

# [***Fox News Democracy 2024: Iowa Town Hall With Nikki Haley***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B2G-HD71-F072-X0KV-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

QUESTION: What is your closing pitch for Iowa voters?

FORMER GOV. NIKKI HALEY (R-SC), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: The country is in disarray. We see it with crime on our streets or a border that's irresponsible, reckless, and dangerous. We see it with our world on fire.

For the first time, 81 percent of Americans don't think their kids are going to live as good of a life as we had. We can't be OK with that.

We have one job as parents, and that's to do right by our kids. Every child deserves a good education, regardless of where they're born and raised. We feel it with our mortgage payments, with our insurance payments. Everything that we have to pay has all gone up.

I analyze the threats, and the stronger the threat, the higher the heel. I'm a problem-solver, but, more than that, I love America. No one's going to outwork me in this race. No one's going to outsmart me in this race. We do have a country to save, but I will promise you this. If you join with me in this movement, if you join with me in this fight, I promise you our best days are yet to come.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MARTHA MACCALLUM, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: Welcome to Des Moines, Iowa, everybody. Good evening from the Iowa Events Center.

Tonight, the first of three special town halls this week. We are now just days before the first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses featuring Republicans who want to be president of the United States.

Great to have you all with us. I'm Martha MacCallum.

BRET BAIER, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: And I'm Bret Baier. Welcome.

This evening's session is with former South Carolina Governor, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley.

Governor, welcome.

First, we're going to talk about who is coming up next, and we will get some headlines. Talk in a minute.

MACCALLUM: Yes, like we said, it's a big week.

We have -- tomorrow night, we're going to talk to Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. Wednesday night, we will have former President Trump with us.

BAIER: We have invited Iowa Republican voters from across the spectrum to attend tonight's event.

MACCALLUM: We should note that none of the campaigns have input on who is in this room tonight, who was invited, or on the questions that we will ask.

BAIER: As mentioned, first, a look at some of the other "Special Report" headlines we are following tonight.

President Biden appearing at a rare campaign event today, he spoke to black voters at a church in Charleston, South Carolina, the president indirectly referring to the controversy over Governor Haley's failure to specify slavery as a cause for the Civil War, talked about that today.

MACCALLUM: And the White House is dealing with a growing controversy over the absence of Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin. It says Austin's job is safe. The White House did say that today, and they are reviewing the rules and procedures regarding his failure to disclose that he is in the hospital and has been for days.

We still do not know why White House officials were not notified, were not aware of this until three days after Austin was admitted to the intensive care unit at Walter Reed Medical Center.

BAIER: And Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas admits today the current release rate of illegal immigrants apprehended crossing the border is above 85 percent. He told me the other day it was 70 percent. Above 85 percent.

It came during a private meeting with Border Patrol agents in Eagle Pass, Texas.

MACCALLUM: Secretary of State Antony Blinken back in the Middle East, as the war between Israel and Hamas rages on. He met today with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Also tonight, an Israeli airstrike has killed an elite Hezbollah commander inside Southern Lebanon.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Let me be clear, for those who don't seem to know. Slavery was the cause of the Civil War.

(APPLAUSE)

BIDEN: There is no negotiation about that.

Now -- now we're living in an era of a second lost cause. Once again, there are some in this country trying, trying to turn a loss into a lie, a lie which, if allowed to live, will once again bring terrible damage to this country.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: President Biden in Charleston, South Carolina.

Governor Haley, welcome.

HALEY: Thank you.

BAIER: Clearly, we want to start there.

The first part of that sound bite was pretty much aimed at you and your answer in that New Hampshire town hall about the cause of the Civil War. You have since explained that slavery was the cause.

But what's your reaction to the president going to the Mother Emanuel AME Church, a church in Charleston you often talk about, and he said -- to go after you and what he called MAGA Republicans led by a defeated president?

HALEY: I mean, first of all, Mother Emanuel Church is a sacred place. I mean, we had -- we lost nine amazing souls that night for just going to a Bible study. And I will tell everybody, those amazing people, all 12 of them, when someone else showed up that didn't look like them or act like them or sound like them, they didn't call the cops. They didn't throw him out. Instead, they pulled up a chair and prayed with him for an hour.

And when they bowed their heads in that last prayer, he began to shoot. These were people like Ethel Lance, who had just lost her daughter two years prior to breast cancer. But she would go around Mother Emanuel Church singing "One day at a time, sweet Jesus, that's all I ask of you, give me the strength to do every day what I have to do."

Tywanza Sanders, our youngest victim, had just graduated college. And on that night he stood in front of his 87-year-old great aunt Susie and looked at the killer and said, you don't have to do this, we mean no harm to you.

Or it was someone like Cynthia Hurd, whose life motto was simply to be kinder than necessary. That's who these people were. For Biden to show up there and give a political speech is offensive in itself.

