

Set 1: nuclear, iran, korea, north, weapon, sanction, threat, tabl

Set 2: presidenti, candid, debat, univers, welcom, tonight, commiss, nomine

Set 3: sir, minut, pleas, respond, goe, sorri, ask, statement

Set 4: health, insur, care, cost, cover, afford, obamacar, premium

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MODERATOR Good evening from the Field House at Washington University in St. Louis. Im Jim Lehrer of the NewsHour on PBS. And I welcome you to this third and final Campaign 2000 debate between the Democratic candidate for president, Vice President Al Gore, and the Republican candidate, Governor George W. Bush of Texas. Lets welcome the candidates now. [Applause] Before proceeding tonight we would like to observe a moment of silence in memory of Governor Mel Carnahan of Missouri, who along with his son and his former chief of staff, died in a private plane crash last night near St. Louis. A reminder, as we continue now, that these debates are sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates. The formats and the rules were worked out by the commission and the two campaigns. Tonights questions will be asked by St. Louis area voters who were identified as being uncommitted by the Gallup organization. Earlier today each of them wrote a question on a small card like this. Those cards were collected and then given to me this afternoon. My job, under the rules of the evening, was to decide the order the questions will be asked and to call on the questioners accordingly. I also have the option of asking follow- ups which — in order to get to more of the panels questions. For the record, I plan to do sparingly and mostly for clarifications. The audience participants are bound by the following rule. They shall not ask follow- up questions or otherwise participate in the extended discussion. And the questioners microphone will be turned off after he or she completes asking the question. Those are the rules. As in Winston- Salem last week, no single answer or response from a candidate can exceed two minutes. There is an audience here in the hall and they have promised to remain absolutely quiet, as did their predecessors this year in Boston, Danville, and Winston- Salem. Before we begin, a correction from last weeks debate. I was wrong when I said Vice President Gores campaign commercials had called Governor Bush a bumbler. That specific charge was made in a press statement by Gore campaign spokesman Mark Fabiani, not in a TV Guide.

AL GORE Im glad you clarified that.

MODERATOR Now, lets go to the first question. Of over the 130 questions we received from this panel, we will begin with one of the 19 on health issues, and it goes to you, Mr. Vice President, and it will be asked by James Hankins. Mr. Hankins? MEMBER OF

AUDIENCE How do you feel about HMOs and insurance companies making the critical decisions that affect peoples lives instead of the medical professionals, and why are the HMOs and insurance companies not held accountable for their decisions?

AL GORE Mr. Hankins, I dont feel good about it, and I think we ought to have a patients bill of rights to take the medical decisions away from the HMOs and give them back to the doctors and nurses. I want to come back and tell you why, but if you will forgive me, I would like to say something right now at the beginning of this debate following on the moment of silence for Mel Carnahan and Randy Carnahan and Chris Sifford. Tipper and I were good friends with Mel and Randy, and I know that all of us here want to extend our sympathy

and condolences to Jean and the family and to the Sifford family. And I would just like to say that this debate in a way is a living tribute to Mel Carnahan because he loved the vigorous discussion of ideas in our democracy. He was a fantastic governor of Missouri. This state became one of the top five in the nation for health care coverage for children under his leadership. One of the best in advancing all kinds of benefits for children to grow up healthy and strong. And of course, this debate also takes place at a time when the tragedy of the USS Cole is on our minds and hearts and insofar as the memorial service is tomorrow, I would like to also extend sympathy to the families of those who have died and those who are still missing, and the injured. Now, Mr. Hankins, I think that the situation that you describe has gotten completely out of hand. Doctors are giving prescriptions, they're recommending treatments, and then their recommendations are being overruled by HMOs and insurance companies. That is unacceptable. I support a strong national patients bill of rights. It is actually a disagreement between us, a national law that is pending on this, the Dingle-Norwood bill, a bipartisan bill, is one that I support and that the governor does not.

MODERATOR Two minutes response, Governor Bush.

GEORGE W. BUSH I, too, want to extend my prayers and blessings, Gods blessings on the families whose lives were overturned yes — tod — last night. Its a tragic moment. Actually, Mr. Vice President, its not true. I do support a national patients bill of rights. As a matter of fact, I brought Republicans and Democrats together to do just that in the State of Texas to get a patients bill of rights through. It requires a different kind of leadership style to do it, though. You see, in order to get something done on behalf of the people, you have to put partisanship aside, and thats what we did in my state. We have one of the most advanced patients bill of rights. It says, for example, that a woman doesnt have to go through a gate keeper to go to her gynecologist. It says that you cant gag a doctor, doctor can advise you. The HMO, the insurance company, cant gag that doctor from giving you full advice. And this particular bill, it allows patients to choose a doctor, their own doctor if they want to. But we did something else that was interesting. Were one of the first states that said you can sue an HMO for denying you proper coverage. Now theres whats called an Independent Review Organization that you have to go through first. It says if youâ€™ve got a complaint with your insurance company, you can take your complaint to an objective body. If the objective body rules on your behalf, the insurance company must follow those rules. However, if the insurance company doesnt follow the findings of the IRO, then that becomes a cause of action in a court of law. Its time for our nation to come together and do whats right for the people, and I think this is right for the people. You know, I support a national patients bill of rights, Mr. Vice President, and I want all people covered. I dont want the law to supersede good law like weve got in Texas. I think —

MODERATOR Governor, time is up, sir.

AL GORE Jim, we have a direct disagreement on this.

MODERATOR Just a minute, Mr. Vice President. I want to — the way the rules go here now, two minutes, two minutes, and then Ill decide whether we go on. Okay. So what I want to make sure is we understand here is before we go on to another question in the health area, would you agree that you two agree on a national patients bill of rights?

AL GORE Absolutely not. I referred to the Dingle- Norwood bill. It is the bipartisan bill that is now pending in the Congress. The HMOs and the insurance companies support the

other bill thats pending, the one that the Republican majority has put forward. They like it because it doesnt accomplish what I think really needs to be accomplished to give the decisions back to the doctors and nurses and give you a right of appeal to somebody other than the HMO or insurance company, let you go to the nearest emergency room without having to call an HMO before you call 911, to let you see a specialist if you need to, and it has strong bipartisan support. It is being blocked by the Republican leadership in the Congress.

MODERATOR Sir.

AL GORE And I specifically would like to know whether Governor Bush will support the Dingle- Norwood bill, which is the main one pending.

MODERATOR Governor Bush, you may answer that if youd like. But also Id like to know how you see the differences between the two of you, and we need to move on.

GEORGE W. BUSH Well, the difference is is that I can get it done. That I can get something positive done on behalf of the people. Thats what the question in this campaign is about. Its not only whats your philosophy and whats your position on issues, but can you get things done? And I believe I can.

AL GORE What about the Dingle- Norwood bill?

MODERATOR All right. Were going to go now to another — all right. Yes.

GEORGE W. BUSH Im not quite through. Let me finish. I talked about the principles and the issues that I think are important in a patients bill of rights. Its kind of Washington, D. C. focus. Well, its in this committee or its got this sponsor. If Im the president, were going to have emergency room care, were going have gag orders, were going to have direct access to OB/GYN. People will be able to take their HMO insurance company to court. Thats what Ive done in Texas and thats the kind of leadership style Ill bring to Washington.

MODERATOR All right. Another — the next question also on health issue is from — it will be asked by Marie Payne Kloepey, and it goes to Governor Bush. MEMBER OF