

CATO INSTITUTE

BOOK FORUM

Ten Things You Can't Say in America

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Moderator:

Edward Crane

With:

Larry Elder, Talk Show Host, KABC

The Cato Institute

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. CRANE: I am Ed Crane. I am President of the Cato Institute. I would like to welcome you to our forum this morning to hear from Larry Elder, the author of the "Ten Things You Can't Say in America." Which I guess he is going to refute that right here by saying them. But it is a very good book. I saw it in manuscript form. And it is really the sort of thing that needs to be in the public discourse these days.

I grew up in South Central Los Angeles, as Larry did, and went to a racially-mixed high school, Dorsey High School. And I have always had kind of more interest in race issues than I think a lot of people in the public policy community do. It has always been very disturbing to me that the African-American community has been led for so long by people like Jesse Jackson, who pursue policies that, to me, are just absolutely opposed to the interests of low-income Americans, and certainly to African-Americans.

I think one of the great tragedies in American politics is that Republicans have been so unsuccessful in attracting a large following among African-Americans and I think that is primarily because they haven't tried.

I think one of the great lost opportunities was Ronald Reagan's administration. Reagan was a person who virtually

everyone liked, regardless of where they were on the political spectrum. Yet, there was no effort at all to reach out to African-Americans. I think that is regrettable because on issues, ranging from school choice to Social Security privatization, there is a real convergence of interests between African-Americans and those who support limited government and free markets.

But that is all changing now. There is kind of a spontaneous leadership that is developing around the country, not least of whom is our speaker today, Larry Elder, who is a very effective spokesman for limited government and indeed for individual liberty and libertarian ideas in general.

As I said, Larry was born and raised in South Central Los Angeles. He attended Brown University, where he got a B.A. in political science in 1974. He then went on to the University of Michigan School of Law to become a lawyer, which is what America probably doesn't need, another lawyer. But the good thing is that he is not longer practicing law. He went to work for a large law firm in Cleveland and then started his own executive recruitment firm for lawyers, specializing in placing attorneys.

At that time, when he was in Cleveland, he hosted a television show on PBS, and I was a guest. That is where I first met him, I guess right around 1980 or so. I was impressed at the

time with what an intelligent interviewer he was. That show went on to be a local Fox affiliate program.

Larry has contributed to dozens of newspapers. He is ubiquitous on television. Currently, he is the host of the Larry Elder Show on KABC Radio in Los Angeles, a very, very daily radio talk show. Interestingly enough, beginning next month, he is going to preside as judge on a national television program called "Moral Court," which maybe he will tell us a little bit about.

In any event, it is a real pleasure for me to introduce my friend and one of the most important political thinkers in the country today, Larry Elder.

(Applause.)

LARRY ELDER, TALK SHOW HOST, KABC

MR. ELDER: Thank you very much for that introduction, Ed. I appreciate it. And thank you for coming out.

I am often asked how it is I got into talk radio, because I never even thought about getting into talk radio. And I now host a show which is, thankfully, the number one rated afternoon drive-time show in Los Angeles. What happened was that I was working in Cleveland, as Ed mentioned. I practiced law and then I started a business, which I ran for about 15 or 16 years. And one of the reasons I am so adamant about my belief in this

country and my belief in economic freedom is because of how successful that business was.

But in any event, I never even thought about doing radio. I did write a lot of op ed pieces for newspapers. And every now and then one would get published. And I wrote a piece where I talked about limited government and the importance of eliminating things like affirmative action. And it ticked off a local talk show host in Cleveland. I never listened to talk radio and I didn't know who he was. His boss called me and asked me if I would agree to appear on the show. I said, "Sure, I'll go on."

And so I went on for one hour. And I was just called all sort of names: Uncle Tom this, and you are an idiot. And I am yelling at the callers and the callers are yelling at me. I drive back to my office, and I remember saying to myself, "What a God-awful waste of time that was." It reminded me of arguing with my little brother, Dennis. Everybody has a little brother, Dennis. You know what I am talking about.

And I get a phone call from this guy's boss. He says, "You were fantastic." I said, "I was?"

"Oh, God, you were funny."

I said, "I was?"

"And you took a position and you defended it well."

I said, "I did?"

"Have you ever thought about doing talk radio?"

I said, "No."

He said, "Well, this guy is going on vacation next week, why don't you sit in for him?"

I said, "Well, that is very flattering, but I don't think so."

He said, "I don't think you realize how potent you could be in this medium. Would you just please consider it?"

I said, "I'm sorry. It's flattering. I don't think so. I don't like it."

"Take one night. Think about it. Come back. I'll call you tomorrow. Let me know what you think."

I was married at the time. I went home. I said, "Cindy, they want me to do this thing." She said, "What do you think?"

I said, "I think that talk radio is stupid, shallow, and glib." She said, "It is. You would be good at it."

(Laughter.)

MR. ELDER: That gives you some idea of what happened to that marriage.

(Laughter.)

MR. ELDER: I have been call all sorts of names. And in the first chapter, which is probably the most controversial chapter, Ed, "blacks are More Racist Than Whites," I talk about

some of the names that I have been called. And I just give a very abbreviated list in the book: "Oreo," as in brown on the outside, white on the inside. "Uncle Tom," or "boot-licking Uncle Tom," which is a kind of higher grade Uncle Tom. "Straight Up Uncle Tom," which is really the Academy Award. "Judas Boy, Bug Eyed, Foot Shuffling, Sugar Cane Negro, Handkerchief Head, Trojan Horse, Anti-black, Pro-White, Remus, Sambo, Sambo Tom, the Anti-Christ," and one that really pissed me off, "Republican."

(Laughter.)

MR. ELDER: A man can only take so much.

I argue that blacks are more racist than whites, not to say that the majority of blacks are racist, but if we are talking about white racism being a major force in America, I think we have to look at black racism.

In California there was this fight over Proposition 209, to abolish race and gender-based affirmative action. The guy who led the charge was Ward Connally, a black man who is a contractor in the Bay Area. He was attacked, I mean viciously attacked, especially by black leaders and black political figures, one of who was State Senator Dianne Watson.

Ward Connally happens to be married to a white woman. And Dianne Watson says, "I know why you support the abolition of affirmative action. You are married to a white woman. You have

no ethnic pride. You want to be white; that's why you support this measure."

Did she apologize? No. In fact, when reporters asked her about it, she said, "That's right, I said it and I don't take it back."

She is now, by the way, the Ambassador to Micronesia, care of Bill Clinton.

Charles Rangel, the New York Congressman, said of the GOP 1994 Congress, "They don't say 'Spic' or 'Nigger' anymore. They just say 'Let's cut taxes.'" To this day he has not apologized, nor felt any reason to.

Al Gore's campaign manager, Donna Brazil, referred to the Republican Party as the party of the white boys. Do you recall that? No apology. No apology demanded and none given.

