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MODERATOR: New question. As I was saying. Both of you — Governor, both of you have talked much about Medicare and health care for seniors. What about the more than 40 million younger Americans who do not have health insurance right now? What would you do about that?

BUSH: Well, I've got a plan to do something about that. It's to make health care affordable and available this way. First, there's some who should be buying health care who choose not to. There's some —

MODERATOR: Some of the 40 million.

BUSH: Some of the healthy folks, healthy young kids say I'll never get sick, therefore I don't need health care right now. For those what I think we need to do is to develop an investment-type vehicle that would be an incentive for them to invest, like medical savings accounts with rollover capacity. In other words, you say to a youngster, it will be in your financial interest to start saving for future illness, but for the working folks that do want to have health care that can't afford it, a couple of things we need to do. One, we need more community health centers. I've developed — put out money in my budget to expand community health centers all around the country. These are places where people can get primary care. Secondly — and they're good. They're very important parts of the safety net of health care. Secondly, that you get a \$2,000 rebate from the government if you're a family of \$30,000 or less — it scales down as you get higher — that you can use to purchase health care in the private markets. It will be a huge down payment for a pretty darn good system. If you allow — also allow — convince states to — allow states to allow the mother to match some of the children's health insurance money with it, the pool purchasing power. And to make health care more affordable, allow business associations like the National Federation of Independent Business or the Chamber of Commerce or the National Restaurant Association to write association plans across jurisdictional lines so that small businesses have got the capacity to have national pooling to drive the cost of insurance down. I think that's the very best way to go. It empowers people, it trusts people, it makes — and it's a practical way to encourage people to purchase health care insurance.

MODERATOR: Vice President Gore?

GORE: It's one of my top priorities, Jim, to give every single child in the United States affordable health care within the next four years. I would like to see eventually in this country some form of universal health care, but I'm not for a government-run system. In fact, I'm for shrinking the size of government. I want a smaller and smarter government. I have been in charge of this reinventing government streamlining project that's reduced the size of government by more than 300,000 people in the last several years. And the budget plan that I've put out, according to the "Los Angeles Times" again, the way these things are typically measured as a percentage of the GDP, will bring government spending down to the lowest level in 50 years. So I want to proceed carefully to cover more people. But I think we should start by greatly expanding the so-called child health insurance or CHIP program to give health insurance to every single child in this country. I think it's intolerable that we have so many millions of children without any health insurance. So it's one of my top priorities. Now, I know that we have some disagreements on this. And I'm sorry to tell you that, you know, there is a record here. And Texas ranks 49th out of the 50 states in health

care — in children with health care. 49th for women with health care, and 50th for families with health care. So it is a priority for me. I guarantee you. I'm not aware of any program — well, I'll just leave it at that. I think it ought to be a top priority.

MODERATOR: Governor, did the — are the vice president's figures correct about Texas?

BUSH: First of all, let me say he's not for a government-run health care system? I thought that's exactly what he and Mrs. Clinton and them fought for in 1993 was a government-run health care system. It was fortunately stopped in its tracks. Secondly, we spend \$4.7 billion a year on the uninsured in the State of Texas. Our rate of uninsured, the percentage of uninsured in Texas has gone down, while the percentage of uninsured in America has gone up. Our CHIPS program got a late start because our government meets only four months out of every two years, Mr. Vice President. It may come as a shock for somebody who has been in Washington for so long. But actually limited government can work in the second largest state in the union. And therefore Congress passes the bill after our session in 1997 ended, we passed an enabling legislation in 1999. We've signed up over 110,000 children to the CHIPS program. For comparable states our size, we're signing them up as fast as any other state. You can quote all the numbers you want, but I'm telling you we care about our people in Texas. We spent a lot of money to make sure people get health care in the State of Texas, and we're doing a better job than they are at the national level for reducing uninsured.

MODERATOR: Is he right?

GORE: Well, I don't know about all these percentages that he throws out, but I do know that — I speculate that the reason why he didn't answer your question directly as to whether my numbers were right, the facts were right about Texas ranking dead last in families with health insurance and 49th out of 50 for both children and women, is because those facts are correct. And as for why it happened, I'm no expert on the Texas procedures, but what my friends there tell me is that the governor opposed a measure put forward by Democrats in the legislature to expand the number of children that would be covered. And instead directed the money toward a tax cut, a significant part of which went to wealthy interests. He declared the need for a new tax cut for the oil companies in Texas an emergency need, and so the money was taken away from the CHIP program. There's — you don't have to take my word for this. There is now a federal judge's opinion about the current management of this program ordering the State of Texas to do — you should read that judge's language about this. I believe there are 1.4 million children in Texas who do not have health insurance. 600,000 of whom, and maybe some of those have since gotten it, but as of a year ago 600,000 of them were actually eligible for it but they couldn't sign up for it because of the barriers that they had set up.

MODERATOR: Let's let the governor respond to that. Are those numbers correct? Are his charges correct?

BUSH: If he's trying to allege that I'm a hard-hearted person and I don't care about children, he's absolutely wrong. We've spent \$4.7 billion a year in the State of Texas for uninsured people. And they get health care. Now, it's not the most efficient way to get people health care. But I want to remind you, the number of uninsured in America during their watch has increased. He can make any excuse he wants, but the facts are that we're reducing the number of uninsured percentage of our population. And as the percentage of the population

is increasing nationally, somehow the allegation that we don't care and we're going to give money for this interest or that interest and not for children in the State of Texas is totally absurd. Let me just tell you who the jury is. The people of Texas. There's only been one governor ever elected to back-to-back four-year terms, and that was me. And I was able to do so with a lot of Democrat votes, nearly 50% of the Hispanic vote, about 27% of the African-American vote, because people know I'm a conservative person and a compassionate person. So he can throw all the kinds of numbers around. I'm just telling you our state comes together to do what is right. We come together both Republicans and Democrats.

MODERATOR: Let me put that directly to you, Vice President Gore. The reason you brought this up, is it — are you suggesting that those numbers and that record will reflect the way Governor Bush will operate in this area of health insurance as president?