

Introduction: The Presidential debates are exercises designed to allow your campaign team the opportunity to strengthen your skills in the areas of leadership, team building, group problem solving, and presentation. The debates give your campaign team the opportunity to present your ideas to your voters and opposition. The debates will consist of the Secretary, President and Vice President. Each member should be well informed and able to answer each of the questions presented.

Guidelines for the Economy Debate

30 second opening statement from each Secretary of the Treasury

Question posed by Mr. Patten or Ms. Dennis

1-2 minute response from each of the Secretaries

2 minute crossfire between the Secretaries

This format will continue until the end of the debate. The Secretary, President and Vice President may take turns answering questions.

OPENING STATEMENT: By the end of 2018 the United States is predicted to be over \$20 trillion dollars in debt. Every year our country's debt grows more and more and we need to do something about it. We suggest that our country should make small changes now within our budgets in order to gradually decrease our debt. These small changes won't show progress until a few years after, but we feel this is the best way to solve this so that we are not disrupting our economy and the world economy. By making these small budget cuts now we can save million and billions of dollars that can be put towards getting our country out of debt.

1. The U.S. debt is currently over \$21 trillion dollars. It has increased over \$1 trillion dollars a year since 2007. In order to decrease our debt, we must cut from our discretionary spending. How much money is your administration going to cut from our discretionary spending if elected? How will this benefit the United States? Are there consequences to your decision? **In order to decrease our debt, we must cut from our discretionary spending. If we are elected, our administration plans to cut at least \$25 billion from our discretionary spending budget. These budget cuts will benefit the United States in a numerous amount of ways. We will be on the path to resolve our debt. Also with this money, we will create new programs that will aid our education systems and our people. To make sure we are on the right path to resolving our debt, we have decided to raise our taxes, but not by much. In New York, the income tax is 6.68% as of 2017. We plan to bring this to an even 7%. But, it wouldn't be on each item, it would be on the total.**

2. What programs do you believe are necessary to cut or decrease spending for in order to decrease our debt? Explain why cutting from these programs is necessary.

It is necessary for some of the programs in our government to decrease their spending in order to decrease our debt. For example, our administration decided to cut some of the budget for HIV research and put that money into our cancer research. We did this because we believed that cancer research is more of a problem than HIV today. We have also settled that we were going to cut \$1 billion from the total International Affairs budget and \$5 billion from the Community and Regional Development budgets. The money that is being spent in these programs could be put towards resolving our debt. To go further, we are going to decrease the border and transportation security by \$3 billion. Our Canadian borders are not as much as a threat to our nation like the Mexican border is. Former President Barack Obama and current President Donald Trump both stated that they wanted to cut the Impact Aid Support Payments for Federal Property, who has a budget of \$67 million. This program reimburses schools for lost tax revenues from tax-exempt federal properties in their districts. Many programs in our government are duplicates of bigger programs. These programs include the Minority Business Development Agency who has a budget of \$32 million and the Office of Education who has a budget of \$115 million. Also, many of our programs are dedicated into research programs and grants. We have decided it would be the best decision to decrease their budget because if we solve our debt problem, we can focus more on new technology. The money that we cut from these programs could be spent towards things that are a necessity to our country at this time. We need this money to resolve our nation's debt.

3. In 2001, our National Defense Budget was \$280 billion dollars. After the attacks on September 11th, we have seen our defense budget continue to grow. Our National Defense budget is currently over \$623 billion dollars. Do you plan to

increase, decrease or maintain this budget? Make sure to explain your reasoning.

