

RUBENSTEIN COMMUNICATIONS

"SERVICE NATION PRESIDENTIAL FORUM"

SENATORS JOHN MCCAIN AND BARAK OBAMA

MODERATOR: RICHARD STENGEL

CORRESPONDENT: JUDY WOODRUFF

NO MEDIA ID

PRESIDENT BOLLINGER:

(IN PROGRESS) --Governor David Patterson, Columbia College class of 1977. Governor Patterson is a recipient of our distinguished John J Award for professional achievement for his decades of public service as New York's lieutenant governor and as a state senator representing upper Manhattan. He is, also, known to many students at the Columbia School of International and Public Affairs as Professor Patterson for his six years as an (UNINTEL) faculty member. He has taken on the leadership of our state with his characteristic decency and determination, his intelligence and extraordinary good humor. Governor Patterson personifies the commitment to public service that so many in the

Columbia community have shared over the decades. As I welcome all of you, again, I am proud to introduce to you the governor of the state of New York, David Patterson. (APPLAUSE)

DAVID PATTERSON:

Thank you. I was standing on the corner of 68th Street and Lexington Avenue right here in Manhattan once. And I approached a woman and-- very elegant and I asked her to look across the street and tell me if there was a drug store on the corner. She said, "I'd be delighted," and, then, took me by arm and led me across the street to the drug store.

She was kind of surprised when I went back and stood on the corner. And she came back and asked me why I wasn't going in the drug store. And I said, "A friend of mine told me that his office is located at 168th Street and Lexington Avenue across the street from the drugstore." And this woman was aghast.

But I thanked her for taking her time out to help me and told her it doesn't really matter, I applaud your service. So thank you very much. Some of you know her. Thank very much President Bollinger for that very kind introduction. I wish you were president when I was at Columbia.

Maybe I would've gotten out sooner. To all those who are national chairs of service nation, those of you in the public and private sector who have taken your time and given it to this great cause, I wanna thank you. To Senator Barack Obama, Senator John McCain, Senator Hilary Clinton, Mayor Michael broom-- Bloomberg, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the first lady, Laura Bush among the leaders who will be speaking tonight, I wanna thank them for taking their time out to be here at Columbia at this great, great event.

I am honored to have been invited to have attended the service nation event. And I wanna welcome all of you to New York. We are very

pleased to have you hear and want to enhance the service of service nation in any way we can. The 33rd governor of the state of New York once said that he felt that the welfare of each of us is dependant fundamentally on the welfare of all of us.

That was President Teddy Roosevelt. Years later, his fifth cousin another relatively obscure governor of New York named Franklin offered us that human kindness does not in any way weaken the stamina or soften the fra-- fabric of a free people. These two men were not bonded by politics.

One was republican, the other a democrat. They were bonded slightly by blood. But they are linked inexplicably because of their service to human dignity. One does not have to be a president to provide service. It's just that the Roosevelt's were two links in a long chain of citizen service that Americans have demonstrated

since 12,000 men offered the call-- answer the call of the res-- of the revolution and offered their service against attacks by the British and would be available within a minute. Years later up to last year, that has been stretched to the point that 61 million Americans offered eight billion hours of service in this country.

They would help (APPLAUSE)-- they would help struggling ste-- students. They would deliver meals to seniors. They would help those in poverty among other tasks. Indeed, 26 permer-- Americans took time out from their deliberations to offer service last year, 23 million more than did so 20 years ago.

Right here in New York, three million people offered 366 million hours of service. And so this is a call that has been heeded in this country and one we badly need because unfortunately 3/4 of our society feel that is our country is going the wrong direction. Perhaps,

they feel this way because just this year 772 million-- 772,000 Americans have lost their jobs. Since last summer, a million Americans have lost their homes. And so now is the time for us to step up with our service more than ever. That is why, today, I am elevating the director of our office for national and community service right here in New York State, I am elevating that office to a cabinet position in my administration. (APPLAUSE)

Thank you. Thank you. I thought you would like that. But, now, we come to a point where service cannot just be a temporary plan but a lifelong commitment. And we're going to be needing a president that believes in this type of service. And we are certainly fortunate in this country that both of the candidates, major candidates, for president this year have performed outstanding service to our community from Barack Obama who has viewed personal opportunity and lucrative offers to work in service organizations

in the city of Chicago, Illinois, to John McCain who almost had to perform the ultimate service when he found himself lingering on life in a prison of war camp in North Vietnam during his service to the military of the United States. Both of these men aptly follow in the footsteps of the Roosevelt's.

One of them will be called upon by us to lead this nation. And I hope that they will find a commitment to service, perhaps, funding the corporation of the National Community Service and signing legislation that would add service-- as part of our American tradition. (APPLAUSE)

Finally, I would add that today is probably the seventh anniversary of the greatest collective service this country has ever seen when we were attacked by terrorists on September 11th, 2001.

And people ran into buildings, firefighters, EMS workers, police officers and private citizens to rescue people they didn't know or never met.

When those who survived were asked about it, they said that they just didn't think about their ambition. They didn't think about their families. They didn't think about their other obligations. They just knew that they had to help someone.

Pope Gregory the first, known as Saint Gregory the Great, always admonished Christians to love their neighbors as they would love themselves. But he said that there are moments of epiphany where a person will find a bond with one whom they never met. Pierre Avarar writing in the 12th century added to that by saying, "There are moments of feelings of identic image in which individuals because of an intervening crisis start to see others as being part of them. And so I'm hoping that, perhaps, that Christian adage will take on a new meaning in the 21st century as more of us are involved in service as we come closer to that oneness of the human spirit and we, actually, re-amplify the idea of-- of helping

our neighbors as we would help ourselves to helping our neighbors because they are ourselves. Thank you very much. (APPLAUSE)

PRESIDENT BOLLINGER:

Thank you, governor. Now, for the part that my grandkids are really excited about. Now, most of you know, our next guest as the web slinging super hero, Spiderman, from his super performances in *Spiderman* one, two and three. These movies are cast with three of the 15 highest grossing films of all time.

Toby McGuire has appeared in over 20 motion pictures. He's renowned for his ability to deliver stand out performances in both big budget movies as well thought provoking independents. He will next be seen in Jim Sheridan's *Brothers*, a powerful story of two siblings who are polar opposites. When a traumatic event occurs, the brothers take on parts of each other's characters.

The film is set for release by MGM and it, also, stars Jake Gyllenhaal and Natalie Portman. As a producer, McGuire is currently developing an array of thought provoking projects through McGuire entertainment. Toby McGuire is deeply committed to service.

He'll be the first to tell you that he had a rough childhood. And he's here today because of the many volunteers and community programs that helped him through his troubled times. Now, he wants to give back. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Toby McGuire. (APPLAUSE)

TOBY MCGUIRE:

Thank you. I swear I did not write that-- that-- introduction. Anyways, good evening, and thank you all for being here on this historic night. Today, we remember and honor those who lost their loves in service and the service of those who helped save lives in the tragedy seven years ago. Service to our fellow Americans must be the living legacy of September 11th.

Our country started with a very simple idea, we the people. It was that ideal, a belief that we are all part of something bigger that inspired Jefferson, Madison, Franklin and others to be the first ones to serve our country. At the time, they were ordinary citizens who did extraordinary things.

I am honored to be here tonight along with the many distinguished guests including our presidential candidates to thank many of you for the extraordinary things you do every day to continue that fine tradition of service. To be honest, in the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's easy to overlook the scores of people like you who get up every morning with one simple goal, to make our country a better and safer place for others, to stand up for we the people.

We don't spend enough time recognizing your work. And we certainly don't do enough to encourage others to make the commitment few have made. And

that's why this organization, Service Nation and this forum are so important. And it's why I was so eager to join this nationwide, grassroots movement to take responsibility for our country's future through service because while I may play a super hero on the big screen, we all know who are real American heroes are.

Among them, they are those who go to the fire station at the crack of dawn, who staff the afterschool centers in the evening, who walk the beat at night, who put on their military uniforms as they head into harms way to protect our freedom. They are from all backgrounds and from all walks of life. And they are living by Booker T Washington's credo, if you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else.

We are here tonight to recognize all of you, to salute you for your service and thank you for lifting so many others up. I know that what you do is not always easy. But it certainly must be

rewarding to know that you are making a difference and doing extraordinary things. As you all know, we are honored to have with us tonight the next president of the United States. Of course, which of them it is just yet. Both of the candidates have lived lives of service and both have made a call to service a part of their campaign.

My only election prediction is that we will have record turnout because there is genuine excitement about this election and these candidates. And it's thrilling to see so many people get involved. But we can't go back to cruise control after November.

Loving your country is not just about supporting a candidate. It's about serving a cause that is bigger than you, a cause that is bigger than this election, bigger than this generation. I remember all too well my first trip to New York City and to ground zero soon after 9/11 shook our

nation.

