

Presidential Debate 10/15/08

Contributed by Robert Steinhoff
Friday, 24 October 2008

Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY was the site of the third and final debate between Democratic Presidential Nominee, Barack Obama and Republican Nominee, John McCain. If the debate had to be summed up in one word, it would be "intense." Bob Schieffer moderated the debate and asked intriguing questions that centered on the category of domestic policy. If John McCain came out slow at the last debate and he wasn't going to make the same mistake twice. McCain's game plan consisted of smashing Obama's economic policy and Obama continued to link McCain's policies to that of George Bush. McCain was particularly harsh on the Obama's tax policies. When asked why he thinks his tax plan is more effective, McCain answered, "We have to have short term fixes and long term fixes." Obama responded by saying, "The financial rescue plan is an important first step. Let's focus on jobs. Let's help families right away." Both candidates detailed further how they are going to implement their individual tax plans.

A new player in the campaign, "Joe the Plumber," was brought up by McCain as an example of someone Senator Obama's tax plan would affect. Obama responded, "We both want to cut taxes, the difference is who we want to cut taxes for." McCain then referenced "spreading the wealth around," which is how Obama first responded to the "Joe the Plumber" argument. He said that he wants to cut taxes for 95% of Americans and that his tax plan will help the working class.

Another question centered on the budget deficit and the candidates offered mixed results. When asked what he will cut back, Obama said, "there is no doubt that we have been living beyond our means. Every dollar I have proposed, I have proposed an additional cut." McCain responded by going into the real estate crisis and went into how we can start increasing home values. He then said, "We have to stop giving billions of dollars to countries that don't like us." McCain's strategy entails a complete across the board spending cut which is commonly referred to as the hatchet.

On the issue of energy, the question of what specific number can be given to emission control. McCain's main platform revolves on oil independence and drilling on the home front as popularized by one of his campaign slogans, "drill baby, drill." McCain said that it would take 7-10 years to completely make the United States energy independent. Obama stated a number of 10 years until we are completely rid of our imports from the Middle East and Venezuela. Obama said we need to expand domestic production and he stated that we only have 3 or 4 percent of the world's oil reserves and we need to start investing in alternative forms of energy.

A clear winner of the debate was completely absent. No unbiased determination can be obtained as to who won. Many Obama supporters say that he won and the same sentiments have been expressed by the McCain campaign. Let's hope that these debates have helped Americans strengthen their resolve for whomever they support and that they show their support on November 4th.