

Romney Wins Debate by Challenging Obama's Policies

President Obama and his challenger for the White House, **Mitt Romney**, met face-to-face for the first time on the debate stage Wednesday night at the University of Denver.

The candidates answered questions and drew stark differences in their visions for health care, entitlements, taxes, deficits and job creation. The debate focused on domestic policy and lasted for 90 minutes.

President Obama was on the defensive much of the night, as Romney was assertive in challenging his policies.

"When I walked into the Oval Office, I had more than a trillion-dollar deficit greeting me. And we know where it came from: two wars that were paid for on a credit card; two tax cuts that were not paid for; and a whole bunch of programs that were not paid for; and then a massive economic crisis," the president said.

"And despite that, what we've said is, yes, we had to take some initial emergency measures to make sure we didn't slip into a Great Depression, but what we've also said is, let's make sure that we are cutting out those things that are not helping us grow," he added.

"What we're seeing right now is, in my view, a—a trickle-down government approach, which has government thinking it can do a better job than free people pursuing their dreams. And it's not working," Romney said.

The candidates had a back-and-forth moment arguing over their tax plans. President Obama said Romney's plan to reduce all tax rates 20 percent would add \$5 trillion to the deficit and benefit only wealthy people. Romney said the picture Obama

painted of his plan was inaccurate.

On **health care**, the president pointed out that his sweeping health care reform law was modeled after what Romney passed in Massachusetts as governor.

“This was a bipartisan idea. In fact, it was a Republican idea. And Gov. Romney at the beginning of this debate wrote and said what we did in Massachusetts could be a model for the nation,” Obama said.

Romney battled back, insisting that his plan was a state plan, not a federal plan, and saying that he worked with a Democratic legislature on a bipartisan solution, something he accused the president of not doing in Washington.

“So entirely on a partisan basis, instead of bringing America together and having a discussion on this important topic, you pushed through something that you and Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid thought was the best answer and drove it through,” he said.

At the end of the debate, the candidates were asked about the role of government. Romney referenced the words to the Constitution that were on a screen behind them on the stage.

“The role of government is to promote and protect the principles of those documents,” Romney said.

He went on, “That says we are endowed by our Creator with our rights. I believe we must maintain our commitment to **religious tolerance** and freedom in this country. That statement also says that we are endowed by our Creator with the right to pursue happiness as we choose.”

Obama, answering the same question about the role of government, cast a different vision, saying the federal government’s first role is to protect the American people.

“I also believe that government has the capacity, the federal

government has the capacity to help open up opportunity and create ladders of opportunity and to create frameworks where the American people can succeed.”

The candidates will continue campaigning in battleground states, as they try to reach any undecided voters, with just five weeks until Election Day.

They have two more debates in October. Additionally, Vice President Joe Biden will debate his Republican opponent, Rep. Paul Ryan, at a debate in Kentucky next week.

The consensus is Mitt Romney solidly won last night's debate. How big an impact will his victory have on the presidential race?