But the second thing I'll say is, I don't need someone who palled around with segregationists in the '70s and has said racist comments all the way through his career lecturing me or anyone in South Carolina about what it means to have racism, slavery, or anything related to the Civil War.

(APPLAUSE)

MACCALLUM: So with regard to this other story that we mentioned in the headlines, Governor, this mysterious situation around the secretary of defense, Lloyd Austin, who, for several days, the White House didn't appear to know that he was in intensive care. We just learned moments ago that they are saying they don't know when he is going to be released from the hospital, which makes this mystery a little bit deeper.

Do you believe -- the former president, Donald Trump, said today he thinks that Austin should be fired over this. Do you agree?

HALEY: I think Biden should be fired. This is unbelievable that we have a situation like this. When I had a crisis in South Carolina, if we were dealing with anything and I had to deal with my adjutant general, I was on the phone with him every day twice a day. We have war in Europe. We have a war in the Middle East. North Korea tested an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of hitting the United States. China is on the march.

First, I have a problem with the fact that Biden is not talking to his secretary of defense every single day anyway. Secondly, is there not enough connection that he didn't even know he was put in the hospital in intensive care at that? And then to go and say, oh, but his deputy secretary knew what was going on but she is vacationing in Puerto Rico? There are so many things wrong with this.

But the biggest one that bothers me, when I was at the U.N., we knew the intel. We knew the health of everybody in every country. They know what's happening to Secretary Austin. What bothers me is while our adversaries may know, our own president doesn't know. And these things continue to happen and it's why I say the one thing that keeps me up at night is what happens between now and Election Day. Because Biden is making America very vulnerable and putting us at risk.

MACCALLUM: So on that issue of national security, we're going to hear from our first questioner tonight. Jennifer (ph) is a stay-at-home mom from West Des Moines. She has indicated that she's currently been looking at all the candidates. She is leaning toward Vivek Ramaswamy and caucusing for him, but she is here tonight with a question for you, Governor Haley.

Jennifer (ph), take it away.

HALEY: Hi, Jennifer (ph).

UNIDENTIFIED: Hi there, good evening. I am concerned about your national security policies. Please explain to us how you will put the United States first and, additionally, I'm wondering how you can continue to send money to Ukraine where they're really not accounting for how they're spending all of our billions of dollars.

HALEY: That's a great question. And, you know, for anybody that questions why we should care about Ukraine, that's a legitimate question for you to ask. The problem is no one is giving you the answer. And I blame Biden for all of that. He should always tell Americans why we're doing what we're doing.

The reason we care about Ukraine, and I'll be the first one to say, I don't think we should give any country, friend or foe, cash, because you can't follow it and you can't hold it accountable. I don't think we need to put troops on the ground in Ukraine and Ukraine doesn't want them because they want to be able to win it themselves.

But what I saw at the United Nations, terrorists, thugs, and dictators always tell us what they're going to do. They're amazingly transparent. Hamas said they were going to go into Israel. They did. China said they were going to take Hong Kong. It happened. Russia said they were going to invade Ukraine. We watched it. China said Taiwan is next. We'd better believe it.

Russia said once they take Ukraine, Poland and the Baltics are next. Those are NATO countries. That puts America at war. This is about preventing war. It's always been about preventing war.

My husband is a combat veteran. He's deployed now. The last thing I want him or any of his military brothers and sisters to do is to go to war. But to avoid going to war, you have to prevent it. And just to support Ukraine, it only costs 3.5% of our defense budget. That's it. The Europeans have paid more, and they should. It's in their neighborhood.

But this is about preventing war. And we have to make sure that we do everything we can to keep Americans safe and to keep our national security safe.

MACCALLUM: But as a percentage of GDP, we're the largest supporter of the war in Ukraine. And what we're seeing in terms of polling on this is that it's declined 9 points over the course of the last year, in your party, of people who say that we should continue to, that they favor continuing funding the Ukraine military. Are you concerned that since Trump and DeSantis, and Ramaswamy are on the other side of this, that they are more concerned about security at home than abroad that you might be on the wrong side of this issue in your party?

HALEY: No, because polling isn't what guides me. That shows that Biden should be communicating more why this happens. If people knew this prevented war, they would absolutely want to do this. I mean, what we know now is there's a reason the Taiwanese want the West and US to help the Ukrainians, because they know if Ukraine wins, China won't invade Taiwan. We need to remember that.

Before Russia invaded Ukraine, China and Russia held hands and named themselves unlimited partners. We need to know what that means. A win for Russia is a win for China. This is about preventing war. I will never do things based on a poll. What I will do is over communicate to every American so they know why things matter., why are we doing what we're doing.

And the fact that we don't go out there and just help countries for the sake of it, we do it when we know it keeps Americans safe and we do it when we know it protects -- it prevents war. I think that DeSantis is wrong for calling this a territorial dispute. I think that Trump has copped out because he used to get it right and now he's turning around and he's getting it wrong, wanting to be an isolationist.

We need to remember that America always needs friends. We needed a lot of friends on September 12th. But you got to be a friend to get a friend.