I debated Julianne Malveaux, who is, in my opinion, one of the more irresponsible writers. She writes a column for USA Today. She happens to be an economist. I was debating her on a nationally televised program. I said, "You know what the program here is? This almost pathological search for the great white bigot." To which she responded, "You are wrong, Larry Elder. There is not a great white bigot. There are about 200 million little white ones." That is a quote.

I gave a speech before the Anti-Defamation League once. And they commissioned a poll and found out, good news,

anti-Semitism in America is at an all-time low. The American anti-Semitic rate, according to the ADL-commissioned poll, stood at about 9 percent, again, an historical low.

However, in the black community it was four times higher than the overall rate. These are the kinds of things that I point out in the book. During the Proposition 209 fight, a local college wanted to host a debate. To debate the pro-affirmative action side they hired and paid a guy names Joe Hicks who now heads the L.A. Civil Rights Commission. To debate the anti-affirmative action, they hired David Duke.

When I read that they were going to invite David Duke, I called them and I offered myself to debate the anti-affirmative action side, and they decided David Duke would be a much more effective person. Because, after all, anybody who is opposed to affirmative action is "David Duke-like" in their mentality.

These are the kinds of things that I am talking about. These statements are routinely made, routinely not checked. But the overall theme on the part of somebody like Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, Maxine Waters, is that if you can't get a loan at the bank, it is obviously because a racist lender refused to give you the money. If you live in an area where there is a lot of violence and a lot of crime and you can't get insurance, obviously, you are a victim of racist redlining.

If your kid doesn't do well on the SAT, well, the problem is not your kid and your kid's refusal to work harder and your refusal to put more pressure on the kid to work harder and the crappy school the kid goes to, it's because racist examiners decided to culturally bias tests.

What does this say? It says that people like that are willing to accept the worst possible motive in the minds and hearts of white people; that white people really get up in the morning and want to oppress black people. Now, that is something that we call in the black community "racial profiling." And it is as offensive as when it is done to black people. Anyway, that is the first chapter.

The second chapter, equally as important in my opinion, is that white condescension is as real as black racism. And I have lots of examples of that. Some of them are the Columbine tragedy. Within a matter of days, I pick up a newspaper and there are all these articles about "Where were the parents?" "How could Mom and Dad have allowed this to have happened?"

But when somebody comes down in the inner city, where are the thought pieces? Where is the analysis? Where is the assumption that a parent should have stopped this?

Jesse Jackson hopped on a plane and went down to Decatur, Illinois, you might remember, when those seven kids were kicked out for fighting in the stands at a football game. The

kids turned out to have gang-related ties and collectively had missed something like 400 days of school. But Jesse Jackson decided that the suspension and expulsion was a result of a racist school board.

That is incredible, the assumption that white people would conspire to kick out black kids just because they are black, and the almost silent response on the part of the people who were accused. It is just amazing to me that white people can be accused of all manner of things and rather than say, "you are just full of it," there is silence, there is fear, there is intimidation. I consider that to be a form of condescension.

I think a lot of people, whites, who, deep down inside, if they are honest and support affirmative action, do so because they really believe blacks aren't smart enough. They really believe blacks aren't sharp enough. They really believe blacks can't make it without a boost. If you have a conversation with some people and you really get deep and they get loose, I believe that many white people who support affirmative action will in fact admit that.

The media bias is one of my chapters. There is absolutely no question that there is liberal bias in the media. That doesn't mean that the media [doesn't] get the facts and it doesn't mean that they are evil. It doesn't mean that they are

out to oppress people. But the media bias, I don't think, can be refuted if you are fair minded.

Gannett, no right wing organization, commissioned a poll back in 1996 and asked Washington, D.C. journalists, "For whom did you vote in 1992?" Forty-seven percent of the America people voted for Bill Clinton. Eighty-nine percent of Washington, D.C. reporters did. Forty-three percent of the America people voted for George Bush. Seven percent of Washington, D.C. reporters did. About a third of Americans call themselves moderate, about a third conservative and about a third liberal. Two percent of Washington, D.C. reporters describe themselves as conservative.

Now, what is the argument? Well, reporters are capable of setting aside their emotional feelings and write a story right down the middle. I don't pretend to be able to set aside my emotions. And I think it is pretty unrealistic to think reporters can write a story about gun control -- when in fact they are in favor of gun control -- and write it right down the middle. And there are lots of example of that.

The Media Research Center conducted studies, looked at the coverage of the Brady bill debate, ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN, to find out whether or not it was fair, whether or not it was balanced. And they looked at hundreds of hours of shows. So

this was not just some impressionistic kind of thing, "Well, the liberals feel this way."

I tried in my book to document everything I say, so it is not anecdotal and it's not impressionistic. They found out that routinely people like Sarah Brady, who is the head of Handgun Control, Inc., a 501-(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the same as the NRA, routinely she was referred to as an advocate. Wayne LaPierre, Charlton Heston, the NRA, people like that, were routinely referred to as lobbyists. Now, either they are both advocates or they are both lobbyists, but pick one.

Now, obviously the term "advocate" has a much more refreshing sound, a much more noble sound than the term "lobbyist." They found that the media routinely did that.

When you watch a news account, they will go to a "talking head" to kind of illustrate a point or to give you some background. How often were pro-gun control talking heads used versus anti-gun control talking heads used? A two-to-one margin, the networks used a pro-gun control talking head with an academician or somebody else, a politician, who supported more gun control than they did for people for the other side. Now, that is a form of media bias.

And I doubt whether or not, when the reporter sat down and did the story, he or she said, "How can I slant this from my point of view?" I don't think you can help it.

Look at what happened with George W. Bush recently. His mike was open, you will remember and he made those rather unguarded remarks about that New York Times reporter, Adam Clymer. He referred to him as a "major league ass hole."

By the way, I talked to a number of reporters in and around New York and they tell me that Adam Clymer is an ass hole.

(Laughter.)

MR. ELDER: But I guess truth is not a complete defense. His mike was open. He shouldn't have said it. Any smart politician should be aware, whenever there is a mike in front of you, whether it is hot or cold, shut your mouth.

But does he have reason to be a little irritated with the New York Times? They wrote a series of articles critical of his record as Governor -- fair enough. But they wrote a number of articles critical about his intellectual fire power. One of the articles referred to him as an "air head."

There was one article, an analysis piece, that said something like this: While George W. Bush was frolicking at Yale, Al Gore was studying at Harvard.

Let's talk about the frolic and the study. It turns out that, when you look at the undergraduate grades of Al Gore, his grades were lower than were the undergraduate grades of George W. Bush. Al Gore enrolled in a divinity school. He took eight courses over three semesters, got five F's, and flunked

out. He then enrolled in law school, made mediocre grades, and dropped out.

George W. Bush has an undergraduate degree from Yale and a Harvard MBA. Who is the idiot? It is not fair. All I am asking for is fairness.

