

Questions asked to candidates, [CNBC'S "YOUR MONEY, YOUR VOTE: THE REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE,"](#) Oct. 28, 2013

CNBC's "Your Money, Your Vote: The Republican Presidential Debate" Live from the University of Colorado Boulder in Boulder, CO

CARL QUINTANILLA: A lot to get to tonight, so let's get started.

This first is an open question. This series of debates is essentially a job interview with the American people. And in any job interview, you know this, you get asked, **What is your biggest weakness? So in 30 seconds, without telling us that you try too hard or that you're a perfectionist, what is your biggest weakness, and what are you doing to address it?**

JOHN HARWOOD: Mr. Trump, you've done very well on this campaign so far by promising to build a wall and make another country pay for it... Send 11 million people out of the country, cut taxes \$10 trillion without increasing the deficit... And make Americans better off because your greatness would replace the stupidity and incompetence of others...

Let's be honest. **Is this a comic book version of a presidential campaign?**

JOHN: We're at 60 seconds. But I gotta ask you, you talked about your tax plan. You say that it would not increase the deficit because you'd cut taxes \$10 trillion, and the economy ...would take off like -- hold on. Hold on. The economy would take off like a rocket ship...

I talked to economic advisors who have served presidents of both parties. **They said that you have as much chance of cutting taxes that much without increasing the deficit as you would of flying away from that podium by flapping your arms around.**

BECKY QUICK: I want to talk taxes.

Dr. Carson, let's talk about taxes. You have a flat tax plan of 10 percent flat taxes. And I've looked at it, and this is something that is very appealing to a lot of voters, but I've had a really tough time trying to make the math work on this.

If you were to take a 10 percent tax with the numbers right now on total personal income, you're going to come in with bringing in \$1-1/2 trillion. That is less than half of what we billed bringing in right now.

And, by the way, it's going to leave us in a \$2 trillion hole. **So what analysis got you to the point where you think this will work?**

BECKY: I understand, but if you look at the numbers, you probably have to get to 28...15 percent still leaves you with a \$1.1 trillion hole... You would have to cut government by about 40 percent to make it work with a \$1.1 trillion hole... It is true. I looked at the numbers.

JOHN (to Ohio Gov. John Kasich): Hold it, I am coming to you right now. I want to comment on this. This is a fantasy that I talked about in the beginning. I'm about to ask you about this. That is, you had some very strong words to say yesterday about what is happening in your party and what you're hearing from the two gentlemen we've just heard from.

JOHN: You said yesterday... Well, let's just get more pointed about it. You said yesterday that you were hearing proposals that were just crazy from your colleagues. **Who were you talking about?**

BECKY: Dr. Carson, let me -- let me take 30 seconds of Dr. Carson ...

CARL: (to Carly Fiorina) **You want to bring the 70,000 pages (of tax law) to 3?**

CARL: This one's for Senator Rubio. You've been a young man in a hurry ever since you won your first election in your 20s. You've had a big accomplishment in the Senate, an immigration bill providing a path to citizenship the conservatives in your party hate and even you don't support anymore.

Now you're skipping more votes than any senator to run for President. **Why not slow down, get a few more things done first, or at least finish what you start?**

CARL: **So when the Sun-Sentinel says Rubio should resign, not rip us off, when they say Floridians sent you to Washington to do a job, when they say you act like you hate your job, do you?**

CARL: **Do you hate your job?**

JOHN: We're moving to Governor Bush.

Governor, the fact that you're at the fifth lectern tonight shows how far your stock has fallen in this race, despite the big investment your donors have made. You noted recently after slashing your payroll that you had better things to do than sit around and be demonized by other people.

JOHN: Okay. It's a question about why you're having difficulty. I want to ask you in this context. Ben Bernanke, who was appointed Fed chairman by your brother, recently wrote a book in which he said he no longer considers himself a Republican because the Republican party has given in to know-nothingism.

Is that why you're having a difficult time in this race?

BECKY: Ms. Fiorina, I would like to ask you a question. You are running for president of the United States because of your record running Hewlett-Packard. But the stock market is usually a fair indicator of the performance of the CEO, and the market was not kind to you. Someone

who invested a dollar in your company the day you took office had lost half of that dollar by the day you left.

Obviously, you've talked in the past about what a difficult time it was for technology companies, but anybody who was following the market knows that your stock was a much worse performer if you looked at your competitors, if you looked at the overall market.