BAIER: All right. Governor, Jenny is -- thank you, an artist from Urbandale. Where are you, Jenny? This says, Jenny, that you're still undecided who you'll caucus for just six days to go. Is that right?

JENNY, REPUBLICAN VOTER: Yes, that's right.

BAIER: OK. You're leaning towards somebody.

JENNY: No.

BAIER: Really undecided?

JENNY: Really undecided.

BAIER: OK. So what's your question for Governor Haley?

HALEY: Hi, Jenny.

JENNY: Hi. Thanks for taking my question.

HALEY: Sure.

JENNY: I watch the news a lot every day, and I watch how many people are pouring over the border. And I keep wondering, how are we, as the United States, supposed to provide housing, medical care, food, education for all of these people? And then if we deport them, how do we pay for that as well?

HALEY: We're not supposed to. And your question is exactly what I think every American is worried about. And it's not just the southern border, it's the northern border too. You look at the fact that we have had 8 million illegal immigrants come to that border. Biden sent back only 142,000 last year. That's it. We've had more fentanyl cross the border that would kill every single American. Number one cause of death for adults 18 to 45, fentanyl.

And don't think for a second China doesn't know what they're doing when they send it over. If we want to deal with this, we have to deal with it once and for all. No more excuses. And that means more than just building a wall. We need to do more than that.

When I was governor, I passed one of the toughest illegal immigration laws in the country. Obama sued me over it. We need to carry that nationwide. We'll do a national e-verify program where businesses have to prove that the people they hire are in this country legally. We'll put 25,000 border patrol and ICE agents on the ground and let them do their job. They're not letting them do their job right now. We will defund sanctuary cities once and for all, so that there are no safe havens for any illegal immigrants.

We will go back to the Remain of Mexico policy so they never step foot on US soil to start with. And instead of catch and release, we'll go to catch and deport. And for all of those that have come over, as cruel as it sounds, you got to send them back.

We have to send them back because if we don't send them back, it is an incentive for others to come. And Biden gave half a million Venezuelans temporary protective status. That's half a million Social Security numbers, that's half a million driver's licenses. I saw at the UN what that does. They pick up the phone and they call their family members and tell them to come on.

Not only that, they're cutting the line of those people who were trying to do it the right way. We are a country of laws.

The second we stop being a country of laws, we give up everything this country was founded on.

We need to secure the border. We need to build the wall. We need to deport anybody that doesn't come here the right way, and we need to start thinking of, again, national security.

America right now is acting like it's September 10th. We better remember what September 12th felt like because it only takes one person.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Governor, former President Trump's campaign is out with an ad today that says that you are too weak and too liberal to deal with the immigration issue on the border. It says that you refuse to call illegal immigrants criminals and was opposed to Trump's border wall.

What's your response to that?

HALEY: My response is, why did Obama sue me for passing one of the toughest illegal immigration laws in the country?

Look, just because President Trump says something doesn't make it true. Every -- first of all, I appreciate all the --

(APPLAUSE)

I appreciate all the attention President Trump is giving me. It is quite sweet and thoughtful of him. But he's lying about it.

And I'll tell you the reason he's lying about it is because he's taking snippets of things I said. I said you shouldn't just do the border wall. You have to do more than that. That's what I said.

From the second I was governor of South Carolina, we fought against illegal immigration. We fought against the Syrian refugees. We fought against Guantanamo Bay prisoners coming. We fought every single second because we cannot have people who have not come here the right way.

My parents came here the right way. We are blessed to take care of my parents. They are 78 and 90. And whenever I have dinner with my mom, she still says, are those people still crossing the border?

They are offended by what's happening. And my mom would always say if they don't follow the laws to come to this country, they won't follow the laws when they get to this country.

(APPLAUSE)

MACCALLUM: So, you're also getting heat for not being conservative enough or a true conservative from DeSantis. He has a new ad out saying that Hillary Clinton was your inspiration. And he plays a number of videos where you say, yes, you know, we differed on certain issues, but she inspired me to get into ***politics***. I saw her speak at The Leadership Institute. I walked out the door and I made my decision to get into ***politics***.

You're shaking your head.

HALEY: No. Because I mean, look, DeSantis is desperate. He's lying because he's losing.

But let's go -- the problem is if you have to lie to win, you don't deserve to win.

I never said Hillary Clinton was an inspiration. What I said when I was talking to a group of women, who were looking at running for office, I said the same thing about her that I said about Sarah Palin. And that is when I was looking to run, everybody told me why I couldn't do it.

They said you're too young. They said you have small children. Oh, you should start at the school board level.

And I went to a women's leadership forum at Furman University and one of the speakers happened to be Hillary Clinton. And I have never agreed with a single thing Hillary Clinton has ever said and I said that, too. But Ron forgot to put that in the ad.

