

From ISIS to Immigration, Where Do the Republican Candidates Stand?

The 17 Republicans running for president squared off in two debates aired on Thursday evening on Fox News.

Here is a look at some of the key points made in the debates by the candidates:

Top Candidates' Debate

– Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush said he stills believes in a path to legal status, but not amnesty, because fixing the immigration system would boost the economy; said that he was “completely pro-life” and that he did not know that a foundation board he served on donated money to Planned Parenthood; and reiterated his support of Common Core education standards.

– Retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson said he would significantly revise the taxation system so people pay proportionally based on earnings; declined to state whether he would support the use of waterboarding because he did not think the country should “broadcast” how it would treat suspected terrorists; and said his first foreign policy move would be shoring up and expanding the U.S. military.

– New Jersey Governor Chris Christie said he would use means testing to determine eligibility for Social Security retirement benefits for those making more than \$200,000 per year; said the government could and should be collecting more data while respecting citizens' civil liberties; and wants to expand the U.S. military, including no fewer than 500,000 active-duty soldiers in the Army.

– U.S. Senator Ted Cruz of Texas said he would continue to support a proposal that would require mandatory prison sentences for deported immigrants who return to the United States illegally; emphasized his continued opposition to any form of amnesty for illegal immigrants; and criticized the Iran nuclear deal, saying the United States did not get anything in return for lifting sanctions.

– Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee said he would use existing amendments to the U.S. Constitution to defend the rights of fetuses; create a more fair tax system based on consumption at which point he could eliminate the Internal Revenue Service; and would update the U.S. military's ships and planes.

– Ohio Governor John Kasich said that "economic growth is the key to everything;" added that that growth needs to reach all communities, including minorities; and said that issues like same-sex marriage "are planted to divide us."

– U.S. Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky opposes the Iran deal but said he wouldn't immediately rule out negotiations; said "I don't want my marriage or my guns registered in Washington;" and wants the United States to stop sending foreign aid to countries where the American flag is burned.

– U.S. Senator Marco Rubio of Florida wants curriculum reform to happen at the state and local – rather than national – level; said the Dodd-Frank financial reforms are "eviscerating" small businesses and need to be repealed; and said the Constitution defends all American life, including the unborn.

– Businessman Donald Trump wants to build a wall to stop illegal immigration but said it could have a "big, beautiful door" for legal immigrants; would like to see health insurance regulated more nationally instead of state by state; and wants a stronger military.

– Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker wants to focus on ties with our current partners in the Middle East, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia; said Iran is “not a place we should be doing business with;” and advocated better police training, particularly for use of force.

Second-Tier Candidates’ Debate

– U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said he would make the United States energy independent; would do “whatever it takes, as long as it takes, to defeat” Islamic State, including putting U.S. ground forces in Iraq and Syria; and said a strong environment and a strong economy are not mutually exclusive.

– Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal said radical Islam is a problem; said immigration without assimilation is an invasion; and prioritized keeping Christian business owners from facing “discrimination” over their views on gay marriage.

– Former New York Governor George Pataki said he would outlaw abortions after 20 weeks and would institute a freeze on adding new employees in Washington except for military- and defense-related personnel, and said encouraging Americans to engage in violent jihad is not protected religious speech.

– Former Virginia Governor Jim Gilmore proposed a three-bracket tax code of 10, 15 and 25 percent; said he would get rid of excessive government regulation to help fuel growth; and said the United States needs to prepare for further terrorist attacks.

– Former Texas Governor Rick Perry said that, if elected president, “I will secure that southern border” and would tear up a nuclear agreement with Iran; he also said that he would work to boost U.S. economic growth.

– Former Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania said he would reduce immigration and boost U.S. manufacturing; compared the

recent Supreme Court ruling legalizing gay marriage to the Dred Scott slavery decision; and called for a flat tax rate of 20 percent.

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