And I have anecdote after anecdote after anecdote, study after study after study, of polling data going back twenty or thirty years, where reporters are asked, do you consider yourself to be a moderate or conservative or a liberal and so forth? And almost by a two-to-one margin the reporters self-described themselves as liberals or moderate versus those who described themselves as conservative. I don't know how, if you are a human being, that cannot seep into your work.

In our judicial system, we have what we call preemptory challenges. A preemptory challenge is what a lawyer can use, because he sees somebody and he just doesn't think they are going to follow the judge's instructions and render a fair decision. Why do we have that? We have that because we recognize certain people, despite what they say, cannot be fair. I think the same kind of thing applies here.

I don't know how human beings who are in favor of gun control are going to write a fair article about gun control. I don't know how human beings who are in favor of affirmative action are going to write a fair article about affirmative

action. I submit to you that certainly many do, but some cannot do that.

The other chapter is "The Glass Ceiling is Full of Holes." Not long ago Bill Clinton gave a speech, where he said, "Women earn about three-quarters for every dollar a man earns." And he said, "You wouldn't tolerate three out of four elections, would you?" I am not sure of the correlation, but what the hell?

Women earn 75 cents for every dollar a man earns for doing the same work. I ran a business for 16 years. Assume that that is true. Any CEO who has a predominantly male work force ought to go out immediately and fire all the men and hire women. Why doesn't that happen?

On the one hand, we argue for minimum wage laws because, after all, our dastardly CEO's are just concerned about the bottom line. We have to have a mandatory Family and Medical Leave because dastardly employers would not take into consideration the value of their employees because all they are concerned about is the bottom line. But over here we are assuming that they completely ignore the bottom line and just hire buddies so they can go out and drink after work. I don't think that that makes a whole lot of sense.

June O'Neill, who is an economist specializing in labor relations, used to be the head of the respected Congressional Budget Office. And she looked at apples to apples, unlike what

Bill Clinton did, throwing all women in one pool and all men in one pool and then comparing them as if they are the are the same.

She looked at people who went to School A, versus men who went to School A; women who graduated at the same level versus men who graduated at the same level; women who had the same major versus men who had the same major; women who entered the same corporations, stayed at that corporation, did not take time out for having children. There was absolutely no difference in their incomes. When you compare apples to apples, what Bill Clinton said is simply false.

Furthermore, he is doing women damage. How? He increases their cost of hiring. If you hire a woman and you know that somebody may come along and accuse you of discrimination because you haven't paid them what somebody else feels that they should be paid, if you increase the likelihood of a woman taking off because of the Family and Medical Leave Act, what you really have done to an employer is said: Look, this woman may cost you some money down the road. So, a rational business person, looking at an equally qualified man versus an equally qualified woman, knows that the guy is less likely to give him some grief and may very well hire the man over the woman.

So, these kinds of measures that Bill Clinton has been advancing are in fact net negatives for the very people he

purports to help. Ironic, since without women's votes, he never would have been elected either time.

I also talk about America's greatest problem. Far and away, America's greatest problem are not bad schools, although it is very important, are not drugs, although that is very important, are not crime, although that is very important. America's number one greatest problem is illegitimacy. By that I mean children having children. I don't talk about the Murphy Brown problem, where somebody who has the resources decides for whatever reason she wants to have a child on her own or somebody, as a single person, wants to adopt.

I am talking about people who cannot feed, clothe and educate a child having a child. And what we have done is provide incentives for that very thing through our welfare state. My father is 85 years old. He is a child of the Depression. He grew up in the South.

When I was a child, he worked two full-time jobs as a janitor, cooked for a white family on the weekends, and went to night school three nights a week to get his GED, because he left home when he was 13 and never finished school. He does not, by the way, know who his biological father is.

My father told me that welfare is probably the worse thing that ever happened to this country and the worse thing that ever happened to black people. There was a time, after slavery,

when a black man was as likely to have a child within the confines of a marriage as a white man. Look at census data. And it is kind of sketchy, because records were not kept very well in those days.

But, as near as I can tell, around the turn of the century a black child was as likely to be born in a nuclear, intact family as a white child. What happened? We launched Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, essentially going door to door and encouraging people to get on welfare, "Here are the benefits that you can get."

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, back in 1965, wrote a book called, "The Negro Family: A Case for National Action." At the time, 25 percent of black children were born outside of wedlock. He considered this to be a call to arms and we must, we must do something about it.

I was in my first year of college when I read his book, in Sociology 101. I was one of a handful of blacks in the class. The professor thought the book was racist. The kids thought the book was racist. I am sitting in the back, having been born and raised in South Central L.A., and I raised my hand and I said, "Well, I don't know that he is racist. Maybe there is like something there."

That's not a terribly sophisticated analysis, I agree. I was called all sorts of names, Uncle Tom this and Uncle Tom

that, that I was Euro-centric, that I believed in a patriarchal structure. Fast forward to the year 2000, nearly 70 percent of today's black children are born outside of wedlock.

Do you want to know why there is a drug problem in the inner city? Do you want to know why there is a crime problem in the inner city? Do you want to know why schools are bad in the inner city? Start there.

I quote a book by a man by the name of James Robeson called "My Father's Face." In the first chapter, he talks about a Federal prison chaplain who decided to increase morale. He went down to one of the major greeting card companies, I think it was Hallmark or American Greeting, and said, "Look, Mothers Day is coming up. Why don't you, as an act of good will and PR for you, give us 500 free Mothers' Day cards?"

They thought it was a good idea. They did. It was extremely successful. Every single inmate filled out a Mothers' Day card and sent it to good old Mom.

Fathers' Day rolled around. The chaplain thought he would duplicate his success. He went down and got 500 more Fathers' Day cards. Not a single inmate, not one, wanted to send one to his father. Are there any questions? Not one.

The health care crisis, I call it the big lie. Tell me, Ed, where in the Constitution, Article I, Section 8, does it

say we are supposed to provide health care benefits for somebody else?

MR. CRANE: It turns out it doesn't.

MR. ELDER: No, I don't think it does. You see, you take money from this person and give it to that person's health care. You take money from this person who is childless and give it to that person who had three or four kids, and didn't ask your permission to have them, but the way. There is something wrong here.

Furthermore, it doesn't work. Even putting aside the constitutional and philosophical arguments, it doesn't work. The Medicare Act was passed in 1965. The 20 years before that, the typical day in a hospital increased three-fold. Twenty years after the enactment of the Medicare Act of 1965, the typical day in one hospital increased eight-fold; and you can't attribute it just to inflation.

When the hype of "Hillary Care" was going on, we were urged to take a look north at the wonderful Canadian system. Look at the wonderful Canadian system. It is in a total meltdown right now. People are coming over the border. I know, I lived in Cleveland for a number of years. They are coming over the boarder for cutting-edge technology. They are just now getting some MRI's there. There are lines. There are people who are waiting right now. There are people who are now dying because

they can't get it on. It's a very complicated thing, health care.

Now, we have a government that does not run the post office as effectively as FedEx runs it. What makes them think they can run something as complicated as health care? I mean it is really quite outrageous. There are about 40 or 50 million people without health care insurance.