It's hard to imagine that was seven years ago. It seems like yesterday that I stood in front of the wreckage reading the stories on the fences, watching teams of people, firefighters, police, construction workers and other first responders sifting through the piles. No matter what they were told or how tired they got, they refused to give up.

We must never give up this cause for service. Thank you all for being a part of this forum and for helping lift up the country we love. And in conclusion, I'd like to take a moment to recognize all of the leaders and service members past and present and future for their extraordinary work. Let's give them a round of applause. (APPLAUSE).

FEMALE VOICE:

Thank you, Toby. Thank you for your commitment to service. On September 11th, 2001, the life of every American changed. And no one was impacted

more than those who lost-- lost loved ones in the tragedy. This evening we'll hear from two 9/11 family members. Liz Alderman is co-chair of the Memorial Committee for Families of September 11th and co-founder of the Peter C Alderman Foundation. The foundation works for the victims of terrorism and mass violence in post-conflict countries.

Jay Winnick is co-founder of My Good Deed created by 9/11 families and friends to honor those killed and injured, to pay to tribute to those who aided in rescue and recovery and to renew the spirit of unity that enhanced and embraced our country following 9/11. The organization seeks to transform 9/11 into a national day of service through online networking and to make a difference one good deed at a time. Please, join me in welcoming Liz, followed by Jay Winnick.

(APPLAUSE)

LIZ ALDERMAN:

Good evening. Our youngest child, Peter, was

murdered on September 11th, 2001. He was attending a conference at Windows on the World at the World Trade Center. He was 25 years old when he died. We are an ordinary family. But through hard work and determination, we have made a difference in the world to honor Peter's memory. One billion, one sixth of humanity have directly experienced torture, terrorism or mass violence.

More than 40 percent are incapacitated by traumatic depression and PTSD. They can't work or care for their families. Children can't attend school. Many can't even leave their beds. We have dedicated our future to rebuilding society by returning victims of mass violence to productive lives.

Our foundation is on the front lines every single day. Since 2003, we have trained more than 100 indigenous doctors and other healthcare professionals from 20 countries including Iraq and Afghanistan. We work on four continents.

And these trained professionals have trained an additional 400 healthcare workers. Our foundation, also, has opened six trauma treatment centers in Africa and Asia. By January, 2009, we will have opened two more. And that is only the beginning. The foundation has partnered with the Republic of Uganda to help return 30,000 abducted child soldiers to school and productive lives.

Also, we have partnered with the government of Rwanda and partners in health to help people living with HIV AIDS. Recently, we were able to assist 2,700 displaced Kenyan refugees and enable them to return to their homes. To date, more than 75,000 victims have been treated in foundation run clinics or by foundation trained personnel. (APPLAUSE) The need is everywhere and is growing as war and--

(OVERTALK)

LIZ ALDERMAN:

--continues to make it's mark around the world.  
Make no mistake--

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

LIZ ALDERMAN:

--from PTFD than from HIV AIDS, TB and malaria combined. The opportunities for individuals to get involved and make a difference are unlimited. And if you want to learn more about our organization, you can visit our website at PeterCaldermanFoundation.org. In conclusion, we're leaving a profound and indelible (?) mark that Peter existed on this earth.

As an Iraqi psychiatrist told me last September 11th because Peter lived, the world is a better place. Peter would be very proud of the foundation that bears his name. And if he could see me standing here tonight, he would think his mom was a hoot. Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

JAY WINNICK:

Thank you, Liz. Good evening, my name is Jay Winnick and I'm a 9/11 family member. My brave brother, Glen, died that September as he had lived, in service to others. A partner at a

large law firm, Glen was, also, a volunteer firefighter and an EMT for almost 20 years. When the towers were hit, he raced for a nearby evacuated law office building toward the World Trade Center to participate in the rescue effort. Glen died when the south tower collapsed. Unselfless actions that morning helped inspire MyGoodDeed.org and organization I co-founded with my friend David Paine and some other 9/11 family members and friends.

Our goal to establish September 11th as an annually recognized national day of charitable service. Why September 11th (APPLAUSE)-- why September 11th is such a day, well, flash back to how you felt in the days and weeks after 9/11 and what you would do, what you would really like in America, never in our history has our citizenship so spontaneously, so universally and so effectively stepped forward to pitch in.

No matter where you were in the nation, no matter

what your politics were, your profession, your gender, your religion, your economic status, your age, you wanted to find a way to help even if just in a small way. Well, we felt that spirit of compassion was too valuable to waste. As a nation, we need to embrace that and put it to good and sustained use.

And as important, we wanted to make sure that future generations learn not only about the attack but, also, about how Americans and the world responded, how good triumphed over evil to rebuild this city and this nation. And so, now, over the last seven years, millions of people from all 50 states and more than 150 countries have participated in my good deed by engaging in charitable service on or around September 11th.

They register their intentions on our website, MyGoodDeed.org and then go about helping the next guy in need. Some make donations to a charity of their choice, clothing, blood, food, eye glasses,

books, money, on and on. Some work in schools or soup kitchens. Some send letters to our troops overseas, help out with the--

(OVERTALK)

JAY WINNICK:

--or visit the elderly or sick or help rebuild homes ravaged by disaster or clean up a neighborhood park in disrepair. One former New York Giant, George Martin, walked across the United States to raise money for sick 9/11 workers. The ways are truly countless and endlessly creative.

My Good Deed is an amazing grass roots phenomenon. And we think it's making a real difference. It's widely supported by the U.S. Congress and the White House. And it's a great tribute to my heroic brother, Liz's son, Peter and all those who perished on that horrific September morning. A few years ago, I spoke at the dedication of stunning firefighters memorial wall across from ground zero.

I said something that morning that I believe is as true today. In this city and this nation, we value courage. We value honor. And we honor those who sacrifice for others. We are at once compassionate and resilient. We are principled. We survive adversity and, then, we flourish.

My Good Deed was always meant as a way to pay tribute but, also, as a way to move forward from tha-- those dark days, to help us flourish, to give something productive and meaningful to do to mark each anniversary. I hope you agree and that you'll take some time to learn more about what we're doing by visiting [MyGoodDeed.org](http://MyGoodDeed.org). My sincere thanks to those who have organized this terrific summit, to Senators Obama and McCain for joining all of us this evening and to you for your kind attention. (APPLAUSE)

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

MALE VOICE:

First-- from the valley of ARF and LISHA Ward of

the target foundation. (APPLAUSE) That this-- truly bipartisan event is occurring at all tonight is-- of course, a tribute to the power of the very idea of national service. But it's, also, a fitting tribute to the careers and the character of the two journalists who are about to lead the discussion with the two men who would seek to lead our country for the next four years. As a rule and a group, journalists like thinking of themselves as realists. Some would say cynics. And generally, they are idealist especially in their own rights.

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

(APPLAUSE)

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Good evening. And welcome to the Service National Presidential Forum at Columbia University in New York City. I'm Judy Woodruff with PBS's *News Hours with Jim Lehrer*. Service Nation is a network of groups reaching 100

million Americans, and working to solve our challenges through national service and civic engagement. And we are delighted to have the Republican and Democratic presidential nominees with us tonight for a conversation on service.

We'd like to thank the presenting sponsors of the event, AARP, Target, and *Time Magazine*, as well as the Carnegie Corporation of New York for their support. (APPLAUSE) Our co-moderator is Rick Stengel, the editor of *Time Magazine* whose 2007 cover story, "The Case for National Service," ignited this movement. And *Time's* leadership on the issue continues this week with a new cover story on national service. Welcome, Rick.

(APPLAUSE)

RICK STENGEL:

Today is the seventh anniversary of the tragic events of 9/11. And we chose this day for a reason. Because we believe it can be a day not only of national mourning and memory, but a day of national service. Whether that's tutoring

kids after school, serving in the military, or volunteering for a faith-based organization, national service can help us (UNINTEL) national challenges.

Service is not let or live. It's beyond party and partisanship. John McCain served in the military for 26 years, nearly making the ultimate sacrifice for his country. After college Barack Obama chose to work in the streets of Chicago to improve the lives of everyday people.

Both of these men that we will hear from tonight are deeply committed to national service. We are honored to have them with us together for the first time as their party's nominees. The order of their appearance tonight was chosen by coin toss. I am very pleased to welcome Senator John McCain, the Republican nominee (APPLAUSE) for President of the United States.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator McCain.

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator McCain, thank you again for being with us. You were at ground zero today with Senator Obama. That day, 9/11, is still very fresh in the minds of people here in New York City and Washington and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. But there's evidence that it's receding in the memory of many, many Americans. What are one or two of the most important things that you do-- you think should be done to keep this an enduring memory for America?

JOHN MCCAIN:

Well, I think commemoration on days like today are very important. And I must say that-- both in Pennsylvania, and I understand, in Washington, D.C., but I was in Pennsylvania earlier today, and the-- and the ceremonies that went on today I think served to remind all Americans. But I think the best way to commemorate and the w-- best way to show our appreciation for-- and love and sympathy for their families, for those who

have sacrificed, is to-- serve our country.

