

LEMON: Thank you, Mr. Vice President. Thank you.

Let's move now to immigration, please. Secretary Castro, you think it should no longer be a crime to cross the U.S. border illegally. President Obama's homeland security secretary, Jeh Johnson, whom you served with, says that is a public declaration that the border is, quote, "effectively open to all." How is he wrong?

CASTRO: Thank you for that question. You know, if you elect me president, you're not electing me to follow. You're electing me to lead. And open borders is a right-wing talking point, and frankly I'm disappointed that some folks, including some folks on this stage, have taken the bait.

The only way that we're going to guarantee that we don't have family separations in this country again is to repeal Section 1325 of the Immigration Nationality Act. That is the law that this president, this administration is using to incarcerate migrant parents and then physically separate them from their children.

My immigration plan would also make sure that we put undocumented immigrants who haven't committed a serious crime on a pathway to citizenship, that we do a 21st century Marshall Plan with Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, so that we can get to the root of this challenge so people can find safety and opportunity at home instead of having to come to the United States. That's how we can be smarter, more

effective, and more humane when it comes to immigration policy.

LEMON: Thank you, Secretary Castro. Senator Bennet, what's your response?

BENNET: I disagree that we should decriminalize our border. This is personal for me. My mom is an immigrant, and she was separated from her parents during the Holocaust in Poland.

And for those reasons, I was part of the Gang of Eight that wrote -- I wrote the immigration bill in 2013 with John McCain that passed the Senate with 68 votes, that gave a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented people that are here, that would pass the most progressive DREAM Act that had ever been conceived, much less passed on the floor of the Senate, and had \$46 billion of border security. Every single Democrat voted for that bill and a lot of Republicans. That should be our position. That is our position as Democrats.

LEMON: Senator Harris, you have indicated that you don't think it should be a criminal offense punishable by jail to cross the U.S. border illegally. How do you respond to Senator Bennet?

HARRIS: Well, again, with all due respect, you know, I -- after the last debate, for example, I went to a place in Florida called Homestead, and there is a private detention facility being paid for by your taxpayer dollars, a private detention facility that currently houses 2,700 children.

And by the way, there were members of us -- Julian was there, members of Congress, they would not let us enter the place, members of the United States Congress. So I walked down the road, I climbed a ladder, and I looked over the fence. And I'm going to tell you what I saw. I saw children lined up single file based on gender being walked into barracks. The policies of this administration have been facilitated by laws on the books that allow them to be incarcerated as though they've committed crimes. These children have not committed crimes and should be not treated like criminals.

LEMON: Senator Bennet, what's your response?

BENNET: I think this is one in the end that we agree with. There's not a single person on this stage if we were president would ever separate a child from their parents at the border. And that is what this...

That is what this administration has done in the American people's name. They have turned our border into a symbol of nativist hostility. The symbol of this country before Donald Trump was president was the Statue of Liberty. That should be the symbol of the United States of America, not Donald Trump's words.

LEMON: Thank you, Senator Bennet. Senator Gillibrand, I want to bring you in. What's your response?

GILLIBRAND: So I think when you talk about whether this should be a crime, you have to remember who we're talking about. When I was at the Texas border, I visited with women who had fled violence. A woman from

El Salvador owned a small business, gangs came to her and said if you don't give us all your money, we're going to kill your family. That's why she fled. Another woman was raped. That's why she fled. So this is who we're talking about -- and they're not criminals. So I believe that we should have a civil violation. No president before President Trump enforced the law in the way he has enforced it. Because he's using it as the crutch to lock up women and children, to separate mothers and babies, to put them behind bars.

So I don't think we should have a law on the books that can be so misused. It should be a civil violation and we should make sure that we treat people humanely.

LEMON: Thank you, Senator. Vice President Biden, in the first two years of the Obama administration, nearly 800,000 immigrants were deported, far more than during President Trump's first two years. Would the higher deportation rates resume if you were president?

BIDEN: Absolutely not, number one. Number two, everything landed on the president's desk but locusts. I found that Julian -- excuse me -- the secretary, we sat together in many meetings. I never heard him talk about any of this when he was the secretary.

BIDEN: The fact is what the senator from New York talked about is seeking asylum. That woman, the women she spoke to are entitled to asylum. That is not crossing the border illegally. What we should do is

flood the zone to make sure we have people to make those decisions quickly.

With regard to -- with regard to the secretary's point, I already proposed and passed \$750 million for Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, to be able to change the circumstance why people fled in the first place.