But what I'll tell you is, she ended it by saying, for every reason they tell you not to run, that's exactly the reason you should. And I left there and said that's it. I'm running for office. I had never been politically active. I had never been involved in ***politics***.

So, they can twist and turn this all they want, but it's because they see what we see, we're surging in the polls -- not just in Iowa, not just in New Hampshire, not just in South Carolina.

But I'll say that's the problem with politicians. Rather than talking about what they can do, they just want to talk up and make things up that I -- that they are saying that I said.

I'm happy to dispute it every day of the week. But at the end of the day, I'd rather be talking about inflation and our economy and education, and how we have to go back to the basics and get our kids reading again. About a border that's out of control. About the fact that we need law and order back in this country and that we need a strong America that we can be proud of again. And that's what I'm going to stay focused on.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Governor, we have a lot more questions on those very topics. When we come back, we will talk about a lot of those topics with Governor Haley coming up. And, also, deal with the frontrunner in this race, former President Donald Trump.

(APPLAUSE)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'm sick of the division in the country on both sides. I think both parties have failed the country. But I'm hoping that Nikki Haley can be that fresh voice to bring our party and the country together.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BAIER: Welcome back to our town hall with Republican presidential candidate, Former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley.

MACCALLUM: So, we are going to go straight to our next questioner. Dan is a small business owner. He voted for Trump in 2020, but he says he is considering Haley this time around and he's open to all of the candidates.

So, Governor, here's your opportunity to convince Dan. Dan, what's your question tonight?

HALEY: Hi, Dan.

DAN: Hi, Governor Haley. My question is, inflation is soaring and multiple states are implementing higher minimum wages, which will only exacerbate cost of goods and job growth even more. What can you realistically do as president to combat this or is there no going back?

HALEY: There's going back. They just may not like the going back and what that looks like. I mean, first of all, you look, and as much as I would love to say Biden did this to us, our Republicans did this to us too.

I mean, you look back at that $2.2 trillion COVID stimulus bill that they passed with no accountability. We now have 80 million Americans on Medicaid, 42 million Americans on food stamps. That's a third of our country. And did Republicans try and make it right? No. They opened up earmarks and pet projects for the first time in 10 years, pushing through 7,000 of them last December.

Want to know how they spent your money? Thirty million dollars on an honors college in Vermont, $10 million to tear down a hotel in Alaska, $7.5 million on a courthouse in Colorado, and the list goes on. In the 2024 appropriations budget, Republicans put in $7.4 billion worth of pet projects and earmarks. Democrats put in $2.8 billion.

So now you tell me who the big spenders are, all while one in six American families can't pay their utility bill, 60 percent of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck, 50 percent of American families can't afford diapers? Social Security will go bankrupt in 10 years. Medicare will go bankrupt in eight.

So what we have to do is realize there are no saints in Washington that got us into this. Stimuluses never work. Debt never works. Everybody talks about how great the economy was under Trump, but at what cost? He put us $8 trillion in debt in just four years. Our kids will never forgive us for that. That's not how you improve an economy.

What we will do is, we will stop the spending, we will stop the borrowing, we will eliminate the earmarks, and I will veto any spending bill that doesn't take us back to pre-COVID levels. We will go and take as many federal programs as we can and send them down to the state level. That will reduce the size of the federal government, but it will empower people on the ground.

And then we will focus on the middle class. Right now, the middle class, we're watching the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. We're going to go and eliminate the gas and diesel tax in this country. And then we're going to make sure we cut taxes on the middle class and simplify those brackets.

And, finally, we're going to make the small business tax cuts permanent. They made them temporary. They made the corporate tax cuts permanent. I grew up in a small business. Small businesses are the heartbeat of our economy. But we can't just say it. We have to prove it.

So when we start to focus on the spending that's happening -- and I will do it in every one of our agencies is make sure we take them back to what their core mission is, get all these old programs down, get all this federal regulation down, get all this extra bureaucracy down. That's how we will start to get our financial situation back on track.

And that's why I think we need an accountant in the White House.

BAIER: Well, Michelle (ph)...

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: ... is of the same mind-set as far as her job. She's a financial adviser. She's from West Des Moines.

It says here that you're undecided.

Michelle, is that true?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yes, I'm going to make my final decision after tomorrow night's town hall.

BAIER: OK, you have a question for the governor.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Hi, Michelle.

HALEY: Hi.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Nice to see you again.

And you have already led into some of this, but most Americans are counting on Social Security benefits during their retirement years. But, as you highlighted, current projections show that Social Security, as we know it today, is no longer sustainable.

What changes, should you become president, would you make so Americans can be confident in the future that Social Security -- Social Security will be there for them?

HALEY: First acknowledge what I just said, that it's going to go bankrupt in 10 years. Medicare will go bankrupt in eight.

Every one of my opponents, every single one has said they're not going to touch Social Security and Medicare. Do you know what that means? That means they're actually going to go and become president and serve four or eight years and leave it bankrupt. That's irresponsible.