We have decided that it is in our country's best interest to maintain the National Defense budget because in recent years there have been more terror attacks, not as drastic as 9/11, but still pretty damaging to our country. Our national defense budget is the highest out of all of the discretionary spending topics because safety is our government's number one priority. Not only with this budget are we protecting our people, but we are creating jobs. The Department of Defense is the nation's largest employer with over 1.4 million men and women on active duty, 718,000 civilian personnel, and another 1.1 million who serve in the National Guard and Reserve forces. If we were to cut the budget of the National Defense we wouldn't only be putting our safety in jeopardy, but peoples jobs and paychecks. A part of this budget also goes towards health insurance and life insurance for military personnel. Additionally there are benefits given to those deployed in the military, as well as their family back home. This money the families receive help pay for housing and other bills. It would be a bad idea to cut from this budget because husbands, wives, and significant others back home rely on this check to provide for their family, since mostly likely they spend their days at home with taking care of their kids. These are just some of the reasons why we have decided to keep the budget of the National Defense the same because it does a lot more than just keep our country safe, it helps the people who are out there in the world fighting for our country as well.

4. Social Security provides benefits to over 47 million retired Americans and their families. There is concern that overtime as more and more collect, the reserve will run out. Do you believe that the age to collect Social Security should be raised from 65? Explain your answer.

We do believe that the age to collect Social Security should be raised from 65 because right now many of the people who were born during the baby boom are already 65 or are close to turning 65. The first year of baby boomers turned 65 around 2011 and the youngest baby boomers will most likely turn 65 this year. With an increase in the amount of people collecting social security due to the baby boom and the fact that our life expectancy is getting higher and higher there will be an insane amount of people collecting social security all at once in the next coming years. Social Security was founded in August of 1935 when the life expectancy was 61 years old. Nowadays the life expectancy is between 79-81 years old which is about 20 more years than back when social security was invented. With the amount of people collecting social security and the life expectancy increasing as well the reserve for this program will run out of money. It is especially unfair because the people whose money is being collected and given out to the elderly right now won't be able to collect at 65 because there will not be enough money to suffice. In addition, majority of people plan to retire around 65 because they think they will have saved enough money and are going to start receiving social security benefits, but this is not the case. Right now more and more people in the United States are retiring at around the age of 70 because they do not have enough fund to live a stable life. The cost of living is extremely high in some places especially in New York and California. I would like to quote USA Today in order to further my point. "Almost a quarter of Americans believe they won't be able to retire until age 70 or older. Worse yet, 5% are convinced they'll never be able to retire at all. Even workers who plan to retire at 65 aren't so sure of themselves. Those surveyed admit that, while they'd like to retire at 65, they think there's a 50% chance they'll wind up working until 70. So why all the negativity? A lot has to do with insufficient savings. With Social Security only designed to replace about 40% of the average American's pre-retirement income, most of us have to save independently to ensure a reasonably comfortable retirement" (USA Today). It would be best for us to increase the age to collect Social Security to around closer 70 because more people are going to retire around that age anyway. This are the reasons why we feel that the age to collect social security should be raised.

5. Medicare provides benefits to over 55 million retired Americans and their families. There is concern that this mandatory spending is continuing to prevent us from decreasing our debt. Do you believe that the age to receive Medicare should be raised from 65 in order to save the U.S. money? Explain your answer.

We believe the age of Medicare should be raised. The current age is 65 years old, but we believe this should be raised to around 70. Many people make their retirement plans based on their medicare eligibility age. By increasing the age this would help the labor markets because it would encourage our people to work more. By encouraging people to work longer it would help us accelerate economic growth, increase revenue collection, and improve overall retirement security. Some people can't afford to retire as early as they want to because the cost of living is so high and if we increase the age it will give them more time to plan and save for their retirement. The Social Security full retirement age or FRA has already been increased from 65 to 66 and is scheduled to rise further in the coming decade. People born in 1960 will be turning 67 in 2027. Implementing this option would reduce federal budget deficits between 2020 and 2026 by \$18 billion. This would help our economy greatly and it will help soon to be retirees as well.

6. The 1961 Foreign Assistance Act is defined as "the unilateral transfers of U.S. resources by the U.S. Government to or for the benefit of foreign entities." These resources include not just goods and funding, but also technical assistance, educational programming, humanitarian aid, military aid and services and other health services. More than 200 countries receive foreign aid, but most goes disproportionately to a few such as Afghanistan. Our foreign aid rose dramatically after September 11th and is projected to be approximately 53.3 billion dollars. Does your administration plan to cut from foreign aid? Explain how much and why or why not.