That's what this-- that's what this forum is all about, serving our country. And that way we can assure their families it'll never happen again. That way I think we can honor their service and their sacrifice-- to our nation. And remarkable acts of courage and compassion and love. And-- that's probably the best way to not only prevent a reoccurrence, but keep their memory alive by protecting the lives of the-- those fellow citizens-- who were unable to experience this firsthand but are in danger.

RICHARD STENGEL:

Senator, as recently as this past Sunday you talked very openly about the fact that Americans should have been asked to do more than go shopping or traveling. What would you have done as president in those circumstances to make people aware of what they should do as Americans after 9/11?

JOHN MCCAIN:

Well, first all, I would have a-- called them to serve. I would have created organizations ranging from neighborhood block watch, to making sure that our nuclear power plants are secure, to-- immediately proposing the Congressional legislation such as Senator Evan Bayh and I-- proposed of service to country to create additional organizations, to expand Americor, expand the Peace Corps, expand the military. Obviously we were facing a new threat.

Obviously we needed to, at that time, take advantage of the unity in the United States of America. We weren't Republicans on September 11th. We weren't Democrats. We were Americans. And I think that if we had asked for a concrete plan of action, both on the part of federal, state, and local governments, as well as by the Congress of the United States, as well as, frankly, talking directly to the American people-- yeah, the need for us all to-- to serve this

nation. I think perhaps we--

But, you know, I gotta tell you something, Rick. I-- when I travel around this country, that spirit is still there in America. Today we've seen Americans respond in a way that only Americans do. And I don't say that with any sense of superiority over any other group of people.

But I do believe we're a unique nation and blessed with certain inalienable rights that we wanna extend to the rest of the world. But I think that-- (NOISE) that we-- we probably still have that opportunity. And when I say this I don't want you to take it the wrong way. But Americans are so frustrated now with our government. Eight-four percent of the American people think the country's headed in the wrong direction.

The approval rating is-- of Congress is down to

nine percent, I believe, down to blood relatives and paid staffers. (LAUGHTER) And-- and this is an opportunity. This is an opportunity to lead the nation and talk to the American people and reform our government and ask for more service.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

So-- Senator, do you-- what are there-- what are the obligations of citizenship other than paying taxes? And should there be in-- do you see service connected to what you're talking about in Washington? And should there be something compulsory?

JOHN MCCAIN:

No, I don't think so, Judy. I-- I-- I don't think-- because I think when you compel someone to do something then you basically are in contradiction to the fundamental principle of having people wanting to serve, and willing, and eager to serve. Americans are still eager to serve.

Americans-- when we look at-- all of the programs

that we've made available, almost all of them-- in fact, I-- all of them are over-subscribed by people who are volunteering. What-- what's the most-- probably one of the lead organizations in America today is Teach for America. We'll v-- vastly (?) thousands more are seeking to be part of that program, to go in the inner cities of America and teach children.

We're-- we're doing well in our military recruitment. Could do better. We gotta do better on retention. But we have to expand the military. So I believe Americans at this point, if you're digging for the pony as I clearly am-- are ready now to be inspired. To ready-- they're ready to go. They understand the challenges that we have in this world. They see the-- the Russian invasion of the little country called Georgia. They see the-- the problems in Afghanistan growing larger. They see a whole lotta things happening in the world that's gonna require us to serve. And that opportunity has to

be provided to them.

RICH STENGEL:

So I wanna touch on something you said in an earlier answer. That Americans have a very low self-regard for Washington right now. How is it though that we can try to inspire people into public service and even go to Washington at the same time candidates are running against Washington and dissing Washington at every opportunity?

JOHN MCCAIN:

'Cause we have to reform government. We have to reform the way we're doing business. Look at Congress's activities since they came off their five-week vacations. They never miss a pay raise or a vacation or recess. And the point is that they see this gridlock. They want it reformed. And they want it changed. And they're ready for change.

And I think they're ready to turn a page the beginning of January. I think they are ready to

say, "Okay." And one thing we politicians crave it's ap-- it's approval. And I think that if they saw us working together the way that we did for a period of time after 9/11. Look, we-- we presided over the biggest reorganization of government since-- the creation of the Defense Department in the creation of a Department of Homeland Security.

We did do a lot of things right after 9/11. But it gradually eroded. And now-- I think the American people are ready. They're ready to rally behind-- frankly-- a new page to be turned in America's history.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator, we have less than a minute in-- in this block. But do you think the length of your service in Washington gives you a-- a unique understanding of the changes that--

JOHN MCCAIN:

I--

JUDY WOODRUFF:

--need to be made? Help us understand how that is, how--

JOHN MCCAIN:

Well, first of all, you know, I wasn't elected Miss Congeniality again this year. (APPLAUSE) And the fact is I fought 'em and fought 'em and fought 'em. And we have achieved some reforms. We-- with Russ Feingold we achieved the landmark Campaign Finance Reform Bill.

We did a number of-- and we-- we enacted ethics and lobbying reform that wasn't nearly enough. I've fought against 'em. And there are allies there. They're not-- th-- d-- we're not all the go along to get along crowd. And I know how it works. And I know how to fix it. And I know where the problems are. And so I-- I'm confident we can fix it.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Thank you, Senator. We'll be right back after this short break. (APPLAUSE)

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

RICHARD STENGEL:

(APPLAUSE) Senator, even as we sit here tonight, Hurricane Ike is bearing down on the Texas coast. What are the lessons that we learned from Hurricane Katrina where we had the largest voluntary outpouring in American history? And isn't-- aren't emergencies and disasters like this exactly why government needs to exist? What is the role of the private sector? And what is the role of government?

JOHN MCCAIN:

The role of government, obviously, is the primary role. And to protect our citizens and help them in times of emergency and distress. But also I think there's a great role p-- for faith-based organizations, volunteer organizations-- and the private sector. I think we've got to involved more-- businesses and industries that routinely provide goods and services, rather than rely on the federal government to do it.

I don't think, frankly, if-- FedEx or Target or-- or a lot of these organizations had been in charge we wouldn't have had a truck full of ice ending up in Maine. They know where everything is. So we need to have-- we need to have that partnership.

But I also wanna point out that faith-based organizations, as well as other volunteer organizations, did a magnificent job. There's a place called the Resurrection Baptist Church down in New Orleans. Thousands of volunteers from churches all over the country came and are still working in New Orleans as we speak. So the primary role is government. But we also need to have citizen involvement in a way which, as Ann-- to say the least, we all know you need a better level of cooperation between (PH)-- between federal, state, and local government.

We saw that. We saw the-- a-- a dramatic improvement in this last that we had. And our

thoughts and prayers go out to the people of Texas and the area that's threatened now. And we pray, God, that it's minimal. And we're ready to help. That's the primary responsibility of government.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator, it's been pointed out that for-- for many people to-- to be able to do volunteer work-- they are often people of-- of some means. They can take a leave from their job. Or they may not need to work. Often volunteer work service is left to those who are more comfortable. Whereas other people, especially young people who want to do service, and they graduate from-- from college with a huge education debt. How do you-- do you balance that?

JOHN MCCAIN:

Well, first of all, my experience has not been that the wealthiest people do the most volunteering. In fact, I think it is average citizens that do the most. In all due respect-- to rich people and (UNINTEL) (LAUGHTER)-- but the

point-- I-- it seems to me it's the average citizen that's the first to respond.

But I-- but I agree with you. We should-- provide-- especially from a business standpoint, if someone graduates from a fine institution or university, then we hope that the-- the people that hire them would give them s-- additional time to maybe go down and volunteer in a Habitat for Humanity or some other worthwhile cause. But honestly you know what I found? The busiest people are the busiest. And the busier they get, the busier they get. And the more time they find to help their neighborhood, their community, and their fellow citizens. So--

JUDY WOODRUFF:

So there's no need--

JOHN MCCAIN:

--I'm-- I'm very pleased a-- at the volunteer effort in America. I'm very pleased at what we've seen-- around this country, particularly as we are in difficult times. I think we can be

proud of Americans. And obviously if we need to take some steps to encourage that and make it easier for 'em, I'm all for it.

RICHARD STENGEL:

Would you encourage corporations to give paid leave for service which some companies are doing like Timberland?

JOHN MCCAIN:

Th-- I-- if they want to. But I wouldn't force them to. If they wanna do that I would praise them. I would-- cite them as an example. But I don't think we can force that kind of thing.

RICHARD STENGEL:

Let's go to a-- a different subject, a subject that's close to your heart. In-- *Faith of My Fathers* you write about how there's Senator McCain who has fought in pretty much every American conflict going back 200 years. That's a huge-- legacy that was left on you. You talk about it being a little bit intimidating. What I wonder if-- if you talk personally about how that was conveyed to you as a boy? And then how you

convey that to your own children.