I just wonder, in terms of all of that, you know, we look back, your board fired you. **I just wonder why you think we should hire you now.**

BECKY: Mrs. Fiorina, it's interesting that you bring up Mr. Perkins because he said a lot of very questionable things. Last year in an interview, he said that he thinks wealthy people should get more votes than poor people. I think his quote was that if you pay zero dollars in taxes, you should get zero votes. If you pay a million dollars, you should get a million votes. Is this the type of person you want to --

CARL: Senator Cruz, Congressional Republicans, Democrats, and the White House are about to strike a compromise that would raise the debt limit, prevent a government shutdown, and calm financial markets that fear another Washington-created crisis is on the way.

Does your opposition to it show that you're not the kind of problem-solver American voters want?

CARL: You have 30 seconds left to answer, should you choose to do so.

CARL: I want the record to reflect, I asked you about the debt limit and got no answer.

JOHN: You used your time on something else.

JOHN: Senator Paul, the budget deal crafted by Speaker Boehner and passed by the House today makes cuts in entitlement programs, Medicare and Social Security disability, which are the very programs conservatives say need cutting to shrink government and solve our country's long-term budget deficit.

Do you oppose that budget deal because it doesn't cut those programs enough?

JOHN: Senator, if what you just said is true, why did Speaker Boehner craft this deal, and why did Paul Ryan, who has a strong reputation for fiscal discipline, vote for it?

BECKY: Actually, I have a question for you (to New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie). And maybe we're going to... In your "tell it like it is" campaign, you said a lot of tough things. You said that we need to raise the retirement age for Social Security, you think that we need to cut benefits for

people who make over \$80,000 and eliminate them entirely for seniors who are making over \$200,000.

Governor (Mike) Huckabee, who is here on the stage, said that you and others who think this way are trying to rob seniors of the benefits that they've earned. **It raises the question, when is it acceptable to break a social compact?**

CARL: We promised we would get to everyone this block.

Governor Huckabee, I'm going to give you 60 seconds on this.

CARL: Senator Cruz, before we go to break, we're clearly not having that beer you mentioned. But I'll give you 30 more seconds... Respond on the debt limit or in answer to the Governor, whichever you choose.

CARL: 30 seconds, Governor Huckabee.

BECKY: Mr. Trump, let's talk a little bit about bankruptcy. Your Atlantic City casinos filed for bankruptcies four times. In fact, Fitch, the ratings agency, even said that they were serial filers for all of this.

You said that you did great with Atlantic City, and you did. But some of the individuals, the bondholders, some of the contractors who worked for you, didn't fare so well.

Bankruptcy is a broken promise. **Why should the voters believe the promises that you are telling them right now?**

JIM CRAMER: Dr. Carson, in recent weeks, a number of pharmaceutical companies have been accused of profiteering for dramatically raising the prices of life-saving drugs. You have spent a lifetime in medicine.

Have these companies gone too far? Should the government be involved in controlling some of these price increases?

JIM: Governor Christie. There's been a lot of political rhetoric that some bank executives should have gone to jail for the 2008 financial crisis. But General Motors paid more than \$1 billion in fines and settlements for its ignition switch defect. 124 people died as a result of these faulty switches. No one went to jail.

As a former prosecutor, do you believe the people responsible for the switch and the coverup belong behind bars?

JOHN: Governor Bush, in a debate like this four years ago, every Republican running for president pledged to oppose a budget deal containing any tax increase, even if it had spending cuts ten times as large. A few months later, you told Congress, Put me in, coach. **You'd take that deal. Still feel that way?**

JOHN: But to the point that you made to Congress, if you were President and you were offered a bipartisan deal that had \$1 of tax increases for \$10 of -- **would you take it?**

JOHN: **So you don't want the coach to put you in anymore?**

CARL: Mrs. Fiorina, in 2010, while running for Senate in Tech Ridge, California, you called an internet sales tax a bad idea. Traditional brick-and-mortar stores obviously disagree.

Now that the internet shopping playing field has matured, what would be a fair plan to even that playing field?

BECKY: Senator Rubio, you, yourself, have said that you've had issues. You have a lack of bookkeeping skills. You accidentally intermingled campaign money with your personal money. You faced foreclosure on a second home that you bought. And just last year, you liquidated a \$68,000 retirement fund. That's something that cost you thousands of dollars in taxes and penalties.