We plan to cut foreign aid by 1 billion. We decided to do this because it will help with the deficit we are facing right now. The US currently gives the most aid to the Middle East region of the world. For fiscal year 2017, President Obama requested \$3.1 billion for Israel and \$1.6 billion for Egypt. He also requested \$2.2 billion for Afghanistan and \$1.2 billion to Pakistan. We are one of the largest donors when it comes to foreign aid. We feel that if we cut this from the budget, it will help save money so we can put it toward the debt that we are in.

7. The most revenue generated by the United States comes from collecting Income Taxes from our citizens. The U.S. follows a Progressive Tax System in which the tax rate increases as the amount taxable increases. Do you believe it will be necessary to raise taxes on our citizens in order to help alleviate our nation's staggering debt? Explain.

We believe that taxes should be raised but only for the wealthy. If we were to increase the taxes on the lower class, it would hurt them tremendously. They don't have a lot of money to begin with and could potentially be struggling already, even without doing anything with the taxes. The middle class should keep paying taxes as they do regularly. The upper class on the other hand has more money than they know what to do with. If we were to increase taxes it should be on the upper class this way they wouldn't be in debt and neither would the middle and lower class. We feel that this is a very fair compromise.

8. Over \$2.1 trillion dollars of our debt can be credited to the War on Terror that began after the September 11th attacks. The U.S. is projected to spend another \$45 billion dollars in Afghanistan in 2018. Would your administration decrease this amount if elected? Does your decision pose a threat to our national security? Explain.

Our administration believes that we should decrease the amount of money since we are already in debt. \$45 billion is a lot of money and we can use those expenses elsewhere. Although our protection is super important, the amount can be decreased by \$10 billion. Since we are \$18.96 trillion in debt, the \$10 billion that we took from war expenses could potentially ease our debt. If we use the \$10 billion to pay off our debt, we could be in better shape. Although we still have a long way to go, it will help us in a big way. I truly believe that our decision does not pose as a threat to national security because we are not taking that much away from the \$45 billion. We will still be able to afford the protection that is needed to keep our citizens safe.

PROGRAMS THAT TRUMP WANTS TO ELIMINATE

1. Minority Business Development Agency (\$32 million) - The White House states that this program is “duplicative” of other programs in the Small Business Administration
2. 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (\$1.2 billion) - grants to states to support before and after school programs and summer programs : lacks strong evidence of meeting its objectives, such as improving students achievements
3. Impact Aid Support Payments for Federal Property (\$67 million) - Obama also proposed the elimination of this program : reimburses schools for lost tax revenues from tax-exempt federal properties in their districts
4. International Education programs (\$7 million) - funds exchange programs, migrant schools, and special education services abroad
5. Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (\$382 million) - alternative energy research program
6. Health professions and nursing training programs (\$403 million) - Trump wants to provide scholarships and student loans in exchange for service in areas with a nursing shortage
7. Abandoned Mine Land grants (\$160 million) - discretionary grant : overlaps with a \$2.7 billion permanent fund
8. State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (\$210 million) - reimburses states for the cost of incarcerating criminal immigrants
9. Senior Community Service Employment Program (\$434 million) - job training programs for low income people 55 and older
10. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (\$11 million) - training grants

11. Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund (\$70 million) - provide humanitarian assistance for unexpected and urgent refugee and migration needs worldwide : Trump states that the mission is best left to international and non-government relief organizations
12. The East-West Center (\$16 million)
13. Essential Air Service (\$175 million)
14. Office of Education (\$115 million) - the Trump budget states that this program duplicates efforts by the agency's Science Mission Directorate
15. Corporation for Public Broadcasting (\$485 million)
16. Inter-American Foundation (\$23 million)
17. National Endowment for the Arts (\$152 million) - Encourages participation in the arts
18. U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (\$4 million)