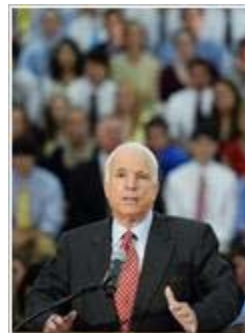


## 10 More Questions John McCain Will Never Be Asked

By Jon Perr  
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In the wake of Charles Gibson and George Stephanopolous' abominable performance in the ABC Democratic debate Wednesday, I created a list of [10 debate questions John McCain will never be asked](#). (*The Real McCain* author Cliff Schecter subsequently featured my list over at [The Huffington Post](#), [AmericaBlog](#) and [Crooks and Liars](#).)

Now, as it turns out, this Sunday's guest on [ABC's This Week](#) with George Stephanopolous is none other than Arizona Senator and Republican presidential nominee John McCain.



Here, then, are 10 more questions John McCain will never be asked:

### **11. Don't your recent comments about U.S. casualties in Iraq, the foreclosure crisis and the deepening recession show that you are insensitive to the concerns of the American people?**

The American people want a president who understands the challenges they and their families face. But many point to your record of callousness when it comes to the fighting in Iraq and the slowing American economy. On [April 1, 2007](#), while escorted by U.S. troops and wearing a bulletproof vest, you said that there "are neighborhoods in Baghdad where you and I could walk through those neighborhoods, today." [Last month](#), you claimed that Iraq is no more dangerous than most American cities when you said, "There's problems in America with safe neighborhoods as we well know." As the [foreclosure crisis](#) worsened in March, you said, "some Americans bought homes they couldn't afford" and that "it is not the duty of government to bail out and reward those who act irresponsibly." And just this week, you brushed off Americans' concerns over the housing crisis, rising unemployment, record energy prices and a [deepening recession](#) by proclaiming, "A lot of our problems today, as you know, are psychological." *Why shouldn't Americans conclude that you are too callous, too unconcerned and too out-of-touch to be their President?*

### **12. Given your support for virtually the entire Bush foreign and domestic agenda, aren't the American people correct in viewing a John McCain victory in November as a third term for George W. Bush?**

[Two weeks ago](#), you told the American people "I'm not running on the Bush presidency." But on almost every issue, your positions are identical to those of President Bush. You reversed course to support making permanent the [Bush tax cuts](#) you twice opposed. Like President Bush, you opposed the expansion of the [SCHIP program](#) for children's health care, while similarly calling for the wildly unpopular [privatization of Social Security](#). You've called for overturning the [Roe v. Wade](#) decision on abortion rights while reaffirming your support for conservative [Supreme Court](#) justices like John Roberts and Samuel Alito. You and the President are in lockstep when it comes to Iran and Iraq, so much so that when you were told President Bush wants to stay in Iraq for 50 years, you said, "[Make it a hundred](#)." *Isn't it fair for Americans to ask where Bush ends and you begin? Don't those who call you "John McSame" have grounds for doing so? When [over 80% of the American people](#) think the*

*country is on the wrong track, isn't it fair for the American people to fear that President John McCain means a third term for George W. Bush?*

**13. You've called yourself a "deficit hawk." But with cost estimates for your tax plan topping \$2 trillion, isn't your claim of fiscal discipline simply unbelievable?**

[This week](#), you told NBC's Andrea Mitchell, "I'm a deficit hawk." Yet James Kvaal and Robert Gordon at the [Center for American Progress](#) documented that your tax plan "is enormously expensive, costing more than \$2 trillion over the next decade and essentially doubling the Bush tax cuts." A [2005 CBO study](#) by your current economic adviser Douglas Holtz-Eakin showed that ".lower tax rates wouldn't come close to paying for themselves." And just this week, you [abandoned a pledge](#) you made just two months ago during the Wisconsin primary to balance the federal budget by the end of your first term. *Why shouldn't we view your claim to be a deficit hawk as a joke? Isn't the McCain tax plan reckless? Shouldn't the American people be worried [when you say](#) "I disagree with the experts?"*

**14. Don't you owe Barack Obama an apology for attacking as "confused leadership" his proposal for unilateral strikes against Al Qaeda targets in Pakistan, a strategy which is now the policy of the Bush administration?**

On August 1, 2007, [Barack Obama](#) announced that as President, "If we have actionable intelligence about high-value terrorist targets and President Musharraf won't act, we will." On [February 19th](#), you attacked "and misrepresented - his position during a primary night victory speech by asking "will we risk the confused leadership of an inexperienced candidate who once suggested invading our ally, Pakistan?" As it turns out, [President Bush endorsed](#) the use of unilateral American strikes against Al Qaeda targets within Pakistan, including the January 29 covert Predator drone attack that killed Al Qaeda leader Abu Laith Al-Libi. *Do you disagree with President Bush's new policy of attacking Al Qaeda targets in Pakistan without the permission of the government in Islamabad? If not, don't you owe Barack Obama an apology?*

**15. Have you forgiven George W. Bush for slandering you and your family during the 2000 campaign? If so, why?**

It is well known that during the 2000 campaign, [George W. Bush's operatives](#) slandered you and your family, including the use of push polls that implied you were anti-Catholic, your wife Cindy a drug addict, and that you had fathered an illegitimate black child with a prostitute. [Time](#) magazine reported that during a commercial break in a February 2000 debate in South Carolina, "Bush grasped McCain's hands and made a sugary plea for less acrimony in their campaign." You are said to have replied, "Don't give me that shit. And take your hands off me." But in [accepting his endorsement](#) on March 5, 2008, you described George W. Bush as a man for whom you now "have a great admiration, respect and affection." *Have you forgiven George W. Bush for slandering you and your family during the 2000 campaign? If so, why? Should Americans assume your pursuit of the Republican presidential nomination is more important to you than your family's honor?*