What I will tell you is, we have got an issue. We need to fix it. And the way we fix it is, no one has to worry that you're going to lose what you paid in or what you gave. America should always keep her promises and we have to live by that.

But what we will do is make changes to those like my kids in their 20s, those coming into the system. We will change their retirement age to reflect life expectancy. We will change -- rather than doing cost-of-living increases, we will do increases based on inflation.

We will limit the benefits on the wealthy, and we will expand Medicare Advantage plans that seniors love that create competition. Once we do that, we will know exactly what we're dealing with. We're not going to put our head in the sand. If anything, we're going to get in front of the issue and fix it, so that you never have to worry about not having it.

But, also, let's fix it so that our kids can have it too. Right now, they know they're not going to have it. Let's make the changes to be responsible. That's how you deal with it. You don't just do what's politically popular by saying, I'm not going to touch any of those things. That's irresponsible.

We do have to do it. But we don't have to hurt people to do it. We just have to get in front of people to get it done.

BAIER: So, Governor, Governor DeSantis is hitting you for claiming the retirement age is -- quote -- "way, way too low."

He said -- quote -- "I don't know why she's saying that."

So, are you saying that? Where do you stand?

HALEY: I have never once said that. I have...

BAIER: Well, wait. Wait, wait, wait.

In Bloomberg interview, you said: "Anyone who says they will leave America bankrupt, Social Security will go bankrupt. Medicare will. So, we don't touch anyone's retirement. But go to people like my kids in their 20s and tell them the rules haven't changed. Change the retirement age to reflect life expectancy.

HALEY: Yes, for those in their 20s. But I have never said retirement age is way too low for everyone else. I mean, he's totally misrepresenting the facts. That's what he has done. Ron continues to lie because he's losing. But the reality is, that is what I have always said, is America should keep her promises, every time.

But rather than saying you're not going to touch it, like Ron says, we have to touch it. But we have to also be honest and over-communicate with those in their 20s that this is what we're going to do. But if we do this, we'll make sure you have something to go forward with.

And it's also letting seniors and those in their 40s and 50s know, don't worry, we're not looking to touch yours. We're looking to actually save it so that you have something when your time comes.

BAIER: OK. Take a listen to this, the former president.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP (R), FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT, 2024 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: Nikki would sell you out just like she sold me out. I mean, I'll never run against him, he was a great president, why would I run? Ladies and gentlemen, I've decided to run.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: What do you say to the former president about he says you betrayed him, that you sold him out, because you promised him you would never run against him?

HALEY: I will tell you when I said that I would never run against him, we hadn't had the debacle in Afghanistan. We hadn't had inflation go through the roof. And we didn't lose the midterms by ridiculous numbers. And I campaigned for a lot of candidates, House and Senate, and governors races on those. And we were devastated when we lost the midterms.

But I will also tell you this. What he won't tell you is when I decided to run, I called him. And I called him for two reasons. One, because it was the right thing to do. He had given me the job. And, two, because I wanted him to know I was in it to win it. And I told him then we needed a new generational leader. I told him then we needed to leave the negativity and the baggage behind. And I stand by that.

Look, I think President Trump was the right president at the right time. I agree with a lot of his policies. But rightly or wrongly, chaos follows him. And you all know I'm right. Chaos follows him.

(APPLAUSE)

HALEY: And we -- we can't be a country in disarray and the world on fire and go through four more years of chaos. We won't survive it. You don't fix Democrat chaos with Republican chaos.

And not only that, we can't go through another nail-biter of an election. We can't. And if you look at the head-to-head polls, Trump, on a good day, might be up over Biden by 2 points. Wall Street Journal had him up by 4. I'm in every one of those same polls, I defeat Biden by 17 points, 17 points. Do you know what that means?

(APPLAUSE)

HALEY: That's -- that's more than the presidency. That's governorships. That's House. That's Senate. That's all the way down to school board.

But more than that, you go in with a double-digit win over Biden in D.C., that's a mandate to get our out-of-control spending back on track. That's a mandate to make sure our kids are reading and get our education back to the basics. That's a mandate to secure our borders with no more excuses. And that's a mandate to bring law and order back to our country.

MACCALLUM: But, Governor, if -- if I may, so but -- but that's if you get to the general election. Right down you're 30 points down from -- from former President Trump. And some people -- you've got a lot of momentum, a lot of very big donors have come to your side because they think that you're the one who could take him down. And some of them criticize you for not going after him hard enough. They say you talk about chaos following him but that you are too -- too careful about your approach. What do you say?

HALEY: What I've always said and what is still true, pro-Trumpers don't think I love Trump enough, anti-Trumpers don't think I hate him enough. And I don't hate him. I told you I think he was the right president at the right time. But any policy that comes up, I'm going to tell you exactly where I stand on that policy.

But ***politics*** isn't personal for me. And that's actually been what's wrong with ***politics*** for so long is they make it about personalities. The reason I'm doing this, I don't want my kids to live like this. We have got to stop with this hatred back and forth. We've got to stop with these divisions.