JOHN MCCAIN:

Well, you know, I-- a lot of times I don't talk too much publicly because I'm not a hero. I had the great honor of serving in the company of heroes. And in Hanoi I observed 1,000 acts of courage and compassion and love. But I'd like to tell you that one day as a child I said, "Gee, I'm gonna, you know, be in military service."

But it was just sort of something that-- that-- was (UNINTEL) that was part of our tradition. And I rebelled against it. I (UNINTEL) perhaps in too much detail (LAUGHTER). It-- but it-- it sort of-- it sort of was something that evolved. But then it was like a lot of young Americans. A lot of that glory was-- was all about me. And it wasn't until I had the experience that I had that I realized that I belong to my country, and that my country saved me.

And I owed my country a great deal. And that--

that change made me appreciate the fact that it's not about the individual. It's about the cause we serve.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator-- still on-- on the subject of military, in the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, we know that recruiting has gotten harder. The qualifications for joining the Army have been lowered today. Thirty percent of enlist-- new enlistees don't have high school diplomas. That's the highest percentage-- ever. The percentage of young people who are either black, Hispanic, or who come from a lower-income household is disproportionately high in the military. All this while the sons and daughters of privilege, for the most part, your sons excluded, don't have to consider military service. We have the greatest freighting army in the world. I think everyone would agree. But is there something about this picture that you think needs to-- needs to change? This social imbalance.

JOHN MCCAIN:

Well, I would remind you in the days of the draft that it was then most unfair. Because the lowest income Americans served, and the wealthiest found ways of avoiding a draft. I think the all-volunteer force is having difficulties recruiting and retaining because we're too small, and we need to expand the size of our military. And we need to do it as rapidly as possible.

And there are-- we've got to perhaps or-- offer additional incentives. For a long time, years ago, the Navy and the Air Force were losing pilots. So we paid them more. And we had more of them stay in. The first reason for serving is patriotism.

But I'll say you've got to offer them incentives-- in order to do so. And frankly-- we're here in a wonderful institution. I'm proud that my daughter graduated from this school. But you know that this school will not allow ROTC on this

campus? Now I don't think that's right. Shouldn't-- shouldn't the students here be exposed to-- the attractiveness of serving in the military, particularly as an officer?

So maybe-- maybe the-- the-- I would hope that these universities (APPLAUSE) would re-examine. I would hope that these universities would re-examine and-- that-- that policy of not even allowing people to come here to represent the military, and other ivy league schools. And-- and then maybe they will be able to attract some more. Now that's-- tha-- that's not the heart of the problem. But I believe that we have the best trained, most professional, best equipped, bravest military we've ever had in our history today.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

And we'll come back to this. We'll be right back after this break. (APPLAUSE)

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

RICHARD STENGEL:

(APPLAUSE) Let's stay on the subject of military. You authorized a-- a really interesting military policy. And it was started out as a bill that you mentioned that you and Evan Bayh co-sponsored and then you inserted it in the Defense Appropriations Act that-- that blends military and civilian service-- to 18, 24, 18 policy, which I won't explain. (LAUGHTER) But it's leading to a larger question. Why wouldn't we have compulsory military service in America that has a civilian component? That if someone wants to opt out of military service they can do the civilian service, like in your bill. And that it would become a unifying thing for-- for America.

JOHN MCCAIN:

Well, Rick, first of all, I-- I think that as much as I treasure our military service, there's lots of ways to serve our country too. And I wanna emphasize that. I know we're talking a lot about the-- about the military. But there are so many ways to serve this country. And there are

so many ways that are noble an-- an-- and wonderful, both at home-- and abroad. So I wanna make that perfectly clear.

I think that it's very clear that Americor has been one of the astonishing successes. Peace Corps, we've seen the success for a long time, because Jack Kennedy, obviously, originated it. But we have seen these volunteer organizations succeed. And if we need to, whether it's connected to the military or not, provide them with-- with sufficient reward and sufficient recognition-- you know, a lot of these young people are-- are more proud of the fact that we recognize them-- ones walking around the red jacket and say, "City Year," than they are about the money. You know? I mean, that's-- that's what they're all about. So I'd be glad to reward them as much as possible.

But you wanna be careful that the reason is not the reward of financial or other reasons, but the

reward is the satisfaction of serving a cause greater than yourself. But th-- that'd be fine with me. Finding new ways to serve. That's what this next few years should be all about.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator McCain-- Senator Obama's put forward a national service-- plan to-- to do some of the things you've talked about. The two of you agree. But his has a price tag of around three-and-a-half billion dollars. Is that an amount of money you'd be willing to spend? More? Less? I mean, is that in the ballpark?

JOHN MCCAIN:

I-- I'd-- I'd be glad to spend money. I don't-- I don't think that should be the first priority in the kinds of benefits that are reaped-- from the kind of thing we're trying to seek. I haven't agreed with all of what Senator Obama has proposed. But-- I think there are very good proposals there.

Some of them are new. Some of them are obviously

not. But I also wanna emphasize there-- it doesn't always have to be run by the government. That's why we also ought to understand that faith-based organizations, other volunteer organizations that are completely separate from the government, have nothing to do with the government, are amongst the most successful. So let's not get-- entrapped by the idea that the government has to run these voluntary organizations and volunteer kinds of-- programs. Because a lot of times the job can be done better with our encouragement.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

So you're not in favor nec-- necessarily of a-- of a-- a distinct government role?

(OVERTALK)

JOHN MCCAIN:

Oh, we have distinct government role. The Peace Corps, Americor, all of these other organizations. But I wanna be careful about expanding it when my philosophy is let's not have government do things that the private sector can

do. Or other organizations can do. That's just my theory of government.

So look, I-- I applaud Senator Obama's commitment to national service. And he makes a very strong case. And I-- I look forward to joining him no matter what happens in November. This is-- this is a cause a lot bigger than anything to do with partisanship.

RICHARD STENGEL:

Actually, speaking of that, I was gonna ask an internet question. We'll get back to that. Governor Schwarzenegger in California has made service the service czar in California a cabinet-level appointment. If you were president would you do the same and make service a cabinet-level appointment? And would you perhaps ask Senator Obama to be the member of your cabinet for national (UNINTEL)? (LAUGHTER)

JOHN MCCAIN:

Yes. (APPLAUSE) Right now, as you know, there's an office in the White House, Freedom Core

Office. That-- that core office coordinates all these different organizations which, rightly or wrongly, fall many times under different departments. I think if you had that person right down the hall from the Oval Office and you're working with that person on a daily basis that's probably the most effective way to do it.

You know, every time we see a problem we sort of, "Let's create another cabinet post." Now we've got so many members of the cabinet that the (UNINTEL) cabinet never meets, as you well know. So-- I'd rather see a powerful, influential, outstanding person sitting in that office who I could literally deal with every day.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator, at the Republican convention a couple of speakers, most notably your running mate, vice presidential nominee, Sarah Palin, made somewhat derisive comments about-- Senator Obama's experience as a community organizer. I've heard you say you haven't taken that (UNINTEL). So I

guess my question is-- are you saying to others in your campaign and your supporters that that's not the kind of language you wanna hear? How-- how do you-- how are you approaching that?

JOHN MCCAIN:

First of all, it's a tough business. Second of all, I-- I think the tone of this-- of this whole campaign would have been very different if Senator Obama had accepted my request for us to appear in town hall meetings all over America, the same way Jack Kennedy and Barry Goldwater had agreed to do so. I know that. Because I've been in enough campaigns. Look-- Governor Palin was responding to the criticism of her inexperience and her job as a mayor in a small town. That's what she was responding to. Of course, I respect community organizers. Of course, I respect people who serve their community. And-- Senator Obama's record there is outstanding. And so I-- I-- I-- praise anyone who serves this nation in capacities that frankly we all know that could have been far more financially rewarding to

individuals rather than doing what they did.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Less significant than the work of a small town mayor?

JOHN MCCAIN:

I think a-- a small town mayor-- I-- or-- has very great responsibilities. Have responsibility for the budget. They have hiring and firing of people. They have great responsibilities. They have to stand for election. I-- I admire mayors. (LAUGHS) I-- I'm-- listen, mayors have the toughest job that I think in America. It's easy for me to go to Washington and-- and, frankly-- be somewhat divorced from the day-to-day challenges people have. So I admire mayors. I-- I ad-- admire anyone who is willing to serve their community and their country. And that's what this is all about.

And this is what today's all about. And we should set aside this partisanship at least for this day. Praise one another for our dedication

to this country. That's what I (UNINTEL).

(APPLAUSE)

RICHARD STENGEL:

We have less than a minute left in this segment. And there's a specific question about setting aside partisanship. Senator Kennedy and Senator Hatch, two old friends in the Senate, have sponsored a bipartisan bill on national service that I think, among other things, would triple the size of Americor and really put a lot of the strength of the federal government behind national service. As president, would you sign that bill?