Well, if you massage the numbers, about half of those are people who are between jobs and will be without health care for no more than a few months. Another several million are people who are perfectly healthy, young people, who have done the numbers and decided the likelihood of them going to a hospital is very low. If I add up all the premiums that I will save, I will net out. If you count those, if you count the millions who are drug addicts, who are hookers, prostitutes and other people in our society, I guess so. Another several million could easily be added to mom or dad's health care at work for a relatively small amount of money, but they just haven't done it.

So when you really get down to it, there are probably no more than 10 million Americans that are without health care insurance, which, of course, does not mean they are without health care.

There is still Medicaid, and hospitals have to, by law, admit you when there is an emergency. So, what we really are

doing is deciding that we need a Canadian type, one system fits all, for the 260 million Americans who are perfectly happy and who have health care insurance in order to take care of the 10 million. Does that make a lot of sense?

We have talked about the welfare state already, which is my other chapter.

And then I have another chapter, called "Republicans Versus Democrats, Maybe a Dime's Worth of Difference." Now, it is a little over the top. And clearly there are differences between Al Gore and George W. Bush. And if the choices were just those two, I would certainly vote for George W. Bush. Fortunately for me, the choices aren't limited to those two, and I typically vote for the Libertarian candidate.

One of my frequent guests on my program is Congressman David Dreier. He is the third most powerful Congressman on the Hill, the Chairman of the House Rules Committee. He often, of course, comes on the program to talk about the vast differences between the two parties. And I asked him why it was that 80 members of his own Party voted to increase the minimum wage. He said, "Well, yes, you are right. We do have some defections."

I asked him why, during Clinton's weakest moment, when Republicans were in charge of both chambers of Congress, as they still are, why the tax cut was 1 percent.

"Well, you are right. We need to do a little bit better."

Why is it that Congressman Dewine, in Ohio, is critical of the so-called dumping of steel in his State when in fact consumers benefit? "I thought your party was about free trade."

"Well, yeah, we do have defections."

George W. Bush gave a speech in Philadelphia and he said, "No American should pay more than 30 percent of his income to the Federal Government."

Thirty percent? I was thinking the number should be closer to, oh, I don't know, zero. And we should get back to what the Founders of the Constitution intended, which was for duties and tariffs to pay for the fundamental duties and obligations of the Federal Government which are: provide for the national defense, coin money, conduct a census every 10 years and a few others. Outside of that, that is it.

But he was willing to settle for 30 percent. And of course, when you add up the State income taxes that some of us pay -- California is 10 percent -- plus the real estate taxes, plus the sales taxes and others, you are getting pretty close up to the 40, 45, and 50 percent territory.

According to Milton Friedman, about 50 percent of the Nation's income, when you count unfunded mandates, when Washington says to a business person you must do this, that and

the other -- and doesn't provide any funds for doing it, of course -- he considers those to be taxes. So, depending upon how you define taxes, the grab of the Nation's income is at an all-time high.

My other chapter is on the war on drugs, which I feel ought to be called off. That is not an endorsement for drugs. However, as for the sins of my youth, Ed, either the Lord has forgiven me or the statute of limitations has run out.

According to Janet Reno, about 50 percent of all crime is directly or indirectly related to people robbing and maiming and stealing to support a drug habit that is prohibitively expensive, that is much more expensive because of the black market. You never know how much it has increased it, but some estimates are that it increased the price 20-fold, some say 30-fold, and some say 40-fold. But there is a constitutional principle here. That is, this is my body. I own it, not the state. If I choose to abuse it, it is my call.

A woman has a right to abort a child, but I don't have a right to ingest illegal drugs. There is something wrong here. William F. Buckley estimates that we are spending over \$200 billion fighting this war on drugs. And those aren't just the direct costs that the Drug Czar is spending; these are the direct costs because of the increased crime, the higher insurance premium that we are paying, prison space. About 30 percent or so

of prisons in this country are there for drug offenses, many of whom have never committed a violent offense.

I am kind of surprised at the black leadership here. About half of all prisoners in this country are black. A substantial percentage of those are there for drug-related offenses. I am kind of surprised. Rather than yelling about the unjust, unfair, racist criminal justice system, black leaders don't connect the dots, and point their finger at the culprit. And that is this war on drugs.

It is the same thing with DWB. DWB is largely a measure of cops looking for people who are possessing or dealing drugs. You get rid of the drug war and you cut down the reason for so many police interactions with black people in the first place.

The last chapter is on gun control advocates. I call it, "Gun Control Advocates, the Good Guys With Blood on Their Hands." I've had some very fascinating discussions with people who are gun control advocates, one of whom is the LAPD Chief, Bernard Parks. He comes on my program regularly, which is pretty courageous because I give him a lot of heat and my callers give him a lot of heat. But he comes on once a month to answer all sorts of questions.

He is one of those, as are most police chiefs, in favor of further gun control legislation. He is opposed to allowing

citizens to apply for a permit to carry concealed weapons, which, of course, I am in favor of. He talks about all the horrible things that would happen if more and more citizens were armed.

I said, "Chief" -- and I would urge you to try this with your friends -- "how often do Americans use guns for defensive purposes every year?" He said, "I don't know." I said, "Well, what do you think?" He said, "I don't know." I said, "Is it relevant?" He said, "Not particularly."

"So, it is relevant to know that 20,000 Americans die because of guns, but it is irrelevant to know how many people are alive because of guns. Is that what you are telling me?"

He said, "Well, I just don't trust any figures on it."

I said, "I understand that. Do you have an estimate, a ballpark, an assumption, something?" He said, "No."

I said: Let me help you out. According to John Lott, the author of the book, "More Guns, Less Crime," 2.5 million Americans every year use a gun for defensive purposes. Ninety-eight percent of them are simply brandishing the gun to break off the attack.

Gary Kleck, a criminologist from Florida, estimates that, out of that figure, 400,000 thought that they would be dead had they not used the gun. Four hundred thousand and twenty thousand. Do the math.

"I don't believe the figures," he said.

I said, "Fine. The Federal Government, in a study that Clinton doesn't refer to very often for some reason, estimates that Americans use guns for defensive purposes 1.5 million times. Will you accept that figure?"

"Well, I don't know."

I said, "Well, let's do it this way, Chief. In Switzerland and in Israel, the per capita ownership rate is much higher than ours in America, yet their murder rate is lower. In Ireland and Scotland, they have very draconian gun laws, however their murder rate is higher. Please explain."

Do you know what he said?

"Well, I don't live in those countries." I said, "Chief, what I just did was called 'making an analogy.' Do you see what I am saying? I was trying to get you to try to understand that the variable here is not the guns."

"Yeah, but I don't care because I live here."

I don't know what you do with that. I don't know what you do with that mind set. Washington, D.C., our beloved city, has very, very draconian gun laws, and, as you know, one of the highest per capita murder rates in the country.