I don't have resentment for President Trump...

BAIER: Let me just press you on this.

HALEY: ... but I don't think he should be the next president going forward. And I'm happy to tell you all the reasons why I think that is.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: We obviously just got through the anniversary of January 6th. Do you agree with Democrats and people like Lynne Cheney -- or Liz Cheney, rather, who say former President Trump is a threat to democracy?

HALEY: Oh, what I think is I think the American people can decide this. And so what I have said is, he said January 6th was a beautiful day. I think January 6th was a terrible day. I hope we never see that happen again. And so that's the focus we should have.

I believe the American people and I trust the American people. And all these people who are trying to tell, whether it's Iowans or Granite Staters or South Carolinians, what they're going to do before they have even done it, everybody is tired of that.

Talk to the people of Iowa. They are still making up their mind right now. So for you all to say that Trump is 30 points up, I would say wait until caucus day, because that's the only day that's truly going to show where Americans are.

BAIER: All right. Governor, we have many more questions from our audience here when we come back, how Governor Haley would navigate the challenging issue of abortion on the national stage.

MACCALLUM: Also, does being a role model really matter to voters, when we come back.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We think the President should be someone who we look up to, and who we admire, and who we would want our children to act like. And so that's one of the things that we've talked about this morning that we would like to have that as a leader of our country. And so then that indicates who we might support or not support.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MACCALUM: Welcome back to Iowa, everybody, in our town hall tonight with Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley.

We're going to talk now a little bit about family values and issues, including abortion and we have our first question.

BAIER: From Sue in Des Moines.

Sue, you have made up your mind or haven't made up your mind?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm --

BAIER: Getting there?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: -- getting there.

BAIER: You're getting there. So, maybe you're leaning towards the governor here?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

BAIER: OK. Let's -- what's your question for the governor.

HALEY: Hi, Sue.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, Governor.

As a college-educated mom of seven, I am concerned about my young adult and teenage children coming of age in a society that no longer values life and the institution of the family or trusts in higher education.

Describe your vision for America's family, one mom to another?

HALEY: Oh, love that question and you're a super mom at that.

You know, I'll tell you, for me, I've always said that -- and you'll relate to this -- if I'm a good mom and a good wife, I'll be a good governor. If I'm a good mom and a good wife, I'll be a good ambassador. If I'm a good mom and a good wife, I'll be a good president.

When my kids were little, even when I was governor, I would still be home five days a week to have dinner with them because I thought the family dinner mattered. Sundays were our days. We always were together on Sunday. And Friday nights were Haley family fun nights.

And I think right now, what we need to do is -- one, it's okay to have God in your life and say that. I mean, I think I walk by faith, not by sight. And I think we should never be afraid to say that.

You know I always go back to the day bef -- the Saturday before the Mother Emanuel shooting that was so devastating. I called for a state day of prayer. And I was vilified for it.

And I thought it was so important because at that time there was a lot of toxicity from the Obama administration and division that we were feeling what was happening. And I thought that it was important. Now I think it was divine.

The fact that we had that day of prayer before one of the worst shootings that our country had ever seen, I think God saved us. You know, there was a reason on the heels of Ferguson that we didn't have riots, we had vigils. There's a reason that we didn't have protests we had prayer, because we had that in our hearts and on our minds.

And I think that we have to always do that, especially now going forward. You look at our kids, they have more anxiety, stress, and depression than we've seen ever. We need to be there for them, and we need to make sure that they know that there are places that they can go that will show them that your faith can get you through this, or guidance can get you through this.

And so, that's what we want to do is make sure that it's always about faith, family, and country. That's what it used to be. Our parents would raise us to be strong individuals. We would go to school, and we would learn what we need to be successful. We would go church and we would find our faith and our conscience.

That's what we have to take our country back again.

(APPLAUSE)

MACCALUM: But you had not support -- you said you wouldn't support, I believe, correct me if I'm wrong, a six-week federal ban if it were to go into place. Ron DeSantis has said that, you know, you are too moderate on this issue.

HALEY: That's not what I said. What I said is be honest with the American people. The only way a federal ban will pass is if you have a majority of the House, 60 Senate votes and a signature of a president.

We haven't had 60 senators in over 100 years. We may have 45 pro-life senators. So, instead of demonizing this issue, the fellows just don't know how to talk about it.

Instead of demonizing this issue --

(APPLAUSE)

HALEY: You have to humanize this issue and understand that everybody has a story. Our overall goal should be how do we save as many babies as possible and support as many moms as possible. That way you take away all the divisions. Democrats have used fear in women when it comes to this issue. Republicans have used judgment.

This is too personal of an issue to use fear or judgment. We need to talk about it in a way that's saving babies and supporting moms. And whatever 60 senators bring to me at whatever level, we will support because the only way we're going to do it is if we find consensus on the federal level.

