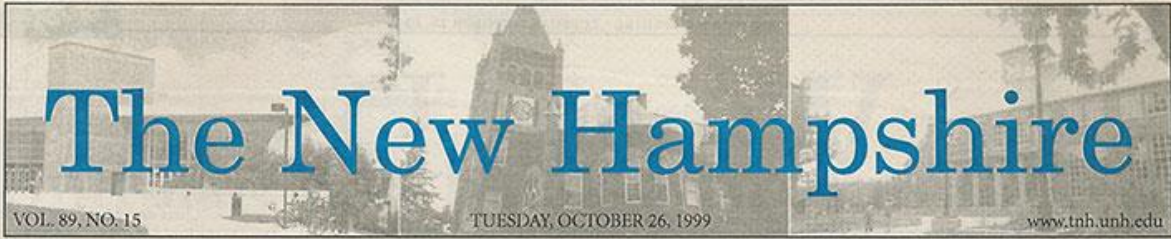


# Republican presidential candidates debate at UNH

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# Republican presidential candidates debate at UNH

By NICHOLAS COPANAS  
TNH Reporter

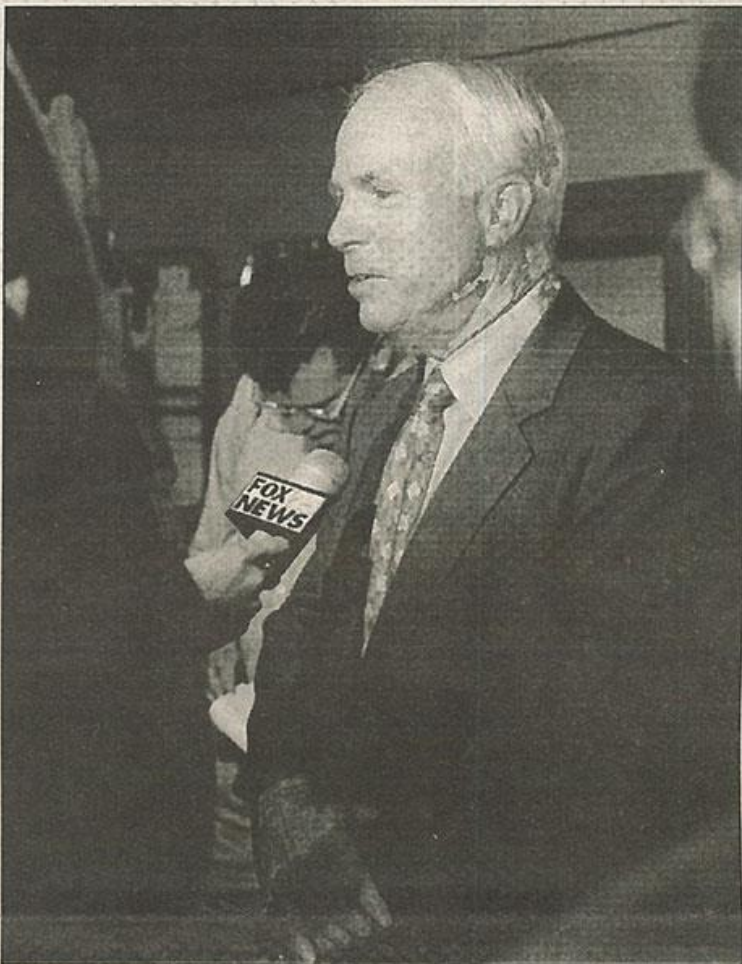
Texas Gov. George Bush, Jr. was the only Republican candidate to miss a forum held at UNH last Friday. The debate, televised from the New Hampshire Public Television studios on Route 155A, was hosted by ABC's Cokie Roberts and featured candidates John McCain, Orrin Hatch, Gary Bauer, Alan Keyes and Steve Forbes.

Bush, the Republican frontrunner, was invited to the debate but attended a campaign fundraiser instead. Gov. Bush missed a heated debate that included God, morality, abortion, military spending and U.S. foreign policy.

The candidates present felt that Bush missed out considerably on a public relations opportunity for the GOP.

"I believe that Gov. Bush was the big loser here tonight," said Forbes, a wealthy magazine publisher who is currently tied in the polls with McCain for second place.

"I thought that [Bush] should have been here. It would have been a wonderful chance for people to talk to him and get to know what he's about," said Hatch, a senator from Utah who currently holds less than 1 percent of the vote, according to a CNN/WMUR



Ryan O'Donnell/TNH Photographer

*Arizona senator John McCain was one of five presidential candidates to come to UNH for the first Republican forum of the year.*

poll conducted by the UNH Survey Center. "Basically, most everyone there was a dedicated Republican."

The forum, which was the first of many planned before January's primary, received mixed reactions from students.

"I thought that most of them sounded alike," said freshman Elizabeth Kaelin. "But I think that Keyes really persuaded me. He wants to get government out of government and that is what the con-  
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stitution stands for.”

“I liked McCain. He seemed to carry a lot of discipline,” said freshman Jon Wellington. “And when there’s discipline in the White House, things get done.”

Many students questioned Forbes’ ability to connect with the common man.

“I don’t like Forbes. He thinks he can buy his way into politics,” said freshman Evan Czychowski. “He got smoked in the last election. How does he think he can win this time?”

But Congressman Bob Barr, a Republican from Georgia who was in the MUB last Friday, disagreed.

“I was drawn to Forbes because he has the ability to connect with the common man,” Barr said. “He’s for issues that the average citizen wants addressed, such as social security, school vouchers and the marriage tax.”

But for many students, Keyes’ prediction of the Republicans’ inability to attack the administration because of the economic boom held true.

