

Text 1

Schliefer: Let's stop there, because I want to get in a question on education and I'm afraid this is going to have to be our last question, gentlemen The question is this: the US spends more per capita than any other country on education Yet, by every international measurement, in math and science competence, from kindergarten through the 12th grade, we trail most of the countries of the world The implications of this are clearly obvious Some even say it poses a threat to our national security Do you feel that way and what do you intend to do about it? The question to Senator Obama first

Obama: This probably has more to do with our economic future than anything and that means it also has a national security implication, because there's never been a nation on earth that saw its economy decline and continued to maintain its primacy as a military power So we've got to get our education system right Now, typically, what's happened is that there's been a debate between more money or reform, and I think we need both In some cases, we are going to have to invest Early childhood education, which closes the achievement gap, so that every child is prepared for school, every dollar we invest in that, we end up getting huge benefits with improved reading scores, reduced dropout rates, reduced delinquency rate I think it's going to be critically important for us to recruit a generation of new teachers, an army of new teachers, especially in math and science, give them higher pay, give them more professional development and support in exchange for high And I think it's important for us to make college affordable Right now, I meet young people all across the country who either have decided not to go to college or if they're going to college, they are taking on \$20,000, \$30,000, \$50,000, \$60,000 worth of debt, and it's very difficult for them to go into some fields, like basic research in science, for example, thinking to themselves that they're going to have a mortgage before they even buy a house And that's why I've proposed a \$4,000 tuition credit, every student, every year, in exchange for some form of community service, whether it's military service, whether it's Peace Corps, whether it's working in a community If we do those things, then I believe that we can create a better school system But there's one last ingredient that I just want to mention, and that's parents We can't do it just in the schools Parents are going to have to show more responsibility They've got to turn off the TV set, put away the video games, and, finally, start instilling that thirst for knowledge that our students need

Schliefer: Senator McCain?

McCain: Well, it's the civil rights issue of the 21st century There's no doubt that we have achieved equal access to schools in America after a long and difficult and terrible struggle But what is the advantage in a low income area of sending a child to a failed school and that being your only choice? So choice and competition amongst schools is one of the key elements that's already been proven in places like New Orleans and New York City and other places, where we have charter schools, where we take good teachers and we reward them and promote them And we find bad teachers another line of work And we have to be able to give parents the same choice, frankly, that Senator Obama and Mrs Obama had and Cindy and I had to send our kids to the school – their kids to the school of their choice Charter schools aren't the only answer, but they're providing competition They are providing the kind of competitions that have upgraded both schools – types of schools Now, throwing money at the problem is not the answer You will find that some of the worst school systems in America get the most money per student So I believe that we need to reward

these good teachers We need to encourage programs such as Teach for America and Troops to Teachers where people, after having served in the military, can go right to teaching and not have to take these examinations which – or have the certification that some are Look, we must improve education in this country As far as college education is concerned, we need to make those student loans available We need to give them a repayment schedule that they can meet We need to have full student loan program for in-state tuition And we certainly need to adjust the certain loan eligibility to inflation