And I think we will find consensus on banning late term abortions. I think we'll find consensus on expanding adoption and good quality adoptions. I think we'll find consensus that doctors and nurses who don't believe in abortion shouldn't have to perform them.

I think we'll find consensus on the fact that contraception should be accessible. And I think we'll find consensus that no state law should say to a woman that gets an abortion that she's going to jail or getting the death penalty. That's where we will find consensus.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: All right. Terry (ph) -- Terry is a retired farmer from Dallas County. He -- have you made your decision?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I've narrowed it down to the candidates that we have seen here in Iowa that speak from the heart rather than a teleprompter written by somebody else.

BAIER: OK.

MACCALLUM: And who are those candidates?

BAIER: Yes, who's that?

TERRY: Who are the candidates?

MACCALLUM: Yes. Who are you narrowed down to?

TERRY: One is standing on stage right now, smiling, speaking from the heart.

BAIER: Well, what's your question for the governor?

TERRY: And I've heard DeSantis, I've liked him, I've liked Vivek. But I'm a proud grandpa. I know you're a proud mom. Let's talk about education.

HALEY: Yes.

TERRY: So, tell me what differs you from the others that gets us back to -- from the other candidates in the Republican Party, that gets us back to reading, writing, and arithmetic rather than guns and fentanyl?

HALEY: What worries me about education is, right now in America, only 31 percent of 8th graders in our country are proficient in reading. Only 27 percent of 8th graders are proficient in math. If we don't do something and do something quickly, we're going to be in a world of hurt 10 years from now.

And remember when I told you we wanted to take those federal programs and send them down to the state level? That includes education. We need to make sure we go back to the basics. We've got to make sure that our kids are learning reading, writing, history, science, math, arts, and that's it. We don't need to get these federal programs.

And what happened is when they started to get it too big with federal, we've seen it from Common Core, we saw it with No Child Left Behind, they became bigger things that got away from the basics of education.

When you send this down to the states, the resources that the states have, they can decide where they need to go. So, for example, I want to put vocational classes back in our high schools. We need to teach our kids how to be a part of the economy before they get out of school. Vocational classes in Iowa would be very different than vocational classes in South Carolina. Let the states decide that.

When you go and you look at these other things that the -- that D.C. has decided are good for our states, that's the problem. What I want to make sure of is that when we move those programs down, we make it more state centric.

Secondly, we should have complete transparency in the classroom. No parent should ever wonder what their child is learning in the classroom. Every syllabus should be online for every parent to see. And every parent should choose where their child goes to school and what mode of education they have. Because a parent knows best.

And finally, I will say, we have to grow strong girls in this country. And strong girls become strong women. Strong women become strong leaders. And none of that happens if we have biological boys playing in girls' sports. We've got to cut that out.

BAIER: Thank you, Governor.

MACCALLUM: Let's bring in Steph Harold (ph), who is retired from West Des Moines. Hi, Steph. Let's get a microphone over to you. There we go.

STEPH HAROLD (PH): Hello, Ambassador.

HALEY: Hi, Steph.

STEPH HAROLD (PH): And please thank your husband for his service.

HALEY: Thank you.

STEPH HAROLD (PH): I am very excited that you are wanting to bring up and tackle term limits. Exactly how do you propose to do this, since I can't imagine that most in Congress would want to shorten their stay.

HALEY: It's very true. You know, not only do I want to see term limits, I want to see mental competency tests for anyone over the age of 75. And I'm not being disrespectful when I say that. We all know people over 75 that would run circles around us. Senator Grassley is a perfect example of that. But then we know Joe Biden.

And right now, Congress has become the most privileged nursing home in the country. These are people making decisions on our national security. These are people making decisions on the future of our economy. We need to know they're at the top of their game.

And yes, I'm a strong advocate for term limits. The way we would deal with that, no Congress isn't going to vote on it. So, we're going to build them up to it. I will have a Haley term limits pledge that everyone needs to sign when they decide to run for office, incumbent or otherwise. And we will find out where they are on term limits. And then, I'm going to give that information to the American people so that you know to ask that elected official about it and you know where they stand.

And then, when we get enough term limit pledges into Congress, that's when we will go and vote on it to make sure that we get term limits back in D.C. We will do it from the outside in, rather than the inside out.

BAIER: All right. Governor, thank you. Well, we're going to take a quick break right here. And when we come back, we will talk about the future of America. A lot to talk about.

MACCALLUM: A lot to talk about. We'll be right back with more.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MACCALLUM: Welcome back to an exciting, snowy night here in Iowa.

We are in the town hall with Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley. Welcome back, everybody.

BAIER: Governor, there's a number of states that are looking to take former President Trump off the ballot. The Supreme Court is going to try to hear this, possibly decide it.

What do you think about that? Should he be taken off the ballot? How do you think the Supreme Court will be receiving that?

HALEY: No, he shouldn't be taken off the ballot, and the Supreme Court needs to rule quickly, before other states start to do this.