The people who need the ability to get guns the most are those living in the inner city with very high crime areas. Because the bad guys are going to get their guns. They ain't going down to a gun store and filling out an application that can

be followed up on. They are going to steal them or get them on the black market. Always was; always will. The ones who are de-fanged are those who need to have a gun.

Now, it is always big news headlines when something like the Day Trader shooting takes place in Atlanta. But there was a little known story. Around the same time as the Atlanta Day Trader shooting, either the day before or the day after, I forget which, a guy fired a guy. The guy's wife called up the boss, former boss, and said, "My husband is going bonkers. I don't know what he is going to do. He is yelling. He is screaming. He is cursing. He is making death threats against you. I just don't know what to tell you."

The boss got scared and went out and got a handgun. Fortunately for him, they did an instant background check where he was able to it just like that. [Snaps fingers.] He came back to the office. Sure enough, the guy shows up with a firearm. Because he had a firearm, he was able to disarm that guy.

What is the moral to the story? The moral to the story is that these handgun waiting periods sound very fine in theory. And I am certain it is true that some hothead, because he or she couldn't get a gun without waiting five, eight or 14 days, did calm down and didn't do anything bad.

But other people need guns and need them right away. You are a woman. You have a fight with your boyfriend. He makes

threats to you. You call the cops. "Well, the threats really haven't risen to the level where we can stake somebody out on your house." And by the way, the police have no legal obligation to protect you. The guy comes back and kills her. There are instances like that that happen in this country.

These laws have costs and the other side refuses to recognize those costs, and frequently the media will not give you and information. When was the last time you saw any article in the media on a gun control issue, whether it is trigger locks or safety locks or licensing or registration? When was the last time you saw any article anywhere that even talked about how often Americans use guns for defensive purposes? Yes, it is as if it is just an irrelevant factor. It is amazing to me.

When I was at the Republican Convention in Philadelphia, there was an article on the front page of the Washington Post, page A-2 of the Philadelphia Inquirer. Researchers, writing for the Journal of the American Medical Association, who had previously written in favor of further gun control, did a study on the effect of the 1994 Brady Bill. Something like 16 or 18 States already had Brady-like measures and there were some 30-some States that didn't.

And the theory was, in the States that now had to adopt Brady-like measures, you should find a decrease in crime steeper

than the decrease in the other ones. There was no difference, none. The headlines said, "Brady law ineffective, study says."

There was one bit of "good news," and I put that in quotes. "Among adults over 55, there was a 6 percent decline in gun suicides." Read down a few more paragraphs, though: The overall suicide rate was unchanged. Obviously, the older people substituted guns for knives or for carbon monoxide or something else. The point is, they still killed themselves.

The Washington Post, front page, Philadelphia Inquirer, second page, L.A. Times, which editorialized back in December of 1993 that no one, I mean no one -- this was an editorial, not an op ed piece -- no one should have a gun other than law enforcement, no one; essentially, they were arguing for the repeal of the Second Amendment, although they didn't say it that way -- the L.A. Times, page A-9, and it was roughly one-tenth the size of the article as it was in the other papers even though it was the Associated Press and they were able to reprint it verbatim if they wanted to, they just chose certain points.

The classic, though, goes to USA Today. They ran a headline on the story, not on the front page, and it said, "Brady law effective in declining gun suicides," ignoring, of course, the major finding, which was that the law was ineffective. And even in the USA Today article, in the third paragraph it said,

"but the overall suicide rate was unchanged." They had to fight to find something positive, and they made that the headline.

That is what I mean by media bias. That is what I am talking about. That is what I am talking about. How is that possible they could do that? And you're flipping through, most people don't have a lot of time to read, and you read the headline, "Brady law effective in gun suicides."

"Yes, just what I thought," and keep on going. Therefore, we don't think. And the majority of American people have never thought about the other side, have never thought about the other equation.

When I talked about this once on my show, I said, I am going to talk about how often guns are used for defensive purposes. And I got an e-mail from a man with a Ph.D in engineering. I had another buddy who also had a Ph.D in science. These were very well-educated persons, very well read. He wrote and said, "Larry, a buddy of mine and I were talking about how often we thought guns were used for defensive purposes before we heard your show."

Do you know what number they came up with nationwide? Fifty, 5-0. He said, "We did that based on newspaper stories, because we rarely see a story where somebody used a gun to break off an attack." And the reason you never see it is (a) the bias, and (b) no blood, no story.

If somebody is breaking in your window and you pull a gun, "Get out of my window or I'll blow your ass away," and he runs, where's the story? What do you do, call a reporter and say, "By the way, somebody just..." There is no story. So people just are completely unaware of how often Americans, every single day, use guns.

This guy thought 50. The government said 1.5 million. John Lott says 2.5 million. Now, there is a big disconnect between 1.5 million and 50, ain't it?

Now, these are well-educated people. The information is just not being given. That is what I am talking about on gun control.

I am often asked about my attitude. Why is it you are so positive? Why is it you believe so strongly in this country? I told you the story about my father. My mother was the same way. She was also born in the South. One day when I was in high school, we read a poem written by a guy who was quite angry about racism and it goes something like this:

"While riding through Baltimore, so small and full of glee, I saw a young Baltimorean keep alookin' straight at me.

"Now, I was young and very small and he was not a wit bigger, and so I smiled, but he poked out his tongue and called me 'nigger.'

"I saw the whole of Baltimore from May until September. Of all the things that happened there, that is all that I remember."

We spent a whole hour on this, and people were ticked off. The teacher thought about the damage done to this kid's psyche and how this kid is forever going to be burnished with the racist statement made by this little boy and how this child would be scarred forever.

So I went home and Mom was in the kitchen stirring a big pot of greens with a big spoon. I'll never forget it. I said, "Mom, we read this poem in class and everybody had this reaction. And I want to know what you thought."

She said, "Well, what is it?"

So I said:

"While riding through Baltimore so small and full of glee, I saw a young Baltimorean keep alookin' straight at me.

"Now, I was young and very small and he was no wit bigger, and so I smiled, but he poked out his tongue and called me 'nigger.'

"I saw the whole of Baltimore from May until September. Of all the things that happened there, that's all that I remember."

My mother shook her head, took the spoon out, rapped it on the side of the pot, turned to me, and she said, "Larry, it's too bad he let that spoil his vacation."

Thank you so much for having me. I will be glad to take some questions.

(Applause.)

MR. CRANE: Would you wait for the microphone, please. Speak directly into it. And please state your affiliation, if you would.

MR. ELDER: You were smiling at me the whole time, you are next. I am single, by the way.

(Laughter.)

MR. HARVEY: I am Phil Harvey, DKG International and PHE.

Apart from eliminating welfare, which is at least being partly accomplished, what would you do about the illegitimacy problem?

