

World & Nation

Bush and Dukakis address the issues: Part II

EDITOR'S NOTE: Last week, we presented the first section of the presidential candidates' responses to a questionnaire formulated by the U.S. Catholic Conference. The final installment will appear in next week's paper.

Family Life:

Would you support legislation to ensure that poor families can obtain adequate public assistance even if both parents reside at home?

DUKAKIS: Support.

BUSH: (No answer checked.) I want a welfare system that strengthens families — not weakens them. We can do it with a new national strategy that stresses grass-roots participation, state and local involvement, and innovative ideas for reducing dependency on the federal government.

Would you support legislation to permit workers to take unpaid leave for the birth or adoption of a child or serious illness in the family without loss of their jobs or health insurance?

DUKAKIS: Support.

BUSH: Support. Due to enormous changes in the workplace over the past decade and because of the need to re-establish our nation's competitive edge economically, we should encourage private efforts to establish flexible standards allowing workers with newborn children, seriously ill family members, and those in similar circumstances to follow through on important family-related work. However, the federal government should not mandate parental leave.

Food and agricultural policy:

Would you support an agricultural program that fosters more diversified family farm ownership and operation over programs which favor the concentration of ownership?

DUKAKIS: Support.

BUSH: Support. There is strong evidence that the 1985 farm bill is beginning to work. Our more competitive prices, coupled with the drop in the dollar's value, have improved our ability to compete abroad. Farm exports in 1987 increased by 18 percent in volume over 1986 levels. We are beginning to recover from the terrible hangover that followed the binge of the '70s — a binge of unsustainable high prices and land speculation, caused by a



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Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York welcomes presidential candidates George Bush and Michael Dukakis during the 43rd annual Alfred Smith Memorial Dinner in New York.

cheap dollar and bad weather overseas. At the same time, we must ensure that the transition to market forces preserves the family farm and rural way of life. Now is the time for a steady hand, to allow American farmers to regain markets at home and abroad.

Do you support efforts to reduce hunger in America by strengthening federal food assistance to poor families (e.g., WIC, food stamps, child nutrition programs)?

DUKAKIS: Support.

BUSH: (No answer checked.) We must be sure that the safety net for Americans in need has no holes in it.

Housing:

Do you support a renewed national commitment to provide increased housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income families, the elderly and others in need, including public efforts to preserve existing low-cost housing, to increase the supply of decent, affordable housing, and to help poor families afford quality housing?

DUKAKIS: Support.

BUSH: (No answer checked.) A typical \$60,000 mortgage cost almost \$300 more a month in 1980 than it does today. Housing starts were 25 percent higher in 1987 than in 1980. And the last time homes were more affordable for first-time homebuyers was the last time we had a Republican president. We are targeting aid at those in need too. The fact is that today the federal government subsidizes more homes for low-income families than ever before and it spends more money to maintain public housing than ever before. I plan to maintain the tax deduction for home mortgage interest payments. You should ask my opponent where he stands on this — don't let him hide his true position on this from you! We conducted experimental housing programs during the 1970s to actually test different housing policies. We found out that when the federal government builds or subsidizes the building of low-income housing, it provides the same aid at two or three times the cost as housing vouchers. For most of the country, vouchers are the answer — they will be the centerpiece of my housing policy. Vouchers address the affordability problem directly by getting aid right into the hands of those who need it. Vouchers give aid recipients the ability to choose where they want to live, rather than corralling all the poor into projects. Vouchers provide aid today — there is no construction lag time. Finally, vouchers are more equitable than building programs — we can help two to three times as many people for the same amount of money we would spend on building new homes.

Immigration and refugee policy:

Would you support the DeConcini-Moakley bill which would temporarily suspend the detention and deportation of certain Salvadoran and Nicaraguan nationals while the U.S. General Accounting Office conducts a study of living conditions of displaced Salvadorans and Nicaraguans in those countries and neighboring countries?

DUKAKIS: Support.

BUSH: (No answer checked.) My immi-

gration policy will continue to balance humanitarian concern about the needs of refugees with the concerns of those who are already American citizens.

Would you support legislation that would restrict the family reunification provisions contained in current U.S. laws?

DUKAKIS: Oppose. We should maintain family unity as the highest priority of immigration policy. At the same time, I endorse reforms in our immigration law to permit independent immigration as well.

BUSH: (No answer checked.) I do not support legislation that splits up families, but we must vigilantly monitor current laws to see that they are not abused.

Would you support legislation that would guarantee free movement of priests, nuns and other religious workers into the United States?

DUKAKIS: (No answer checked.) The United States should extend an especially warm welcome to visitors on a humanitarian or religious mission. All such people, however, should remain subject to our immigration laws.

BUSH: No position.

Would you support legislative initiatives designed to offer (temporary) safe haven for persons displaced by war, civil disturbance, or natural calamity?

DUKAKIS: (No answer checked.) As I stated above, I support the Moakley-DeConcini bill. Moreover, a Dukakis administration will implement our refugee laws in a fair and generous spirit. Finally, I believe we must judge these matters on a case-by-case basis.

BUSH: (No answer checked.) The law already provides for immigration by those suffering from persecution in their homelands. I would have to consider the merits of any legislation as Congress considers it.

If it is determined that the legalization program has had a neutral or positive effect on state and local economies, would you support an extension and expansion of the legalization program to benefit aliens who qualify as continuous residents since 1982?

DUKAKIS: (No answer checked.) Although this is a hypothetical case, the idea you propose is an interesting one and as president I would certainly consider it.

BUSH: No position.

Would you support legislation that would place a cap on annual immigrant admissions?

DUKAKIS: Support. While I am concerned about the limit on immigrants of the Fifth Preference and on the advantage this bill gives to English-speaking immigrants, I support the basic goals of the Kennedy-Simpson legislation now pending in Congress. It would create a generous, yearly cap on the number of new immigrants. Such a cap strikes a sensible balance between the desires of immigrants to come to our nation and the capacity of our government agencies to process them and ease their transition to citizenship.

BUSH: (See below for combined answer to questions on admissions caps.)

On annual refugee admissions?

DUKAKIS: Oppose. The current system allows us to determine each year the cap for refugees. Since the situation changes annually, I believe that this system serves the public interest and I do not plan to change it.

BUSH: (No answer checked.) At this point, I do not see any reason to change current immigration limits.

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