In terms of all of that, it raises the question whether you have the maturity and the wisdom to lead this \$17 trillion economy. **What do you think?**

BECKY: Senator, I understand all of that. I had a lot of student loans when I got out, too. But you've had a windfall that a lot of Americans haven't. You made over a million dollars on a book deal, and some of these problems came after that.

BECKY: But you liquidated that retirement account after the fact, and that cost you about \$24,000 out of that in taxes and fees. That was after you'd already come into that windfall. That's why I raise the question.

JOHN: Governor Kasich, you've called for abolishing the export-import bank which provides subsidies to help American companies compete with overseas competitors. You call that corporate welfare.

One of the largest newspapers in your state wrote an editorial, said they found that strange, writing that if that's corporate welfare, what does Kasich call the millions of dollars in financial incentives doled out to attract or retain jobs by his development effort () of jobs () in Ohio? **If subsidies are good enough for Ohio companies, why aren't they good enough for companies trying to compete overseas?**

BECKY: Senator Cruz, working women in this country still earn just 77 percent of what men earn. And I know that you've said you've been very sympathetic to our cause. But you've also said that the Democrats moved to try and change this political () show of votes.

I just wonder what you would do as president to try and help in this cause.

BECKY: Dr. Carson, we know you as a physician. But we wanted to ask you about your involvement on some corporate boards, including Costco's. Last year, a marketing study called the warehouse retailer the number one gay-friendly brand in America, partly because of its domestic partner benefits.

Why would you serve on a company whose policies seem to run counter to your views on homosexuality?

CARL: This is a company called Mannatech, a maker of nutritional supplements with which you had a ten-year relationship. They offered claims that they could cure autism, cancer. They paid \$7 million to settle a deceptive marketing lawsuit in Texas, and yet your involvement continued. **Why?**

CARL: To be fair, you were on the home page of their website with the logo over your shoulder.

CARL: **Does that not speak to your vetting process or judgment in any way?**

JOHN: Senator Huckabee -- I mean, excuse me, Senator Rubio. Wired Magazine recently carried the headline "Marco Rubio Wants to be the Tech Industry's Savior." It noted your support for dramatically increasing immigration visas, called H1B, which are designed for workers with the special skills that Silicon Valley wants.

But your Senate colleague Jeff Sessions, of Alabama, says, In reality, the tech industry uses this program to undercut hiring and wages for highly qualified Americans.

Why is he wrong?

JOHN: It sounds like you think Senator Sessions is wrong to believe there is enough --believe there is enough abuse in that program that we shouldn't --

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BECKY: Mr. Trump, let's stay on this issue of immigration. You have been very critical of Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook, who has wanted to increase the number of the H1B.

BECKY: So you're in favor of --

BECKY: Where did I read this and come up with this that you're --

BECKY: Let's be clear --

BECKY: You had talked a little bit about Marco Rubio. I think you called him Mark Zuckerberg's personal senator because he was in favor of the H1B.

BECKY: **This is an erroneous article the whole way around?**

BECKY: My apologies, I'm sorry.

RICK SANTELLI: Senator Cruz, let's focus on our central bank, the Federal Reserve. You were a fierce critic of the Fed, arguing for more transparency. **Where do you want to take that? Do you want to get Congress involved in monetary policy, or is it time to slap the Fed back and downsize them completely? What are your thoughts? What do you believe?**

RICK: Senator Paul, the same question to you.

RICK: Dr. Carson, you told the Des Moines Register that you don't like government subsidies, it interferes with the free market. **But you've also said that you're in favor of taking oil subsidies and putting them towards ethanol processing. Isn't that just swapping one subsidy for another, Doctor?**

BECKY: Governor Huckabee, you have railed against income inequality. You've said that some Wall Street executives should have gone to jail over the roles that they played during the financial crisis.

Apart from your tax plan, **are there specific steps that you would require from corporate America to try and reduce income inequality?**

JOHN: Governor Bush, the tax reform bill that Ronald Reagan signed in 1986 cut the top personal income tax rate to 28 percent, just like your plan does. But President Reagan taxed capital gains at the same rate while you would tax them at just 20 percent.

Given the problems we've been discussing, the growing gap between rich and poor, why would you tax labor at a higher rate than income from investments?

JOHN: Senator Rubio, 30 seconds to you. The Tax Foundation, which was alluded to earlier, scored your tax plan and concluded that you give nearly twice as much of a gain in after-tax income to the top 1 percent as to people in the middle of the income scale.