JOHN MCCAIN:

Yes. But I wanna-- (APPLAUSE) our prayers are always with Ted Kennedy. I understand he's coming back in January. I greet that with mixed emotions. I love him. I-- I-- I'm so happy, seriously, that-- that-- Senator Kennedy is on the road to recovery. He's a-- he's a lion of the Senate.

Look, I-- I would sign that-- that legislation. But I also wanna caution again. Government can't do it all. The essence of volunteerism starts at the grassroots level. Does not start necessarily at the-- the federal government level. So let's make sure we maintain the balance between federal involvement and encourage more volunteerism in service to the nation. But also let's not in any way stifle what already is going on. And it's very, very successful in America. And that's organizations that have no dependence whatsoever on our federal government and do such a great job for all of our citizens.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

All right, Senator, we are gonna take another break. We'll be right back. (APPLAUSE)

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator McCain, there's so much emphasis, of course, today on the younger generation giving. What about baby boomers and older-- folks? What should we be doing for this (UNINTEL)?

JOHN MCCAIN:

Well, I-- I think there are-- there are obviously organizations that-- that-- we have place-- for ability to serve. But we ought to really probably do a more and more effective job of utilizing the talents and experience of people who have had very successful lives and careers and continue to motivate them to serve. I think that's part of the proposals that have been made.

And we do have a Senior Corps and other organizations. But-- fact is that people are living longer. And they're more active and vigorous. And I'm here to tell you that's a fact. And-- (LAUGHTER) and-- (NOISE) and-- and-- (APPLAUSE) and so I-- Judy, I really believe that-- that it's one of the under-utilized aspects of-- of community service in America. And-- I think that would be one of the areas of emphasis really.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

If-- if-- if I could just quickly follow-up. I

asked partly because we got a number of online questions. And--

JOHN MCCAIN:

Sure.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

--a-- a woman named Giselle from Brooklyn, New York, she says, "But the staggering economy, how can people commit time to community service and still make ends meet?" I know you said earlier people of all income brackets.

JOHN MCCAIN:

Right, right.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

But what about those people who really do have to work--

(OVERTALK)

JOHN MCCAIN:

Our-- our-- our economy is broken. People are sitting around, not worrying about volunteering, but staying in their homes, keeping their job-- af-- affording-- a ga-- fill up their gas tank. We know that. Americans are hurting very badly.

We gotta reform government. We gotta fix the economy.

We gotta create jobs. But right now we have to restore trust and confidence in government. If people don't trust the government, then they're not gonna be as eager and willing to, frankly, be part of these programs that we are proposing. And that we are hoping that people will volunteer and serve in. So obviously we have to fix our economy and get it going again and create jobs for Americans. But-- the-- the-- I think-- honestly that there are also Americans who are willing-- to volunteer their services no matter what. But when people have a-- a reasonable income and reasonable future, obviously, they're gonna volunteer more.

RICHARD STENGEL:

Let's talk about some folks who don't trust us. And that's a lot of countries overseas. You've talked about expanding the Peace Corps. You've also said, "We shouldn't be sending money to

countries that don't like us." But should we be sending people, sending members of the Peace Corps, to countries that don't like us to help our esteem in the world, which, of course, has suffered since 9/11?

JOHN MCCAIN:

Yes. And that's the best-- the best thing we can do (APPLAUSE) is expose the people in these countries to things we value, the things we stand for, the things we believe in. And there's no repres-- better representative of all that than Americans. But also I wanna add, let's also have more people come here and be educated and trained and be exposed to the United States of America. We have found throughout the world people that come and get educated here and return to the countries they came from as leaders, it's amazing. And it establishes a base relationship that I think can also-- change the policies in a number of these countries that don't like us very much.

RICHARD STENGEL:

Would you give a green card to everybody-- every foreign national who graduates with a PhD in the sciences to stay in America?

JOHN MCCAIN:

I-- I certainly would d-- do everything I can to keep those people in this country. I don't know if it would be an automatic green card. But I guarantee you that-- we'd love to have so many of these highly-trained people stay in this country. And ask any corporate executive in America, particularly those in the information technology business.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator, I want to come back to something you said earlier. I think you used the word exceptional and unique about being an American. On this 9/11, this-- this special day-- what-- help us understand what you think it means to be an American. And I-- and I don't mean that in the-- in the obvious way.

I mean, people who live in Canada, who live in Mexico, any-- around the world feels special about their country. So what is it that's different about being an American? Are Americans better than people in some of these other countries? We hear the term "exceptionalism" about--

(OVERTALK)

JOHN MCCAIN:

I do believe in American exceptionalism. And I think it was best articulated by our founding fathers. But I also think that my hero, Teddy Roosevelt-- expressed it very well. And I-- other leaders throughout our history. We are the only nation I know in the world that really is deeply concerned about-- adhering to the principle that all of us are created equal and endowed by our creators with certain rights. And those we have tried to bring to the world.

And we have t-- not so much militarily. But through example, through leadership, through

economic assistance. Look at what we did for Europe after World War Two. Look at the continuous efforts we make throughout the world. Look at the comb-- the efforts we're making to combat HIV/AIDS in Africa.

There's a lot more America can do. But-- and I love these other countries. And I'm not trying to denigrate them. But I know of no other country in the world with the generosity of spirit and the concern for fellow human beings than the United States of America. I think that goes back to our very beginnings.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Does that make America better than these other--

JOHN MCCAIN:

I think it makes us exceptional. I think it makes us exceptional in the kind of-- of citizenry we have and the kind of service and sacrifice that we are-- we are capable of. And I mean that in no disrespect to any other nation. Our close and unique relationship with the

British, I have-- I'm not trying to in any way denigrate any other nation.

But it doesn't in any way diminish my pride in the s-- the history of this nation which has literally shed our blood in all four corners of the earth, many times in defense of someone else's freedom. And have tried to further the principles of freedom and democracy everywhere in the world. I think we're dedicated to that proposition. And frankly, I think we've done a pretty good job.

RICHARD STENGEL:

Now let's talk about the framers for a second. Because one of the things that they distrusted and disliked, they called it faction, which they meant political parties. The framers didn't want to have political parties. George Washington hated the idea of political parties.

But now, in the midst of the campaign between two parties, and the tone of the campaign has gotten

pretty ugly, you've talked from the beginning about running a different kind of campaign. So has Senator Obama. You've both talked about a high-minded campaign. What does this do to people who are interested in public service? I mean, all-- there are lots of people who think, "Man, I-- I'm not-- I can't run for office when-- when this kind of thing is happening."

JOHN MCCAIN:

I--

RICHARD STENGEL:

What does that do to the-- if we're here for service, then what does that campaign tell us about that?

JOHN MCCAIN:

First of all-- I-- I-- I have said repeatedly I think Senator Obama has inspired millions of Americans who otherwise wouldn't have been involved in the political process. That's just a fact. And-- I believe that my record of service and my vision for the future has attracted people.

I think you're gonna see the biggest voter turnout in history in this election. Has it been rough? Of course. And again, it isn't-- it isn't the final recipe or the only answer. But I think Americans would be helped enormously if we stood in this stage together tonight and talked about national service. All four of us. Rather than three and one going on. And-- and then the other. And again, I hope that Senator Obama will accept my request. Let's go around America. Let's listen to hopes and dreams and aspirations of the American people and respond to them. I think that's the best and most effective way of getting everybody involved in this campaign.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Do you think it's naïve of people to-- to expect that politics could be a little less rough?

(OVERTALK)

JUDY WOODRUFF:

--even nasty?

JOHN MCCAIN:

The-- the people make the final judgment with their votes. They-- they make the final judgment about campaigns and how we present ourselves to the American people. And I think that that will be-- the ultimate test of what kind of campaigns do we run. I, again, think that it's very important that we focus on issues, we fosi-- focus on challenges that America faces today, both domestically and national security-wise. And I intend to do that. And there's 54 more days. But who's counting? (LAUGHTER)

RICHARD STENGEL:

By-- 2042 the United States of America will no longer be a majority white nation. Robert Putnam, the sociologist, who's written about how in communities that are diverse there's actually less social capital, less trust. What can national service do to knit up America? And I'm sorry, we only have one minute left for such a complex question.

JOHN MCCAIN:

National service can do a great deal. National service can unite us, just as the military unite us as we-- we people from-- and I-- h-- in-- interface with people from all over the world. But also let me say, look. The greatest thing that makes America exceptional is we have had wave after wave of people come to this country for the same reason.

They wanted to build a better life. They wanted freedom. And they want to be part of America. So I don't accept that premise of somehow-- some of the most patriotic Americans I've ever seen, and the hardest working and the most ready to serve this country and go in harm's way are those who just came here.