This is one of those don't open a door if you don't want to see what happens. This is a door we don't need to open. I will defeat President Trump fair and square. I don't need anybody throwing him off the ballot to do it.

(APPLAUSE)

HALEY: But this started back with COVID. The idea that you have people telling people what to do, how to think, what to -- how to live, all of that. That's wrong. If they can do this to him, they'll do it to someone else. We can't have others saying, I don't think he should be on the ballot. I think Americans can decide on their own whether they want him to be on the ballot or not.

BAIER: All right.

MACCALLUM: Let's go to David (ph), who is retired and from sales management. He is from Des Moines. And you are deciding, I believe, between Trump and Haley, is that right?

UNIDENTIFIED: Right. I think I'm going to out myself here right at the beginning by saying I voted for Trump in 2016 and 2020.

HALEY: Me too.

(LAUGHTER)

UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you for the opportunity. Governor Haley, I've heard you say many, many times you agreed with a lot of Donald Trump's policies. You actually like some of them. It was all of the rest of the stuff that goes along with him that was the issue. Can you name two or three of his policies that you would consider bringing back and re-implementing should you be elected president?

HALEY: Well, I think what we saw with President Trump, and -- and I think - - when I say he was the right president at the right time, he was good at breaking things, right? But now we need somebody to fix them. Because that was the problem. Yes, he -- he said that...

(APPLAUSE)

HALEY: You know, you look at the fact that he said that he was going to go deal with the border, but he never quite got there. We need to fix it now and make sure that we stop the flow. You know, when you look at what happened with education, he called things out, but we actually need to take it back to the basics and get all of the strings off of education so that we're focusing on our kids. When you look at what's happening, you know, with law enforcement, let's bring law and order back to our country.

But I think what he did do was he had a strength when it came to how to deal with countries abroad. That was important. The problem is, again, he didn't follow-through with China. He allowed us to get these Chinese police stations. He let there be a Chinese spy base to go off our shores in Cuba. He didn't do anything about the fentanyl flow.

So it's like he broke it but he never finished it. He never fixed it. Now is the time we have to fix things. And that's why we need a new generational leader that's not going to focus on the past, which is what he and Biden both are doing. We need someone who's going to focus on the solutions of the future so that we can start getting things back on track.

(APPLAUSE)

MACCALLUM: So, David (ph), what do you think about that answer? Does it -- does it, you know, persuade you either way or on the fence still?

UNIDENTIFIED: He certainly broke things.

(LAUGHTER)

UNIDENTIFIED: And I -- and I would say there is still a need for things to be broken. For example, today the president of Mexico was giving a list of demands to the -- to Biden about what we needed to do to get him to play ball with us. It didn't go that way with Trump. It was just the opposite.

HALEY: No. And you know what we would do on that? We would go to the president of Mexico and say, OK, if that's how you are going to be, then, no, you're not getting the 250 million in aid that you're getting right now.

The problem -- the reason Mexico is doing that, everybody smells blood in the water. Everybody smells weakness. And what I will tell you, at the U.N. I did one thing. I put a book together and I put all 193 countries. The second column was a percentage of times they voted with the U.S. and against the U.S. And the third column was how much foreign aid we gave them. I gave it to President Trump. And I said, quit trying to buy friends. Quit paying off enemies. We have to start being strategic.

Last year they gave Iraq money. They gave Belarus, who is holding hands with Russia, money. They gave Cuba, who we named a state sponsor of terrorism, money. They gave Zimbabwe, the most anti-American African country there is. We gave China money. How weak do we look? When I am president we will no longer give money to countries that hate America.

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Governor Haley, thank you very much. This has been very instructive. Some great questions from Iowa voters. Did the governor sway some of you?

(APPLAUSE)

BAIER: Some of you? OK. We will see. We have a couple of town halls to come. We will be following you as you head towards next Monday and the caucuses. Thank you very much.

Thank you for watching our town hall with Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley.

MACCALLUM: Yes, it's been great having everyone here. And for those of you who are undecided, if you want to come back, we have two more nights that we are in town here. We'll be here almost all week. So you're welcome to come back and join us for Ron DeSantis tomorrow night and for former President Donald Trump on Wednesday night.

It's exciting that people are making these decisions as we get to -- close to this. So we look forward to both of those this week.

BAIER: And this is the beginning of the process. Iowa is number one. And I was out and about talking to voters today that are going to caucus. And I said, are you worried about the snow? Are you worried about the cold? And they said, suck it up. It's Iowa.

(LAUGHTER)

BAIER: We're going to manage to get there no matter what. So we'll be there, too, bouncing around the state until next Monday.

MACCALLUM: We sure will. We're doing shows from here all week. And we look forward to you joining us for those as the voters of America begin to speak. Because we talk a lot about the polls, as Governor Haley said, but now people will have their voices heard. And we will see what they have to say from Iowa.

Thanks for joining us, everybody.

BAIER: Thank you, Des Moines.

(APPLAUSE)

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