MR. ELDER: Well, I would completely eliminate welfare. What we have done now is had welfare reform. And, depending upon the State, some are more aggressive than others. Wisconsin, Michigan and New Jersey are some of the more aggressive States, and they have seen a greater decline in welfare rolls than the other States that have been less aggressive. So I would completely eliminate State welfare. I will give people back

their money and allow private organizations, charitable organizations, churches, the Salvation Army, United Way, agencies like that help people who are truly in need.

Whenever I say that, people say, "Well, what makes you so sure that people will do the right thing?"

To the person who says it, I say, "Well, do you give?"

"Well, yes, I do."

"Do your friends give?"

"Well, yes."

"I see. So you would give, but you assume that anybody else would give?" That's kind of interesting.

Under the Reagan era, when he cut the marginal tax rate from 70 percent to 28 percent, and therefore the value of the deduction also went down, charitable giving both on the part of individuals and corporations in this country went up. We are the most generous nation on the face of the earth. We are the ones who did the heavy lifting in the Cold War. We are the ones who went to Kosovo and Somalia and Bosnia for humanitarian reasons. We are the ones that give more foreign aid than any other country. We are the ones who contribute the most to the International Monetary Fund.

What makes you think that if Americans had their money back we wouldn't give a damn about people that are hurt, that are sick, that are needy? I mean, it is really kind of an insult for

Americans to feel that way about each other. We give more money than the French as a percentage. We donate more time than the French and the Germans and the Japanese do. There is no reason to believe that if Americans had their money back we wouldn't be equally as generous.

But even if I am wrong, the point is we would need to be less generous than the Federal Government is, because you are going to have fewer problems in the first place. Furthermore, people like Thomas Sole estimates that when you look at transfer costs, the dollar that leaves Washington, D.C. that is designed to get down to the person that is in need, by the time he or she gets that dollar, it has been reduced to 30 cents.

Look at United Way and the Salvation Army. And I was a loan volunteer for United Way. About 90 to 95 cents on the dollar gets down to the intended beneficiary. So, (a), you would have less need, and (b), the monies would be spent in a far more efficient and a more humane way.

Yes, ma'am?

MS. SANDS: I am Peggy Sands. I just moved here recently from Santa Barbara, California. I have lived there all my life. It is a pleasure to be able to talk about some of these things without having to say that I am not a racist and all that. I know I relate so much to what you say.

I have worked at the University of California, trying so much to write about affirmative action, bilingual ed, which is equally insidious for the Latino children.

MR. ELDER: I just wrote a column about bilingual education.

MS. SANDS: It is just insidious. I think there is a big analogy between the illegitimacy problem you see in the black community and divorce in the white community, why so many kids are so angry and so alone.

I lived in Switzerland a number of years. You are absolutely right, there were guns in every home, loaded guns.

MR. ELDER: Yes, by law.

MS. SANDS: Yes, by law. Every man is in the service until they are in their forties. Every kid knows where that gun is, and nobody uses them in the schools. So there are a lot of deep things about how --

MR. ELDER: I don't live in Switzerland, though, so it doesn't count.

(Laughter.)

MS. SANDS: Right. I did, so I did count.

How do you make people more aware of it? You are absolutely right, it is because people don't know. And how do you fight the media bias? I have tried writing these things. I have given a few lectures to places like the Rotary Club, but you

can't get into the mainstream to make people more aware about these things.

And you are branded a racist and a bigot. How can you raise the level of awareness?

MR. ELDER: It's a difficult proposition. I remember Ed Crane, years ago, when the Cato Institute was just a gleam in his eye. And look where we are now. People like Cato have been quoted more and more in places like the Wall Street Journal and other mainstream newspapers. And the rise of so-called conservative and libertarian talk radio, I think, is a testament to people's being fed up with this.

This is just an anecdotal story and I am not sure it proves my point. There is a critic in L.A. named Tom Lutey. I don't mention his by name in my book because I don't want to slam him. But he writes a column called "Radio Guide" or something like that, and he just hates my show.

I have been on radio now going on seven years. And I usually don't read any of the radio columnists and radio guides and newsletters on radio because, who cares? My job is ratings. And the fact that an insider may or may not like my show is neither here nor there. The average person is not going to read it, so it is just going to be irrelevant.

It is just like an actor who reads his reviews and gets upset, when in fact if the movie is any good, people will see it

and if it is bad, they won't. But he just slammed me. And the reason I read it was that I was in the can once and somebody had it on the floor. So I like to read and I was bored, so I just started to read it. And he was just slamming me: I was abrasive and angry. And I am one of the least angry guys I know. So I said, oh, so the guy doesn't like my ideology.

Well, fast forward about four or five years ago. I was being considered for a television show, which ultimately I am doing. I get a letter from this guy, an e-mail.

"Dear Larry, I am Tom Lutey. I write the Radio Guide in L.A. And --"

[End Side A. Begin Side B.]

MR. ELDER: -- "I heard you were thinking about going into a television show. Well, I have a production background, and I think I could be an asset to you."

He was just telling me how much he wanted to work with me. I ignored the letter. I got another one. I ignored that one. I get another one.

"Dear Larry, I think I figured out why you have ignored my letters. I have written very negatively about you. And I will be honest with you. I don't like your ideology and, therefore, it is quite difficult for me to listen with an open ear."

Then he proceeded to tell me how good he was. He admitted it. Maybe that was just a suck-up to get me to call him back, but I think that is a classic admission. I did not write fairly because I emotionally couldn't do it. He admitted it.

This is the challenge. This is what we are up against, and it is very difficult. All we can do is keep fighting the good fight. The fact is I got this book published by a very major publisher, St. Martins. About 10 years ago, Ed, I had a similar manuscript. I mean, I have had these views for a long time. It is nothing new. I am not reinventing the wheel over here.

I had a literary agent who went around to the major literary houses, and doors were slammed in his face time after time after time. In fact, they said, "We don't believe your numbers. We don't believe what you are saying about gun control. We don't believe what you are saying about the damage done by minimum wage laws. We don't trust your data."

That was about 10 years ago. In this round I had several publishers bidding on this book. Now, part of it is that I am now a talk show host in Los Angeles. But part of it is I think the country is more ready than before to hear this kind of message. So I am quite hopeful. Ultimately, the truth will win.

Yes, sir?

MR. MILLIKEN: Al Milliken, Washington Independent Writers.

I would be curious on what you see happening with the reparations movement. Do you see this as a threat to divide the Democratic Party and divide the American people?

MR. ELDER: Do I feel this is a danger and possibly dividing the Democratic Party and a threat to the American people?

Well, I don't know about the Democratic Party, but the answer to your second question is yes.

What could be more idiotic? What could be more idiotic? How many living slaves are there? How many living slave owners are there? The whole idea of reparations is to get money from somebody who has done something wrong to you. I have never been a slave, and I don't know anybody who has every been a slave owner.

How do you do that anyway, practically, tactically? Do you not take money from descendants of whites whose great, great, great grandfather fought and died on the Union side? Do you not take money from whites who came to the country after slavery? A lot of people came over, as you know, during the interwar period.