“I didn’t like any of the candidates,” said UNH prospectus Nick Panagopoulos, who came to the university to see the event. “They kept attacking the Clinton administration, but the truth is that we’ve had the best economic times ever, and I would prefer to stick to what works.”

Despite his disagreement with the candidates, Panagopoulos was still excited to have seen the debate.

“It’s great that UNH can get such famous people,” Panagopoulos said. “I’ve never seen this anywhere else.”

## Morality and Abortion:

The five Republicans began their debate by attacking the morality of the Clinton administration and of their Democratic adversary, Vice President Al Gore.

“We will not convince the American people to vote for us based on the economy,” said former ambassador to the United Nations Keyes. “On moral grounds, we should reclaim the White House.”

Among the moral issues that they argued, Republicans were united on the issue of abortion.

“If you put liberty before life, that’s a license to kill,” Forbes said.

Each agreed that as president, he would work to place judges on the Supreme Court that would repeal the landmark Roe vs. Wade case that gave women the right to legal abortions.

Arizona Sen. McCain is running on a campaign platform that would allow abortions only if rape, incest or a danger to the mother were involved.

“If elected, I will abolish Roe vs. Wade,” said McCain.

He offered adoption and foster care as an alternative.

“We need to improve adoption and foster care ... I am proud to be an adoptive father, myself,” McCain said.

“Judges should be pro-life; my running mate will be pro-life,” Forbes said.

## Education and Violence in Schools:

The candidates also discussed education issues, such as

school vouchers and preventative measures to eliminate violence.

“Education has become a civil rights issue,” Hatch said. “We need a voucher program.”

Under Hatch’s program, \$700 million would be cut from the department of education to subsidize a voucher program that would allow parents to choose between public schools and local private schools.

Hatch also stated that as president, he would return morality and discipline to the classrooms.

“One of the problems in our school districts is that teachers are afraid to use discipline for fear of litigation,” Hatch said.

He argued that with the presence of strong discipline and morals, violent acts such as the shootings at Columbine High School would not occur.

“The only fear our children in school should have is when the next test is,” Hatch said.

Forbes, who said that parents needed to be able to choose where their children would be educated, also supported the voucher program.

“The reason we have an education crisis is because we have an education monopoly,” Forbes said. “In Milwaukee, it’s guaranteed that by the second grade of school, students will be able to read or the city will provide tutors. That’s the kind of accountability we want.”

McCain offered a voucher program similar to Hatch’s that would be funded by cutting gas, oil and sugar subsidies.

“We’ve got \$6.4 billion in pork,” McCain said.

The voucher program would



encourage charter and private schools and bring, according to McCain, accountability back into the classrooms.

"We must break the grip of teacher's unions," McCain added.

But some of the candidates disagreed about the need for more funding.

"Money follows the choice of parents to educate," Keyes said.

Keyes cited a breakdown of the American family and the lack of morals taught in schools as the true cause of low quality education. Keyes also cited the school districts in Washington, D.C., where funding is some of the highest per student in the nation, as an example that more funding does not mean better schools.

"We got guns in the schools because we got God out," Keyes said. "Money is not the key."

Bauer agreed with Keyes.

"We need to get the courts out of our schools," Bauer said. "In Colombine, we had boys giving each other the Nazi salute in the hallways yet a teacher would have gotten in trouble if they had so much as mentioned God."

Bauer promised that as president, he would eliminate the department of education.

"As former secretary of education, I had 17,000 people working for me with a budget of \$17 billion," Bauer said. "I ended up spending 95 percent of my time saying no to the doper ideas."

Both men promised N.H. residents that they would remove judges from lawmaking positions.

"It's time that we get government out of government," Keyes said.

Keyes later told *The New Hampshire* that although student loans "have their place," he felt it more necessary to cut taxes than to fund higher education.

"If we didn't take money from the pockets of American citizens, then they wouldn't need federal aide," Keyes said.

All of the candidates agreed that the federal government was taxing too heavily.

"We should not be paying wartime taxes during times of peace," Hatch said.

The senator proposed the abolishment of the Internal Revenue Service [IRS] and reduced government spending to lower taxes.

Forbes also proposed cutting

the IRS and putting a "flat tax," or a tax that offers no exemptions, in its place. A similar idea was also proposed by Bauer, in which Americans would pay a 16 percent flat tax.

"We need to preserve social security and pay our IOU's to the elderly, but we need a 20 percent cut for the young," Bauer said.

Keyes went on to say that income taxes were unconstitutional.

"We need to get back to tariffs ... and abolish income taxes," Keyes said.

#### Welfare and Tax Proposals:

Under a Keyes administration, the federal government would save money by cutting social welfare programs entirely.

"It is the welfare system that drove fathers out of the home," Keyes said. "At the end of the day, we need to leave social welfare to the churches and charity organizations."

Steve Forbes agreed with him.

"That's absolutely right," Forbes said.

Mr. Forbes argued that social welfare would not be as necessary because of his tax plan.

"Under my tax proposal, a family pays zero if they earn under \$30,000 a year," Forbes said.

#### Foreign Policy:

But while the candidates were unanimous in their agreement that taxes should be cut, they could not come to an agreement over the role of the United States in foreign relations with China.

"The days of [the Chinese people] pointing us for suckers are over," Bauer said.

But while Bauer and Keyes remained staunchly opposed to relations with China because of human rights violations, Hatch, Forbes and McCain took a more moderate perspective.

"What we need is a real foreign policy for China," Forbes said. "We must maintain a military presence to protect Taiwan."

Forbes also said that sanctions would only be placed on the country if they were caught selling military technology to Pakistan or other third world nations.

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