percent National Right to Life voting record in 20 years. And the only vote we disagreed on was welfare reform, which had nothing to do with abortion. So I think it is an absurdity and it would be nice if Governor Romney would exercise leadership on his former staff and his major donors to take falsehoods off the air.

BAIER: Governor Romney?

(APPLAUSE)

ROMNEY: Speaker Gingrich, I -- I already said at our last debate that anything that's false in PAC ads, whether they are supportive of me or supportive of you should be taken often the air and fixed. I've already said that.

Now I can't call these people and direct them to do that, as you know, because that would violate federal law, is that correct?

GINGRICH: Absolutely.

BAIER: All right.

So I can't do what you just asked me to do, but I can tell them publicly as I can here if there's anything that's inaccurate in any ads that support me I hope they take it off and don't run it.

But if we are talking about Super PAC ads that are inaccurate, Mr. Speaker, you have a Super PAC ad that attacks me. It's probably the biggest hoax since Big Foot. The people that looked at it have said that this ad is entirely false, that this documentary that they are running includes businesses I had no involvement with, the events that they described. And yet that's out there on a Super PAC that is supporting you.

You said that you think it's bad just as I said the Super PAC that support me is doing bad things. But somehow for you to suggest that you and I have different standards here is just not quite right.

GINGRICH: I said publicly -- I said publicly it ought to be edited. And I believe, in fact, the head of that group has actually submitted your campaign a set of questions to make sure that they edit it accurately and put only the correct facts in.

So I think it should be edited. And I would be delighted if you would agree that the ad that was just referred to was false and people see the Romney Super PAC ad attacking me on that particular issue should know in advance it is false and shouldn't be run.

(UNKNOWN): Me too.

EVANS: Governor Perry.

ROMNEY: We all would like to have Super PACs disappear, to tell you the truth. Wouldn't it nice to have people give what they would like to to campaigns and campaigns could run their own ads and take responsibility for them. But you know what, this campaign is not about ads, it's about issues.

BAIER: So governor Romney, in the general election, if you are the nominee you would

like to see Super PACs ended?

ROMNEY: Oh, I would like to get rid of the campaign finance laws that were put in place McCain-Feingold is a disaster, get rid of it. Let people make contributions they want to make to campaigns, let campaigns then take responsibility for their own words and not have this strange situation we have people out there who support us, who run ads we don't like, we would like to take off the air, they are outrageous and yet they are out there supporting us and by law we aren't allowed to talk to them.

I haven't spoken to any of the people involved in my Super PAC in months and this is outrageous. Candidates should have the responsibility and the right to manage the ads that are being run on their behalf. I think this has to change.

EVANS: Governor Perry, you advocate placing more troops and bigger walls along the nation's southern border to stop illegal immigration, but border crossings are at a 4 year low -- 40 year low, illegal immigration overall is down substantially and the U.S. has other pressing infrastructure and defense needs.

Governor, wouldn't we be better off not spending more money on border walls?

PERRY: Let me tell you the reason that those crossings are at 40 year lows is because the economy of the United States is probably at a 40 year low and the president of these United States needs to change. That's the reason.

As the governor of the second largest state and the state with the longest border, I have spent 11 years dealing with this issue. And the idea that Americans don't want us to spend the money to secure that border is just flat out false. We are going to secure the border with Mexico, that means strategic fencing, that means thousands of national guard troops on the border until we can train up those border patrol to be there.

And it means predator drones and other aviation assets so that we have the real-time information to flow down to those individuals that are in law enforcement so that they can immediately respond to any activities that they see on the border that is either weapons related or drug related or illegal immigration that's occurring on that border. Americans want that border secure. The issue isn't about how much is it going to cost, the issue is when are you going to get it done? And when I'm the president of the United States that border will be locked down and it will be secure by one year from the time I take my hand off the Bible.

BAIER: Last Twitter question is from an eighth grade teacher in Hobart, Indiana. And it's for you, Speaker Gingrich.

Mrwhiteman (ph), has No Child Left Behind been a success or a failure? If the latter, what needs to be done to change it?

GINGRICH: I think it's clearly a failure. I think it has led teachers to be forced into a bureaucratic system of teaching to the test. I find virtually no teacher who likes it. It is grossly disproportionate. You end up with first-generation immigrants who don't speak very good English being tested against a national standard. And a perfectly good school looks bad even though it's doing a great job because there's no measurement that's reasonable.

The correct answer is to radically reduce the Department of Education, cut out all federal regulations, return the money and the power back home to the states. But I would say to the states, it will be good for them to shrink their Departments of Education and return the power back to the local county boards, and then let parents and teachers and students get back to learning.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Thank you all very much. That is the end of our debate, a fiery debate. We appreciate it. That's it for our debate tonight. Our thanks to the candidates, their staffs, the South Carolina Republican Party, and the great people here in Myrtle Beach, fantastic crowd.

(APPLAUSE)

Of course, the state of South Carolina, as well. They could not have been more hospitable. Stay with Fox News Channel, America's election headquarters, all the way through to the conventions, the general election, and the inauguration in 2013. Post-debate analysis is on the way. Keep it here.

END .ETX

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