(OVERTALK)

JOHN MCCAIN:

--forget being at a ceremony in Baghdad last Fourth of July where 160-some people who are green card holders s-- got the-- their

citizenship. And they had been willing to serve in the military for an accelerated path to citizenship. That's how much they wanted to be part of this country. That was an exhilarating experience.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator John McCain, thank you very, very much.  
(APPLAUSE)

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

JUDY WOODRUFF:

As we thank-- as we thank Senator McCain very much for his participation, we want to welcome now the Democratic nominee for President of the United States, Senator Barack Obama. (APPLAUSE)

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

JUDY WOODRUFF:

We'll be right back after a short break.

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

RICHARD STENGEL:

Senator Obama, welcome again. You have had some affiliation here. That's--

(OVERTALK)

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

--home court advantage here. This is my alma mater. And-- I wanna thank-- (APPLAUSE) I-- I was saying, though, that the neighborhood's changed. When I came here in 1980-- some of the apartments around here didn't look quite like what they look like now. And I-- I could afford them. I don't think I can now. (LAUGHTER) Yeah.

RICHARD STENGEL:

Faculty housing is--

(OVERTALK)

RICHARD STENGEL:

Today is 9/11. You were down at Ground Zero with Senator McCain. And we're gonna ask a lot of the same-- similar questions that we asked to Senator McCain. And-- and the first one we asked was what-- what does 9/11 mean to you? What's the significance of it? Where were you when the happened, for example?

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well, I-- I was in Chicago. I-- I was in the state legislature at the time. I still remember

driving down-- Lake Shore Drive on my way to a committee hearing-- downtown and hearing the initial report. And it was still confused then whether it was an accident, what had happened. By the time I got downtown, we started evacuating the buildings. And then we all watched in horror on television. And it, like I think for most people, it is indelible.

And it is a reminder not only of the terrible potential for evil in the world, but it's also a reminder of what America does at the toughest times, which is to come together. Now, when I think of 9/11, I think of that spirit after the-- the tragedy had occurred, how the outpouring of patriotism, emotion, volunteerism, the desire for service-- was-- in the minds of everyone.

And that was also a moment when the petty bickering and partisanship that comes to characterize our public life-- was set aside. And so the-- the question was how do we recreate

that spirit not just during times of tragedy-- not just during 9/11-- but how do we honor those who died, those who sacrificed, the fire fighters, the police officers, how do we honor them every day? How does it reflect itself in our government? How does it reflect itself in how we conduct our own civic life?

And-- you know, my sense is that the country yearns for that. It's hungry for it. And what has been missing is-- a-- a-- a President and a White House that taps into that yearning in a serious way.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Well, Senator McCain actually agreed with that a few minutes ago. He said that if he had been President, he would have used that opportunity-- to ask the country to serve, to ask people to serve. What's different about what you're saying?

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well, I'm not sure-- there is anything different.

I-- what I know is that-- had I been President at the time, and I-- I have to say-- the President did rally the nation-- in his speech at Ground Zero and subsequently. We-- went after those who had attacked us appropriately. But rather than tell the American people to shop, what I would have done-- is to say now is the time for us to meet some great challenges.

We've been tested. And yet we have survived. And we are gonna be stronger than we were. And the way we're gonna be stronger than we were is to tap into the feeling that everybody-- has been caught up in. We're gonna have a bold energy plan that says that we are going to reduce our dependence on foreign oil (SCREAM) by 20 or 30 percent over the course of a-- a decade or two.

We are going to-- ask all citizens to participate in that process, not just government, but each and every one of us are gonna have-- are gonna make commitments in terms of increasing fuel

efficiency in our cars, in our homes. And the government is gonna be in partnership with citizens to make that happen. We are going to tap into this desire when it comes to first responders.

You know, one of the striking things you-- as you travel around the country is the number of small towns-- and medium-sized towns that rely exclusively on volunteer fire fighters. And think about what we could have done all across the country as part of a homeland security initiative-- to organize groups around the country that could serve in those common ways.

And I would have asked very explicitly for young people to engage in community service and military service. I was listening earlier of the discussion about who serves in our military. And I think that had the President very clearly said this is not just going to be-- a-- a war of a few of us, this is going to be an effort that

mobilizes all of us-- I think we would have had a-- a different result.

(OVERTALK)

RICHARD STENGEL:

What are-- Senator Obama, the obligations of citizenship in a democracy? Basically in America now people vote, only about half of them, and they pay their taxes. And that's about where the bar is. What would you ask the people in what you call I believe active citizenship? How is that different than what we see now?

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

America is the greatest country on earth. But it didn't just happen on its own. It's not-- a gift only, although it is a great blessing that we've received. It is also a responsibility. And part of what makes America work is the fact that we believe in individual responsibility and self-reliance, but we also believe in mutual responsibility, in neighborliness, in a sense-- that we are-- we are committed to something larger than ourselves. Now, that can express

itself in a whole range of ways. But, you know, what has built this country is people sense through voluntary associations but also through public service and government that we have commitments that extend beyond our immediate self-interest, that aren't always motivated by profit, that aren't simply short term, that we're thinking long term to the next generation.

And every bit of progress that we've made-- historically is because of that kind of active citizenship. And as President, what I wanna do is restore that sense of common, mutual responsibility-- and-- and I think the American people are ready for it.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

But give-- give us some examples, specific examples of how you would do that because people listening will say, "Well, it all sounds well and good, but how would you do so?"

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well-- let-- let's talk very specifically about--

JUDY WOODRUFF:

And we just have a minute left.

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Okay. Well, it'll carry over. (LAUGHTER) But I--  
- I put forward a very specific national service  
plan. And I'm glad to see-- that my dear friend--  
- Senator Kennedy as well as-- a fine senator,  
Senator Hatch, have come together and taken many  
of the similar elements. They're gonna be  
introducing it tomorrow.

One way of making sure that we encourage this  
kind of citizenship is to start early, to make  
sure that our young people in high school have--  
community service opportunities, making sure that  
our university students, in exchange for making  
college affordable, are giving something back,  
that they're working (APPLAUSE) in under-served  
communities--

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

I've got all kinds of other stuff, Judy, but

I'll-- I'll wait till after the break.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

We are gonna take a break. Thank you for announcing that, and we'll be right back.

(APPLAUSE)

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

RICHARD STENGEL:

You-- you do indeed have a comprehensive national service--

(OVERTALK)

RICHARD STENGEL:

--plan, and it's mentioned in our magazine this week on national service. But here's my question. Bill Clinton also had a very comprehensive national service plan. And he had to tailor a lot of what he had proposed with AmeriCorps and other policies because of the unions, because of teachers' unions, because of public unions. How-- wouldn't you have to kind of cut back the scale of some of what you have done? Or have you done that already to make sure that the unions will go for it?

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

I don't think so. I-- look, the spirit of unions is coming together because we are stronger together than we are individually. That-- that's the-- the idea behind-- the union movement. And I think the-- the times have changed since 1992. I think that people recognize, for example, that we can't continue-- a education system that fails so many of our young people.

And we need a (UNINTEL PHRASE). (APPLAUSE) And I think not only teachers' unions but teachers themselves recognize that if they're all volunteers, if we've got retirees-- who are scientists and mathematicians who are willing to come in the classroom and provide-- additional help to young people and inspire them-- into different careers, I think that they're gonna welcome it.

So-- look, it-- do I expect that my national service plan gets passed exactly as I've

proposed? Of course not. That's not-- the way-- legislation works. But-- I believe we are in one of those special moments, one of those defining moments where the American people recognize that we are not on the right track, that our government is not working the way it should, that our economy is not working the way it should.

And they expect leadership from Washington, but they understand that they have to be a part of the solution as well. And I think that's why we have to seize this moment. And the next President is gonna have to actively--

OPERATOR:

Has joined the conference.

(OVERTALK)

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

--these issues of service.

(OVERTALK)

JUDY WOODRUFF:

When we asked-- Gov-- Senator McCain some of these questions, he said-- several times he said

there is a government role in all of this--

OPERATOR:

Has left the conference.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

--but he said we should be careful about how much we scale up and increase the role of government. I wanna come back to something--

OPERATOR:

Has left the conference.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

--we-- we raised with him. And that is that there's young people who are interested in the Peace Corps, Teach for America. Not all of them can afford, frankly, to come out of school and take a very low-paying job no matter how much they wanna serve. What would be the responsibility of the government and others to-- to make it easier for them?

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well, first of all, I think gov-- Senator McCain is right that-- income does not determine whether or not people serve. You can go into small rural

towns and people are really scraping by and yet they are helping each other-- in all sorts of ways. And-- but what I agree is that the-- the choices that we provide young people right now are too constrained. You-- you know, when I graduated from Columbia, I had a choice.

I could pursue a lucrative career of-- on Wall Street or go immediate to law school. Or-- I could-- follow through on the inspiration that I had drawn from the civil rights movement-- and from the Kennedy era and try to work in the community. And I chose the latter. But it was tough. I-- I made \$12,000 a year-- plus car expenses in Chicago working with churches-- to set up job training programs for the unemployed and after-school programs for youth, trying to make the community better.