Do you give money to Bill Cosby? What do you do about the fact that even in the South most white Southerners never

owned any slaves? In fact, only 25 percent did. Only a handful of that percentage ever owned a large number of slaves.

What do you do about the fact that black Americans are better off today than they would have been had they remained in Western Africa?

Do I owe myself money? Do I owe myself reparations? What do you do about multiracial people? Give them a third of a check? Why don't we just cut to the chase and I'll move back to Africa, you move back to Ireland, you move back to Germany and we will give the land back to the Native Americans? I mean it is absurd.

What do we do about women? Women couldn't vote until fairly recently. Should they also pay the check or, since they were discriminated against, should they pay less money, or do we absolve them and it is just white men?

What do you do about poor whites? Obviously, the system was rigged for white people, but there are more poor whites than poor blacks. What about them? Do they pay as well since the system didn't apparently work for them?

I mean, I just can't think of anything more absurd and more divisive. And what a waste of time. We have under-performing schools. The majority of black parents want vouchers. What does the Democratic Party want? They are absolutely opposed to them because of the Teachers Union.

Al Gore is absolutely opposed to them. Jesse Jackson is absolutely opposed to them. What is the bigger problem, illegitimacy, bad schools, crime, drugs, or getting a check from the government because of reparations?

Should blacks have been compensated upon emancipation? Absolutely. It is a moral wrong this country did to blacks and it will forever be a stain on this country's history. But, right now, today, let's just get busy, work hard, get ahead. All of this negativity, all of this discussions of reparations creates a mind set that you can't make it.

There was a poll in the L.A. Times, "Can You in America Make It If You Work Hard?" Whites earning \$25,000 or less were more likely to say "yes" to that question than blacks earning \$50,000 or more.

There is a problem with attitude in this country. And things like reparations create a polluted environment and take time, effort and attention away from real problems that can be solved.

Yes, ma'am?

MS. MALESKY: My name is Liz Malesky and I am a 27-year member of the Libertarian Party. But, of course, there aren't very many of us so I primarily vote Republican and I have to be interested in what is going on.

I have a theory that the Republican Party, the only reason that they are not very outgoing toward the black community, is because it is sort of below their radar screen. That is not really one of their -- they are ostensibly more interested in economic issues and foreign policy.

I would like to know if you have a theory of how the Republican Party could reach out without just looking like they are sucking up and trying to get votes? Because most black people are natural conservatives. Why our party or the Republican Party isn't more involved in their lives, I don't know.

MR. ELDER: Well, I would dispute the notion that blacks are naturally conservative. Perhaps conservative in moral behavior and character, but in politics or ideology, they are not. Blacks are interested in expansion of government.

The problem the Republican Party has is reaching out without selling out. There is a distinction. You put on Colin Powell at the convention and he talks about his support for affirmative action. Well, most people in the Republican Party are now interested in affirmative action. So, what are you saying? We are now going to take another look at affirmative action in order to attract blacks. And then what? Lose the core of other people who are, in part, in the party because they oppose preferences.

So the real problem, frankly, is not what can the Republicans do. It's why are blacks so angry and so willing to accuse Republicans of bigotry. Now, I am not sure the Republicans have an obligation to "reach out." I think blacks have an obligation to open their minds and stop being so unfair.

As a percentage of the party, more Republicans voted for the passage of the Civil Rights Act than did Democrats. These were redneck Democrat yahoos in the South that were stopping civil rights. George Wallace, "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow." That was a Democrat. Orville Faubus, who stopped integration of Little Rock Schools, was a Democrat. Lester Maddox, the Governor of Mississippi who had the pick handles -- remember, in his restaurant he was beating up black people? That was a Democrat.

MALE VOICE: I think that was Georgia.

MR. ELDER: I thought it was Mississippi. Well, two to one. All right, Georgia.

(Laughter.)

MR. ELDER: Okay, Larry, what else is wrong with your book? What other factual statements are wrong?

(Laughter.)

MR. ELDER: These were all Democrats. So the image of the Republican Party is one of anti-civil rights when, in fact, the historical record is very different. Remember, the first

national successful presidential candidate for the Republicans was Abraham Lincoln.

Up until Dwight Eisenhower, blacks were voting Republican 30 to 35 percent. Republicans did drop the ball. Nixon did. During the 1960 election, Martin Luther King was arrested and put in some Southern jail. And his followers wrote identically worded letters, one to Jack Kennedy, the candidate on the Democrat side and one to Richard Nixon. Nixon ignored it. Kennedy made some phone calls and got him released. Like that, the image changed.

Republicans have to make the case, as I have just done. "Minimum wage laws don't help you. Here is why." "Affirmative action is credited with the creation of the black middle class. That is just false."

There is a book called "America in Black and White" by Abigail and Steven Thurnstom, two Harvard researchers, who are, by the way, both Democrats. They document the rise of the black middle class well before anybody ever heard of affirmative action. And they also argue, as other researchers have, that affirmative action did not accelerate the pace of the black middle class.

By the way, affirmative action has a very tortured history within the black community. The first person I can find to openly advocate something akin to affirmative action was

Whitney Young, the founder of the Urban League. He advocated a period, and I am paraphrasing this, of a "Marshall Plan" to offset the historical problems of racism. He advocated a "Marshall Plan" for 10 years. He made that statement in 1963. Even then, his board said, "Are you nuts? Here we are telling America to be fair, and you want us to tell America to 'hire Negroes just because they are Negroes?' We won't do it." His board voted against it.

Bayard Rustin, black and gay, he was the architect behind the "I Have a Dream" speech, did some of the operations work behind it, was adamantly opposed to preferences and affirmative action.

Arthur Ashe, in his book, "Days of Grace," he supported it, but he did so grudgingly. He said, "It will create a culture of entitlement that I fear." And that is exactly what has happened.

So this notion that there was some sort of unanimity among the black civil rights groups about affirmative action is just not true.

MR. LEVY: I am Bob Levy from the Cato Institute.

Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act provides that there shall be no discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. I wonder if you support that provision of the 1964 Civil Rights Act insofar as it

is applied first to public sector employers and, second, to private sector employers? Or, to put it bluntly, would you uphold the right of a private sector employer not to hire blacks because he does not like blacks?

MR. ELDER: Yes. When I have said that on radio, I get calls from any number of people who just go nuts. The reason I support that is of course I support freedom. And I support the freedom of people to hire and fire whomever they want for whatever reason they want.

Now, you have an employment contract and it is violated, you have a lawsuit. But I do not believe that people ought to be forced to hire based on race, based on gender, based on anything. Moreover, it is not good business to hire based on race or based on gender.

Look what happened to Texaco. When those tapes surfaced and those white executives were demeaning of those black executives, what happened to Texaco? They lost \$1 billion in fair market value in three days. Why? Racism doesn't sell in America.