In addition to that, we're in a circumstance where if in fact you say you can just cross the border, what do you say to all those people around the world who in fact want the same thing to come to the United States and make their case, that they don't -- that they have to wait in line. The fact of the matter is, you should be able to -- if you cross the border illegally, you should be able to be sent back. It's a crime. It's a crime, and it's not one that in fact...

LEMON: Thank -- thank you, Mr. Vice President. Secretary Castro, please, your response?

CASTRO: Yeah, first of all, Mr. Vice President, it looks like one of us has learned the lessons of the past and one of us hasn't.

Let me begin by telling you -- let me just start out by answering that question. My immigration plan would also fix the broken legal immigration system, because we do have a problem with that.

BIDEN: I agree.

CASTRO: Secondly, the only way that we're going to guarantee that these kinds of family separations don't

happen in the future is that we need to repeal this law. There's still going to be consequences if somebody crosses the border. It's a civil action. Also, we have 654 miles of fencing. We have thousands of personnel at the border. We have planes; we have boats; we have helicopters; we have security cameras, what we need are politicians that actually have some guts on this issue.

LEMON: Thank you, Secretary. Mr. Vice President, please, your response?

BIDEN: I have guts enough to say his plan doesn't make sense. Here's the deal. The fact of the matter is that, in fact, when people cross the border illegally, it is illegal to do it unless they're seeking asylum. People should have to get in line. That's the problem. And the only reason this particular part of the law is being abused is because of Donald Trump. We should defeat Donald Trump and end this practice.

LEMON: Thank you. Congresswoman Gabbard, what's your response?

GABBARD: Our hearts break when we see those children at these detention facilities who've been separated from their parents, when we see human beings crowded into cages in abhorrent, inhumane conditions. This is about leadership and understanding that we can and should have both secure borders as well as humane immigration policies.

We will have to stop separating children from their parents, make it so that it's easier for people to

seek asylum in this country, make sure that we are securing our borders and making it so that people are able to use our legal immigration system by reforming those laws.

LEMON: Mr. Yang, your response?

YANG: I'm the son of immigrants myself. My father immigrated here as a graduate student and generated over 65 U.S. patents for G.E. and IBM. I think that's a pretty good deal for the United States. That's the immigration story we need to be telling.

We can't always be focusing on some of the -- the -- the distressed stories. And if you go to a factory here in Michigan, you will not find wall-to-wall immigrants; you will find wall-to-wall robots and machines. Immigrants are being scapegoated for issues they have nothing to do with in our economy.

LEMON: Thank you, Mr. Yang. Senator Booker you have a plan that would, quote, "virtually eliminate immigration detention." Does that mean that the roughly 55,000 migrants currently in detention would be released into the United States?

BOOKER: Well, first of all, I just want to say, again, tonight, we are playing into Republican hands who have a very different view, and they're trying to divide us against each other. I'm listening to the language of my colleagues. No, Mr. Vice President, we are not going to just let people cross the border. An unlawful crossing is an unlawful crossing, if you do it in the civil courts, or if you do in the criminal courts.

But the criminal courts is what is giving Donald Trump the ability to truly violate the human rights of people coming to our country, who no one surrenders their human rights. And so, doing it through the civil courts means that you won't need these awful detention facilities that I have been to; seeing children sleeping on pavement, people being put in cages, nursing mothers, small children.

This is not necessary. We have seen, using the civil system, piloted programs that have 100 percent compliance with the civil courts, where people are evaluated. If they have no justifiable reason to be here, they are returned. If they are, like the people I met in Juarez, who were survivors of sexual assault, who we wouldn't even let come and present for asylum. We are butchering our values and making ourselves less safe.

LEMON: Senator Booker, thank you very much. Mr. Vice President, your response?

BIDEN: I agree with the Senator. The asylum process is a real process, and this president is ruining it. It has nothing to do with that section of law. That's what he's doing, number one. Number two, we should in fact - and we had proposed and we tried to get passed in our administration, I proposed, significantly increasing the number of legal immigrants who are able to come.

This country can tolerate a heck of a lot more people. And the reason we're the country we are is we've been able to cherry pick from the best of every culture.

Immigrants built this country. That's why we're so special. It took courage. It took resilience. It took absolutely confidence for them to come. And we should be encouraging these people. And by the way, anybody that crosses the stage with a - with a - with a PhD, you should get a green card for seven years. We should keep them here.

LEMON: Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. Governor Inslee, what's your response?

INSLEE: I think we're missing two central statements we need to make. Number one, we can no longer allow a white nationalist to be in the White House, number one.