It was the best education I ever had. But, ironically, it was harder for me to find that job than it was for me to find a job on Wall Street.

And I think there are a lot of young people out there who are interested in making that same choice. And we should be encouraging them. The government's gonna have a role. Look, young people can't afford college right now.

And that-- one of my central platforms in this campaign is we're gonna provide a \$4,000 tuition credit, every student, every year. But in exchange for giving something back. And so-- peop-- young people of modest means who are interested in going to college, this gives them an opportunity to serve and, at the same time, pay for their college education. I think there are a lot of creative ways where we can provide more opportunities than exist right now.

RICHARD STENGEL:

Now, the-- the role of government is something we talked a little bit about with Senator McCain. Republicans have traditionally said-- and I'm thinking, for example, of Newt Gingrich who I know is not one of your advisors-- but said that-

- (LAUGHTER) that the problem with big government is that it gets in the way of private initiative. And as government grew over generations that, in fact, it repressed public service and it repressed national service because there was no room for it anymore. Some-- some Republicans worry, well, he's gonna make such a big government that won't even le-- leave room for private initiative.

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well, look, the-- the-- I-- I think-- those are old arguments. Let-- let's look to the future. The fact is that we have to have government. When-- a hurricane strikes, as it did-- with Katrina-- we have to have a FEMA that works, which by the way means that we should be encouraging young people, the best and the brightest, to get involved as civil servants, to pursue careers of public service, so we've got people who are trained in fe-- federal emergency management who are able to take on the job.

Now, that does not crowd out the Red Cross. That doesn't crowd out the thousands of church groups that's went down there. What it means is, is that each-- area has a role to play. The Peace Corps-- does not crowd out opportunities for-- service overseas.

You've got churches-- and synagogues and mosques all across the country that are per-- deeply involved in-- efforts to deal with HIV/AIDS and malaria and-- all sorts of public health issues. And yet this is a matter where George Bush I think appropriately said we're gonna make a commitment as the wealthiest nation on earth to deal with the devastation of AIDS.

And his PETFAR (?) program has been highly successful working with not-for-profits, working with governments, working both public and private in order to solve a problem. So there are more than enough problems out there to deal with. And it-- what is true is we-- we don't need to set up

bureaucracies. So I would-- I would distinguish between a government assist in providing people avenues for service and a government bureaucracy in which the notion is, is that the only way that you can serve is through some defined government program.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

And I-- I do wanna pick on that-- pick up on that just briefly because, as we said earlier, tonight is not a night to focus on contrasts between you and Senator McCain. But help us understand how you see the role of government in all of this differently from the way he does.

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well, you know, I-- listening to his presentation, it sounds like-- he's interested in the AmeriCorps program and Peace Corps. I think it is terrific that we can garner some bipartisan support. That was not always the case. I believe firmly that government should expand avenues of opportunity. I wanna create a-- a Energy Corps, a clean energy corps that-- that

can-- mobilize individual citizens to help create greater energy efficiency in our country.

I wanna mobilize seniors to get involved-- with their schools or their-- local hospital or health clinic. So there are gonna be a whole range of ways that we can do it. Some of that's gonna cost money. But mostly it requires government providing these opportunities and these avenues and a President who is in-- who is willing to inspire people to get in both and get outside of themselves. That's something we're doing in this campaign. And that's something I think I can do as President.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator Obama, we'll be right back after this break. (APPLAUSE)

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator Obama, one of the, of course, enormous consequences of-- of 9/11 were the wars in Afghanistan and then Iraq. In the wake of those

wars, today the United States military is facing enormous challenges. Junior officers are leaving the Army-- in record numbers. The recent graduates of West Point leaving-- the Army. What would you do as President to make serving and staying in the military more attractive to young men and women?

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well, first of all, I-- as commander-in-chief-- my job is to-- to keep America safe. And that means ensuring that we've got the best military on earth. And that means having the best-- persons in uniform on earth. We have that right now. But as a consequence of these wars-- they have been strained incredibly. I think it's important for us to increase the size of our Army and our Marines so that we can-- reduce the pace of tours with-- that our young men and women are on.

I think it's important for us to work towards increasing military pay. I think the passage of

the GI Bill was extraordinarily important-- as a message to our-- men and women in uniform that when you serve our country, we will stand by you. I-- you know, I think about my grandfather who served in Patton's Army in World War II. He joined after Pearl Harbor.

And you-- you know, we're-- we were talking off-- off camera about where did I get this sense of service. I-- you know, I think about my grandfather's generation. My grandfather-- after Pearl Harbor, joined-- the military. My grandmother, who had just had a baby at Fort Leavenworth, stayed back and worked on a bomber assembly line.

There was a total mobilization. And when my grandfather came back, he came back to a GI Bill that was gonna pay for his college education and FHA loans that would help them-- purchase a home. There was that sense of sacred obligation that, frankly, we have lost-- during-- these last two

wars. I wanna restore that. But it's also important-- that a-- a President speaks to-- military service as an obligation not just of some but of many.

You know, I-- I travel obviously a lot over the last 19 months. And if you go to small towns-- throughout the Midwest or the Southwest-- or the South, every town has tons of young people who are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. That's not always the case-- in other parts of the country in more urban centers. And I think it's important for the President to say-- this is-- an important obligation. If we are going into war then all of us go, not just some.

RICHARD STENGEL:

Well, to that end, to get the best and brightest into the military, this university, your alma mater, invited President Ahmadinejad of Iran to be here last year. But they haven't invited ROTC to be on campus since 1969.

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Right.

RICHARD STENGEL:

Should Columbia and elite universities that have excluded ROTC invite them back on campus?

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Yes. I-- I think-- (APPLAUSE) we've made a mistake on that. I-- I-- I recognize that there are students here who have differences in terms of military policy. But the notion that-- young people here at Columbia or anywhere in any university-- aren't offered the choice, the option of participating in military service I think is a mistake.

That does not-- mean that we disregard any potential differences in-- you know, various issues that are raised by-- students here. But it does mean that-- that we should have an honest debate while still offering opportunities for everybody to serve. And that's something that I-- I'm pretty clear about.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

You're saying-- you were saying a moment ago that you think that there should be more young people--  
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SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Yeah.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

--serving in the military. We need a broader demographic cross-section. How do you do that short of a draft?

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well-- again, I think that inspiring young people to serve is something that the President is uniquely positioned to do. Now, it doesn't always have to be-- service in uniform. One of the things that if you talk to our generals, they are desperate for is a civilian-- counterpart to our military forces. Our military is the best in the world. But they are asked to do so many different things because our civilian operations, our State Department, USAID, have been underfunded, have been atrophied. And for us to

say, "Serve in the military, but if that's not where you want to serve, you know, learn a foreign language and-- and go into the Foreign Service." And, by the way, we will deploy you in some difficult areas. But that's part of what it means to be an American and to serve and to sacrifice.

We need agricultural specialists in places will Afghanistan. We need-- you know, civil engineers-- that can-- do some of the work that currently our military officers are doing. And so I-- I think a President who is consistently asking for young people to reach for something higher, something bigger than themselves I think will get an enormous response.

RICHARD STENGEL:

We have only a couple of minutes left in this segment. You mentioned last week on-- George Stephanopoulos's show that you'd actually considered signing up for the military yourself. And you seemed to imply that if there was a war

going on, you might have been more inclined. Is there-- is there anything more important about serving in the military during wartime than peacetime?

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well, there-- there's no doubt that if there are wars going on and some are being asked to sacrifice their lives then I think you have to ask yourself why them instead of you? And so I think there are special obligations-- during wartime. But, look, we need military-- we-- we always have potential conflicts around the world. And our military has to main-- remain strong and ready. And so I-- I wanna encourage military service as well as other ways of serving-- regardless of whether there's war or not.

But I do think that-- over the last several years, the fact that the burden has been shouldered by such a narrow group-- is a problem. And-- how we treat those young people, by the way, when they come home continues to be a

problem. One of my components in-- in terms of national service is having a veterans corps where we are mobilizing citizens to pair up and provide support to our veterans who are coming home, making sure they have the resources, making sure employers are reaching out to them, giving them opportunity-- to transition into civilian life much more effectively than they're getting right now.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Brief question (APPLAUSE) because I think we just have a minute. This is from an online question from Gina in Bloomfield, Michigan. She goes, "How possible would it be to get military style benefits to non-military citizens who do national service work full time?"

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well, I-- you know, I think it-- it depends on-- the kind of service that's being provided. As I said, if-- if we are building the kind of-- foreign service and-- that-- that is expeditionary, that is going into very difficult,

dangerous areas-- to carry out the civilian side of the work of helping a country like Afghanistan rebuild-- then we should think about what are the benefits of that service.