Since you're the champion of Americans living paycheck to paycheck, don't you have that backward?

JOHN: Tax Foundation. Just to be clear, the --

JOHN: No, I did not.

JOHN: Senator, the Tax Foundation said after-tax income for the top 1 percent under your plan would go up 27.9 percent.

JOHN: And people in the middle of the income spectrum, about 15 percent.

CARL: Governor Kasich, let's talk about marijuana. We are broadcasting from Colorado, which has seen \$150 million in new revenue for the state since legalizing last year. Governor Hickenlooper was not a big fan of legalization, but he said the people who used to be smoking it are still smoking it; they are just now paying taxes.

Given the budget pressures in Ohio and other states, is this a revenue stream you'd like to have?

BECKY: Mr. Trump, I'm going to go back to an issue that we were talking about before. The H1B visas. I found where I read that before. It was from the donaldjtrump.com website. And it says -- it says that, again, Mark Zuckerberg's personal Senator, Marco Rubio, has a bill to triple H1Bs that would decimate women and minorities.

Are you in favor of H1Bs? Are you opposed to them?

CARL: Mr. Trump, you said you have a special permit to carry a gun in New York... After the Oregon mass shooting on October 1st, you said, "By the way, it was a gun-free zone. If you had a couple of teachers with guns, you would have been a hell of a lot better off."

CARL: **Would you feel more comfortable if your employees brought guns to work?**

CARL: **Are you carrying right now?**

CARL: We called a few Trump resorts, a few Trump properties that do not allow guns with or without a permit. **Would you change those policies?**

JOHN: Governor Huckabee, you've written about the huge divide in values between middle America in the big coastal cities like New York and Los Angeles. As a preacher, as well as a politician, you know that presidents need the moral authority to bring the entire country together.

The leading Republican candidate, when you look at the average and national polls right now, is Donald Trump. **When you look at him, do you see someone with the moral authority to unite the country?**

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SHARON EPPERSON: Ms. Fiorina, you were the CEO of a large corporation that offers a 401(k) to its employees. But more than half of American workers have no access to an employer-sponsored retirement plan; that includes the workers at small businesses and the growing ranks of Uber drivers and other part-timers in the freelance economy. **Should the federal government play a larger role in helping to set up retirement plans for these workers?**

SHARON: **You wouldn't agree with the start of 401(k) plans for businesses, or anything like that?**

SHARON: I want to turn my attention now to now, Governor Kasich. Most people can't get a college degree without going into debt. Over 40 million Americans have student loans, and many of them cannot pay them back. This country has over \$100 billion in student loan defaults. That's "billion" with a B.

What will you do to make sure that students, their families, taxpayers, won't feel the economic impact of this burden for generations?

CARL: Governor Bush, daily fantasy sports has become a phenomenon in this country. They will award billions of dollars in prize money this year. But to play, you have to assess your odds, put money at risk, wait for an outcome that's out of your control.

Isn't that the definition of gambling, and should the federal government treat it as such?

JOHN: **What should we do (to Gov. Christie)?**

JOHN: **You mean government?**

BECKY: Senator Paul, among the leading conservative opponents for the creation of Medicare back in 1960s was Ronald Reagan. He warned that it would lead to socialism.

Considering the mounting costs of Medicare, was he right to oppose it?

BECKY: Governor Huckabee, you wanted to respond to the points that Senator Rand Paul was just making when it comes to Social Security. Your time, sir.

JOHN: Governor Bush, Mr. Trump says that he is capable of growing the economy so much that Social Security and Medicare don't have to be touched.

Do you want to explain how that's going to happen, Mr. Trump?

JOHN: Governor (Bush), you just heard him.

BECKY: Senator Paul, let's go back to you. **Do these solutions sound like they work?**

BECKY: **Do these solutions sound like they would work?**

JOHN: Yes. You've (Ben Carson) said that you would like to replace Medicare with a system of individual family savings accounts so that families could cover their own expenses. Obviously, that would be a very controversial idea. Explain how that would work exactly.

BECKY: **Governor (Christie), do you also think that Dr. Carson's right, that we can replace Medicare with individual savings accounts?**

JOHN: We are right at the end of our time. You all wanted us to -- all right. Go ahead.

CARL: We have now reached the point in the program where candidates are going to give their closing statements, 30 seconds apiece. We are going to go right to left and start with you, Senator Paul.