PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE
Vice President Al Gore

FIRST TOPIC: SOCIAL SECURITY

1. It is widely understood that health of the current Social Security system, when extended into the 21st Century, depends on the size of the nation's payroll, which in turn depends on the rate of economic growth. If you are president, what level of annual economic growth do you foresee for the next ten years (2000-2009)?

Other 10 year projections and the current rate of growth are cited here for comparison:
Social Security Commission at 2.0% annual growth.
Congressional Budget Office at 2.3% annual growth.
The current rate of about 3.5% annual growth (first half of 1999).]

What would you do as President to promote the level of economic growth you are projecting?

2. At the level of economic growth that you project, how many years do you think the current Social Security program can be supported by payroll tax receipts without raising taxes or reducing benefits?

3. If you believe changes are necessary to maintain the Social Security system, what changes are you recommending? In particular:

Do you recommend reducing the Social Security payout in any of the following ways:
- By increasing the age of retirement? YES ___ NO ___
- By decreasing benefits to retirees? YES ___ NO ___
- By reducing the cost of living increases? YES ___ NO ___
- By increasing the number of years included in the earnings formula? YES ___ NO ___
- Other (please specify)?

Do you recommend increasing the Social Security receipts to keep the program solvent:
- By increasing the payroll tax rate? YES ___ NO ___
- By raising the cap on taxable earnings? YES ___ NO ___
  - If Yes, to what level? ______________
- Other?

4. Do you recommend the use of individual investment accounts to generate Social Security retirement income? YES __ NO __

If you answered yes, please tell how you plan to pay for individual investment accounts?

Out of the current level of individual payroll contributions? YES __ NO __
Out of an increase in the payroll tax rate? YES __ NO __
Out of the Trust Fund surplus? YES __ NO __
Other sources, or a combination (please specify):

If you recommend individual retirement accounts, then how would you deal with these problems:

Paying benefits to disabled workers?

Ensuring that retirees who cash out their individual investment accounts when the market is in a slump have adequate retirement income?

Loss of public confidence in the accounts when the market values drop?

Insuring an adequate retirement to low wage workers?

Insuring an adequate retirement to un-waged, family caretakers?

If you recommend individual investment accounts, what parts of the existing Social Security structure would you preserve?

5. Do you recommend any improvements to the existing Social Security structure?

Do you favor:

Improving the base benefit for low income workers and family caretakers who did not earn enough work credits to bring their retirement above the poverty level? YES ___ NO ___

Relieving the payroll tax burden on self-employed workers? YES ___ NO ___

Relieving the payroll tax burden on low income workers and their families? YES ___ NO ___

Other (please specify)?

Are you willing to support retirees' efforts to correct the reduction in the Cost of Living Adjustment applied to Social Security? (the current formula weights the most costly retiree costs at 18-34 year old consumption levels). YES ___ NO ___

6. How do you plan to manage the excess Social Security tax receipts (the surplus) to ensure payment of benefits to baby boom generation retirees while maintaining a healthy economy? Do you favor:

Reducing the Social Security payroll tax rate, thus reducing the surplus? YES ___ NO ___

Continuing to invest the surplus in government bonds? YES ___ NO ___

Paying down the public debt? YES ___ NO ___

Establishing individual investment accounts? YES ___ NO ___

Investing in the stock market (with government as the investor)? YES ___ NO ___

Investing in programs that promote national economic growth? YES ___ NO ___

Please specify -- what kinds of programs?:

Lending money in state or municipal bonds, or other instruments to build the national infrastructure. YES ___ NO ___

Cutting taxes on businesses, upper income taxpayers, and capital gains. YES ___ NO ___

Please explain your approach/include any other proposals:

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