Oftentimes, those people are putting themselves in great harm. They are being deployed and-- are undergoing-- their families are undergoing similar sacrifices to the sacrifices that those who are serving in the military are. You know, I-- but I-- I do think that we have a special obligation for those who have put their lives at risk-- who are risking life and limb on behalf of the security of America.

That does not meant that we can't provide other avenues of service. For example, I've said we-- we desperately need teachers, math and science teachers in particular. And so for us to provide full scholarships for those who are willing to-- get their teaching certificate, get-- educated in these fields, and then be placed in some of the

most underserved communities-- in the country, that's something that we should be willing to pay for-- so that people who want to serve anyway at least can afford it.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

We'll be right back with our last segment.

(APPLAUSE)

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator Obama, this-- question of whether or not national service would be elevated a Cabinet-level position, among other things Senator McCain said that if it were that, he would ask you to be his (LAUGHTER) (UNINTEL) secretary. Would you ask him if you were elected President to run the national service--

(OVERTALK)

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well, I mean, if this-- if this is the deal he wants to make right now, I-- (LAUGHTER) I am committed to appoint him-- to be my Cabinet national service. But--

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Would you be willing to serve in his Cabinet?

(OVERTALK)

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

(LAUGHTER) I-- I-- we've got a little more to do before we get to that point. Senator McCain's-- service is legendary. And-- one of the wonderful things about this campaign I think is his ability to share that story-- and him-- himself inspire a-- a whole new generation of young people-- to model what he-- did for this country. And-- and so I think that-- one of the primary objectives of my presidency would be to lift up the opportunities for service in a bipartisan fashion so that we take it out of politics.

I-- just have briefly, I wanna give an example. There's a young man in Montana that I met named Matt Kuntz (PH), had been an infant-- infantry officer in the Army-- was injured-- was honorably discharged, got a law degree, and was working in corporate law. His half-brother served in the

National Guard in Iraq, came back with post traumatic stress disorder, was unable to get the counseling he needed, and ended up committing suicide.

And Matt, having watched this painful process and trying to intervene, decided to quit his corporate law job-- and decided that he was gonna take it upon himself to create a advocacy group in Montana just around post traumatic stress disorder for veterans. And now Montana has the best post traumatic-- stress disorder treatment programs-- for National Guardsmen.

And Matt has continued now in the not-for-prof-- profit sector. I make this point because I never asked Matt whether he was Democrat or Republican. I never asked Matt whether he was liberal or conservative. What I knew was that he had seen a wrong and was inspired to take action. And that kind of message I think is what has to be communicated each and every day by our President,

by our political culture. And that's one of the reasons I'm running for President. (APPLAUSE)

RICHARD STENGEL:

We-- (UNINTEL PHRASE) question about Governor Palin's belittling being a community organizer. Did the Democrats in return belittle being a small-town mayor? Was she-- she being unfair? Or was it hypocritical because Republicans actually say, "Hey-- what people do in their private life is more important than public service"?

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well, listen, we-- we've had an awful lot of small-town mayors at the Democratic-- Convention, I assure you. I-- I meet them all the time. And I have-- the mayors have some of the toughest jobs in the country because that's where the rubber hits the road. You know, we yak in the Senate. They actually have to fill potholes and-- trim trees and-- and-- make sure the garbage is-- is-- taken away. So-- I was surprised by-- the several remarks around community organizing

and-- and belittling it.

You know, when I think about the choice I made as a 23, 24 year old to spend three years working with churches to help people help themselves-- no insult to the president of this fine institution, but it was best education I ever had (LAUGHTER) because it taught me that ordinary people can do extraordinary things when they're given a chance and when they're brought together. And that's something I wanna encourage for every young person. I want every young person around this country to recognize they will not fulfill their full potential until they hitch their wagon to something bigger.

Now, that's not to say that we-- we need talent in the private sector. We want talent in the private sector. But there are so many ways of serving voluntarily. You don't have to take the same path I did. But that's something that-- that's a message that I think everyone should

wanna encourage. And I hope the Republicans--  
wanna encourage that as well.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator, picking up on this tone in-- in the  
political campaign-- so much is said that's  
critical about people who are in Washington, the  
way Washington works, bureaucrats in Washington.  
How much responsibility do you think you and  
other presidential candidates-- this year there  
are just the-- the two of you major candidates  
have to-- to change the rhetoric so that-- so  
that people who work in government, work in  
public service are respected?

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well, I-- I think you make an important point.  
Look-- Washington is broken. My whole campaign  
has been premised from the start on the idea that  
we have to--

(OVERTALK)

OPERATOR:

Has left the conference.

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

--that the domination of special interests, the domination of lobbyists-- the loss of a civic culture in Washington among public servants-- has led to not only well-known disasters like the mismanagement of-- of the Katrina situation-- but quiet disasters where you've got entire agencies that have been hollowed out. And you've got political-- appointees who aren't concerned with the mission of those organizations.

So we've got to transform Washington. And we've gotta do some housecleaning. But what we also want to do is to remind young people that if it weren't for government then we wouldn't have a-- a Civil Rights Act. If it weren't for government, we would not have-- the interstate highway system. If it weren't for government-- we would not have some of our parks and-- natural-- wilderness areas that are so precious to America. And so part of my job I think as President is to make government cool again-- and

to say-- (APPLAUSE) to-- to say to young people even as we're transforming Washington, come up. We want you. We want you to get involved at every level.

And by the way, you don't even have to join government. Part of what we're gonna do is create transparency and accountability in how government works so that you can be an active citizen holding your public servants and elected officials accountable. That's one other aspect of citizenship is paying attention to what's taking place. And part of what I-- I've been thrilled about during the course of this campaign is how energized people have been-- how interested people are.

I mean, the-- the-- the viewership both for the Democratic and Republican Convention broke all records. You know, we have seen the kinds of volunteerism in our own campaign which, by the way, we're channeling not just to work on our

campaign. We've had-- had-- thousands hours of community service by our volunteers not organized by us but organized by themselves. And that's the kind of opportunity that I think we have to tap into.

RICHARD STENGEL:

Now, you mentioned civic participation is at an all-time high. Basically there's-- you mentioned voluntary associations before. Back in the 19th century the famous French-- the scholar--

(OVERTALK)

RICHARD STENGEL:

--Tocqueville came here and said, "You know, America's voluntary associations make it unique and special." Is volunteerism, is national service part of American exceptionalism? Is it part of what makes America special?

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Yes. We have always balanced the tradition of individual responsibility and self-reliance with notions of community and love for country in part because of voluntary associations. What it's

done is it's allowed people to-- to exercise the freedom to determine the direction of their communities but still recognizing that we are part of a common project-- of creating a better life for the next generation.

And that's something that's been lost. But what we're seeing in this campaign is it's something that people want to restore. And it requires responsibilities. I mean, part of what is interesting about our campaign, for example, is that-- when young people come in, we work them like dogs. I mean, and they are given big responsibilities. One of the striking things when you visit our troops in Iraq or Afghanistan, you've got 22, 23 year olds-- platoon leaders who are taking on life and death responsibilities and decision making.

We sell too many of our citizens short. They want to be involved. But we've gotta start early. We've got-- and that's part of the reason

why I wanna make sure that we've got opportunities in high school. We've got opportunities in college. That we help schools create a civic education system that in-- involves community service so that-- these values are transmitted to the next generation.

And I think parents would be thrilled to have their kids turn off the videogame and get out there and do something. And you know what? It turns out the kids would-- appreciate it as well.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Is there a-- a President or an administration that would be a model for you? I mean, everybody talks about what John Kennedy asked the country to do. But-- John Kennedy or any other President--

(OVERTALK)

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well, look, I-- I-- I think what-- what Kennedy did at a time of-- of enormous change as to look out into the horizon and say this is where

America needs to go, not just to the moon but all sorts of new frontiers. And-- then he created structures like the Peace Corps to channel the idealism that he tapped. I think Bill Clinton in setting up AmeriCorps, again, put up-- created structures but tapped into idealism that was already there. I think it is right below the service. And so my role--

RICHARD STENGEL:

Any Repub-- any Republican President come to mind?

SEN. BARACK OBAMA:

Well, Teddy Roosevelt I think was an activist President who understood the-- how we mobilize our-- our citizens means that we hold our institutions accountable, public and private. And-- and that's why, you know, one of the premises of our campaign from the start has been that-- change happens from the bottom up. It doesn't happen from the top down.

It happens because the American people look up

and they say, "We imagine a world not as it is but as it should be. And are willing to roll up our sleeves and put in the hard work to change this country block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, state by state." And-- and that I think is the-- the kind of President I would like to be, is-- is one that inspires more-- of that feeling and provides the avenues to express it.

JUDY WOODRUFF:

Senator Barack Obama, thank you very much for joining us for this (UNINTEL PHRASE). (APPLAUSE)  
Thank you (UNINTEL).

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