And number two - number two, we have to make America what it's always been, a place of refuge. We got to boost the number of people we accept. I'm proud of being the first governor saying send us your Syrian refugees. I'm proud to have been the first governor to stand up against Donald Trump's Muslim ban. I'm proud to have sued him 21 times and beat him 21 times in a row. I'm ready for November 2020.

LEMON: Go ahead. Mayor de Blasio, please your response?

DE BLASIO: Two points. One, it's all kind of charade because there's 11 million people here, and everyone, in theory, has broken the law, but they're part of our communities now. They're part of our economy. They're our neighbors. Why are we even discussing on one level

whether it's a civil penalty or a criminal penalty, when it's an American reality?

And what we need is comprehensive immigration, once and for all, to fix it. Second, Vice President Biden, I didn't hear your response when the issue came up of all those deportations. You were vice president of the United States. I didn't hear whether you tried to stop them or not, using your power, your influence in the White House. Do you think it was a good idea, or do you think it was something that needed to be stopped? The president came along, and he's the guy that came up with the idea the first time ever, dealing with the dreamers. He put that in the law. He had talked about a comprehensive plan which he put on the - laid before the Congress, saying that we should find a pathway to citizenship for people. He said we should up the number of people that we're able to bring in to this country.

Lastly, he also pointed out that we should go to the source of the problem and fix it where people were leaving in the first place. So he did - to compare him to Donald Trump, I think is absolutely bizarre.

LEMON: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. Congresswoman Gabbard, you are a co-sponsor of the College for All Act which would make public colleges and universities free for all Americans. One of the authors of that plan, Senator Sanders, believes college should be tuition-free for undocumented immigrants as well. Do you?

GABBARD: I don't. I think it's important for us to fix our legal immigration system and look at the millions of undocumented immigrants in this country who have been suffering as they've been living in the shadows.

And instead of putting a band-aid on this problem, fix our legal immigration system to provide them with that pathway to legal residency or citizenships, that they are no longer treated as second-class citizens in this country. We've got to look at the challenge that people all across the country are facing, under crushing student debt.

This is something that is impacting my generation in a huge way and I believe that it is our generation that has the bold, creative solutions to be able to solve it. This is about promise for our future and we've got to make those kinds of investments.

LEMON: Thank you, Congresswoman. Mayor de Blasio, what's your response?

DE BLASIO: Yes, I -- I agree with the congress member but I don't hear an answer from the vice president. I'm confused. I asked the vice president point blank, did he use his power to stop those deportations. He went right around the question.

Mr. Vice President, you want to be president of the United States, you need to be able to answer the tough questions. I guarantee you if you're debating Donald Trump he's not going to let you off the hook. So did you say those deportations were a good idea or did you

go to the president and say this is a mistake, we shouldn't do it. Which one?

BIDEN: I was vice president. I am not the president. I keep my recommendation to him in private. Unlike you I can expect you would go ahead and say whatever was said privately with him. That is not what I do.

What I do say to you is he moved to fundamentally change the system. That's what he did. That's who did. But much more has to be done. Much more has to be done.

DE BLASIO: I still don't hear an answer.

LEMON: Senator Booker, please respond.

BOOKER: Well, a couple of things. First of all, Mr. Vice President, you can't have it both ways. You invoke President Obama more than anybody in this campaign. You can't do it when it's convenient and then dodge it when it's not.

And the second thing that this really irks me because I heard the vice president say that if you got a PhD., you can come right into this country. Well that's playing into what the republicans want, to pit some immigrants against other immigrants.

From are from shithole countries and some are from worthy countries. We need to reform this whole immigration system and begin to be the country that says everyone has worth and dignity and this should be a country that honors for everyone.

Don't let the republicans divide this party against itself.

LEMON: Senator, thank you. Mr. Vice President, your response.

BIDEN: The fact is that's what I said about this country. We are a country of immigrants. All of us. All of us. Some here came against their will; others came because they in fact thought they could fundamentally change their lives. And they did.

(Inaudible) that's what we're talking about. That's what made us great. And the fact of the matter is, I think the president of the United States, Barack Obama, went out of his way to try to change the system and he got pushed back significantly.

LEMON: Senator Gillibrand, what's your response?

GILLIBRAND: Again, President Trump, under his administration seven children died in his custody. In -- under his administration families have been torn apart. This party is talking about real ideas for the future. We're talking about what we will do to change America.

But we must not forget about our values. We used to believe in this country you should treat others the way you want to be treated. We used to believe in this country we should care about the least among us. Let's remind the American people who we are, why we are democrats, and why we're running for president.

LEMON: Senator Gillibrand, thank you very much. The debate will be right back right after this short break.