Look what happened with Denny's when they demeaned those Secret Service agents here in Maryland and made them wait before they got a table and there became other stories of that around the country. Denny's had to go into a PR overload. They set up a multi-million-dollar fund for black customers who were

victimized. They had an outreach program to attract black franchisees. They apologized to America. Racism doesn't sell.

If you are a company that practices racism, you are not going to get my dime. You are not going to get the dime of most like-minded Americans. You are going to pull from a shallower labor pool, because you are not going to have the option of tapping into talented men and talented minorities.

So, for all sorts of practical reasons and moral reasons, we are not going to have a society if we had a world like that, where a bunch of people are only hiring based on race and based on gender. So when I said that, a guy calls up and he goes, "That is unrealistic and idealistic. You don't know what you are talking about, young man. I do. I work in the private sector."

Never mind that I ran a business for 15-16 years in personnel, and probably interacted with 300 large and small corporations, and I do know what I am talking about. I know what people look for when they hire people. They look for talent, because it is expensive to hire people that are not talented.

But he said, "There was a company I worked for, and there is no question about it, they did not hire black people. They told me not to hire black people."

And I said, "Sir, I never said there aren't bigots and there aren't businesses that will hire based on race. Do you ever watch Black Entertainment Television? "

He said, "Yeah."

I said, "Ever seen any white guys?"

It got quiet. He knew where I was going.

He said, "Well, that's different."

I said, "How is it different?"

He said, "That's a different genre."

I said, "Aren't they both businesses?"

"Well, yeah."

"Aren't they both interested in making money?"

"Well, yeah."

"Well, black Entertainment Television doesn't hire any white people. I have never seen a white anchor on BET. Why?"

"Well, that's different."

I said, "Is that a problem?"

"Well, uh, uh."

"Well, if it's a problem where you worked, then it is a problem with BET, isn't it? Let's be consistent."

And he had no real answer.

What is interesting about the Civil Rights Act of 1964, one of the cosponsors, of course, was Hubert Humphrey. He had to get the Southern Democrats on board. And one of the things they

feared was that the Civil Rights Act would be used for racial preferences.

Humphrey stood on the Floor of the Senate. He held up the bill, and he said, "If there is anything in this bill that smacks of racial quotas or preferences, I will eat it."

It's a good thing he is not alive, because he would probably weigh 500 pounds.

(Laughter.)

MR. ELDER: And it has been ignored. That law was designed not to have preferences. However, for the public sector, that is different. You are using taxpayers' money and you can't hire based on race, based on color, and based on religion. Of course, we ought not have discrimination with respect to government, but not in the private sector.

Two more questions. Yes, ma'am?

QUESTION: It has just been wonderful, wonderful hearing you today, just so inspiring. I agree with you on so many things. And I don't necessarily have to agree with you on everything. But I think your number one problem for America, illegitimacy, I think you are right on the money there. But I have to take that to number two. I think number one is the attitude and law that disregards the value of human life in the taking of life, innocent life, from the unborn to the frail elderly, to euthanasia. Could you address that?

MR. ELDER: Well, I disagree with you. Obviously, it is a very important issue. And I have a lot of friends who are pro-life and I happen to respect that position. I don't share it; I happen to be pro-choice.

If your argument is that our pro-choice nation is creating these problems, the problem is we have been pro-choice for a long time. Before Roe v. Wade, abortion was available in roughly 70 percent of the country. So if these problems are attributable to the availability of abortion, then one would have seen these problems a long time ago. So I just don't share that view.

In New Jersey, after welfare reform, teen pregnancy declined dramatically and there was no corresponding increase in abortion. People changed their behavior. So I believe it is the welfare state more than it is abortion.

Look, this country is seeing a decline in crime, an increase in marriage, a decrease in divorce. The numbers of people who consider themselves to be religious are at an all-time high. The numbers of people who worship regularly at church or a mosque or synagogue are at an all-time high. So, while I respect your position, I just don't share it. Most Americans are anti-abortion, but pro-choice. I don't think those are inconsistent.

Yes, sir. Last question.

QUESTION: I am just wondering if you have a theory as to why the media is overwhelmingly liberal and what could possibly be done about that?

MR. ELDER: Do I have a theory as to why the media is overwhelmingly liberal? Yes. I think the kind of person that goes into journalism has kind of a muckraker mentality, just sort of believes the system is rigged.

There was a survey, and I have it in my book, in 1980, of journalism students at Columbia -- often considered to be our finest journalism school -- who were asked various questions. Forty percent of them favored government ownership of large corporations. Only one-third of them felt that the free enterprise system was fair to workers.

Now, fast forward, about 20 years later. These people are news directors and anchors and news editors and senior writers. Now, we have all grown in 20 years. I would like to think that maybe some of those views have been shed, but I doubt it.

The kind of person who goes into journalism is the kind of person who wants to right the wrongs and has sort of a feeling that the system, as it is constructed, is rigged. When I was watching one of the conventions a few years ago -- I have a friend who is from Iran and doesn't speak English very well -- and she and I were watching the convention. She turned to me and

she said, "Larry, what is the difference between a Democrat and a Republican?"

And, Ed, no one had ever asked me that before, in that simple way. And I thought, "Damn, what am I going to say?"

(Laughter.)

MR. ELDER: And I thought about it for a few seconds, and I said, "Republicans believe hard work wins, and Democrats believe the system is rigged." That was years ago, and I really can't improve upon that right now. I think that is more or less the mentality of the two parties.

Most reporters are Democrats. Most reporters feel the system is rigged. Most reporters don't trust big business. If Firestone happens, obviously it is because executives hid the data, concealed the data, were just concerned about their profits. Never mind, when you manufacture a tire and you kill people you are going to lose your job, you are going to lose market share, you are going to get sued. The assumption is an employer will put out a defective product even if it kills people just because they think they can get away with it. It defies logic and common sense. But that is how they feel.

And some of the articles I am reading about the flap with Firestone and the documents that the executives held and all that stuff -- I mean, what do you do when you get a phone call and somebody says a tire blew and somebody else says a tire blew?

What were the road conditions? How did you drive it? Was it properly inflated? I mean, how do you know that?

At some point, if it gets serious enough, you take action. And, by the way, the NHTSA, they are not the ones who blew the whistle on this. Some State Farm adjustor started getting calls from people, saying that these tires are blowing. What would State Farm have done if they hadn't been an agency? They would have called Firestone and said, "From now on, we aren't insuring anybody with your tires."

And pretty soon they would have done an investigation. It would have happened anyway. But that is the way the reporters feel. They feel the FDA is right there. But for the FDA, we all would die because of drugs. But for the FAA we all die because of the inability and the lack of desire of aircraft carriers to maintain airworthy planes. That is the mind set of a reporter.

Okay, thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. CRANE: I would like to thank Larry Elder for a terrific presentation. I see we are selling his book for a remarkably small premium over the publisher's price outside, just a nickel, so it makes it easier.

So, if you want an autographed copy, please buy one. And please join us for lunch upstairs. Thanks.

(End of Forum.)