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MODERATOR: New subject, new question, Vice President Gore. How do you see the connection between controlling gun sales in this country and the incidence of death by accidental or intentional use of guns?

GORE: Jim, I hope that we can come back to the subject of education because the governor made an extensive statement on it and I have a very different view than the one he expressed. But that having been said, I believe that — well, first of all, let me say that the governor and I agree on some things where this subject is concerned. I will not do anything to affect the rights of hunters or sportsmen. I think that homeowners have to be respected and their right to have a gun if they wish to. The problem I see is that there are too many guns getting into the hands of children, and criminals, and people who, for whatever reason, some kind of history of stalking or domestic abuse really should not be able to get guns. I think these assault weapons are a problem. So I favor closing the gun show loophole. In fact, I cast the tie-breaking vote to close it, but then the majority in the House of Representatives went the other way. That's still pending. If we could get agreement on that, maybe they could pass that in the final days of this Congress. I think we ought to restore the three-day waiting period under the Brady Law. I think we should toughen the enforcement of gun laws so that the ones that are already on the books can be enforced much more effectively. Some of the restrictions that have been placed by the Congress in the last couple of years. I think — in the last few years I think have been unfortunate. I think that we ought to make all schools gun free. Have a gun-free zone around every school in this country. I think that measures like these are important. Child safety trigger locks on a mandatory basis, and others.

MODERATOR: Governor?

BUSH: Well, it starts with enforcing law. When you say loud and clear to somebody if you're going to carry a gun illegally, we're going to arrest you. If you're going to sell a gun illegally, you need to be arrested. If you commit a crime with a gun, there needs to be absolute certainty in the law. And that means that the local law enforcement officials need help at the federal level. Programs like Project Exile where the federal government intensifies arresting people who illegally use guns. And we haven't done a very good job of that at the federal level recently. And I'm going to make it a priority. Secondly, I don't think we ought to be selling guns to people who shouldn't have them. That's why I support instant background checks at gun shows. One of the reasons we have an instant background check is so that we instantly know whether or not somebody should have a gun or not. In Texas I tried to do something innovative. There's a lot of talk about trigger locks being on guns sold in the future. I support that. But I said if you want a trigger lock to make your gun safe, come and get one for free. So we're distributing in our State of Texas for free. I think we ought to raise the age at which a juvenile can carry a handgun from 18 to 21. I disagree with the vice president on this issue. He is for registration of guns. I think the only people that are going to show up to register or get a license — I guess licensing like a driver's license for a gun, the only people that are going to show up are law-abiding citizens. The criminal is not going to show up and say hey, give me my I.D. card. It's the law-abiding citizens who will do that. And I don't think that is going to be an effective tool to make the — keep our society safe.

MODERATOR: All right. So on guns, somebody wants to cast a vote based on your differ-

ences, where are the differences?

GORE: Well, I'm not for registration. I am for licensing by states of new handgun purchases.

MODERATOR: What's that mean?

GORE: A photo license I.D. like a driver's license for new handguns and, you know, the Los Angeles —

MODERATOR: Excuse me, you would have to get the license — a photo I.D. to go in and before you could buy the gun?

GORE: Correct.

MODERATOR: All right. Who would issue the —

GORE: The state. The state. I think states should do that for new handguns, because too many criminals are getting guns. There was a recent investigation of the number in Texas who got — who were given concealed weapons permits in spite of the fact that they had records. And the "Los Angeles Times" spent a lot of ink going into that. But I am not for doing anything that would affect hunters or sportsmen, rifles, shotguns, existing handguns. I do think that sensible gun safety measures are warranted now. Look, this is the year — this is in the aftermath of Columbine, and Paducah, and all the places in our country where the nation has been shocked by these weapons in the hands of the wrong people. The woman who bought the guns for the two boys who did that killing at Columbine said that if she had had to give her name and fill out a form there, she would not have bought those guns. That conceivably could have prevented that tragedy.

MODERATOR: Back to the question about the differences on gun control. What are they, Governor, from your point of view, between you and the Vice President?

BUSH: Well, I'm not for photo licensing. Let me say something about Columbine. Listen, we've got gun laws. He says we ought to have gun-free schools. Everybody believes that. I'm sure every state in the union has got them. You can't carry a gun into a school. And there ought to be a consequence when you do carry a gun into a school. But Columbine spoke to a larger issue. It's really a matter of culture. It's a culture that somewhere along the line we've begun to disrespect life. Where a child can walk in and have their heart turned dark as a result of being on the Internet and walk in and decide to take somebody else's life? So gun laws are important, no question about it, but so is loving children, and character education classes, and faith-based programs being a part of after-school programs. Some desperate child needs to have somebody put their arm around them and say, we love you. So there's a — this is a society that — of ours that's got to do a better job of teaching children right from wrong. And we can enforce law. But there seems to be a lot of preoccupation on — not certainly only in this debate, but just in general on law. But there's a larger law. Love your neighbor like you would like to be loved yourself. And that's where our society must head if we're going to be a peaceful and prosperous society.