**16. Do you really believe that there's been "great progress economically" during the presidency of George W. Bush?**

[On April 17](#), you said of the Bush years, "you could make an argument that there's been great progress economically over that period of time" and that "the fundamentals of America's economy are strong." But [oil and gas prices](#) are at record levels, having tripled during President Bush's tenure. The nation is gripped by the twin crises of the housing market and the financial system. The unemployment rate is now higher than when Bush took office. [The dollar](#) is at all time lows versus the yen, the euro and other currencies. Most importantly, recent studies show the Bush economic expansion was the first since World

War II in which [median family income actually declined](#). *Do you really believe that Americans' anxiety over the economy and their standards of living is, as you put in this week, "psychological?" Do you really believe that there's been "great progress economically" during the presidency of George W. Bush?*

**17. Given that you've reversed yourself on so many long-held positions, why shouldn't the American people view you as an opportunistic flip-flopper?**

You have something of a reputation as a [political maverick](#). Yet in your 2008 quest for the White House, you repeatedly reversed long-held positions and compromised core principles to seemingly curry favor with both the leading lights of the conservative movement and right-wing Republican primary voters. You've changed your positions on the [Bush tax cuts](#), [Jerry Falwell](#) and the Christian right, [immigration reform](#), overturning [Roe v. Wade](#), whether Justice Samuel Alito is a model for the [Supreme Court](#), [France-bashing](#), just to name a few. *What happened to the "courage of our convictions?" Did you read your own book, [Why Courage Matters](#)? After what happened to John Kerry in 2004, why shouldn't the American people view you as an opportunistic flip-flopper?*

**18. Aren't you being a hypocrite for refusing to release you wife Cindy's tax returns?**

For over 30 years, presidential candidates have made their tax returns available to the American people. In 2004, Theresa Heinz Kerry, whose personal fortune was said to top \$5 billion, eventually released the two front pages of her personal 1040 form after enduring withering criticism from [RNC chairman Ed Gillespie](#) and the right-wing mouthpieces like the [National Review](#). Yet [you refuse to release the tax returns](#) of your wife Cindy, the heiress to a beer distribution company who reputedly owns 8 homes and has a net worth well [over \\$100 million](#). Your campaign claims "Cindy McCain will not release her tax returns to protect the privacy of her four children; details of their wealth are included in her filing." *Since the Clintons released their joint returns, why won't you release your wife's? Isn't it fair for the American people to assume that you are hiding something? Isn't it, as Ed Gillespie said of Theresa Heinz Kerry in 2004, "a legitimate question?"*

**19. Aren't you being a hypocrite on campaign finance reform? Didn't you just violate the very campaign finance law you helped write by exceeding the spending cap for a publicly financed primary election?**

You attacked Barack Obama for not pledging to follow the public finance system in a general election campaign. Yet as the [Boston Globe](#) reported in March, "John McCain has officially broken the limits imposed by the presidential public financing system, according to spending reports filed last week by the campaign" by exceeding the \$54 million cap on primary election expenditures. It was [widely reported](#) that while your once desperate campaign used the prospect of federal matching funds as collateral to secure a highly questionable loan back in 2007, you now want to opt out of the system. The Federal Election Commission has yet to grant the public financing withdrawal request submitted by the your campaign. *Aren't you being a hypocrite on campaign finance reform? Are you prepared to pay the steep fines and [serve up to five years in prison](#) if you are determined to have broken the very law you helped write?*

**20. Twenty years after being reprimanded for your role in the Keating Five savings and loan scandal, aren't you just as beholden to lobbyists now?**

In 1989, [you were reprimanded](#) for your role in the Keating Five scandal, accepting campaign contributions, travel and use of Charles Keating's corporate aircraft in exchange for writing letters to and arranging meetings with regulators. In your memoir, you later wrote, "Why didn't I fully grasp the unusual appearance of such a meeting?" Now 20 years

later, you have been [accused on interceding](#) with the FCC on behalf of lobbyist Vicki Iseman and her client [Lowell Paxson](#). Lobbyists dominate [your campaign team](#), including chief political adviser Charles Black and campaign manager Rick Davis. Your economic adviser [Phil Gramm](#) is a vice chairman at UBS, and as a Senator in the 1990's played a critical role in the deregulation of the financial sector which helped fuel the subprime mortgage crisis. *Do you still not "grasp the unusual appearance" of such connections? 20 years after the Keating Five, aren't you still beholden to lobbyists?*

**UPDATE:** As readers have well noted, John McCain's long record provides fodder for an endless list of questions the media will likely never pose and he that he will assuredly never answer. Given this weekend's [Fingergate](#) furor, though, here is one bonus question.

**21. What does your crude 1998 joke about the young Chelsea Clinton say about your character?**

Over the past two days, the media have been reporting false rumors that Barack Obama gave Hillary Clinton the finger during a campaign rally. But at a 1998 Senate Republican fundraiser, you [actually made the joke](#), "Why is Chelsea Clinton so ugly? Because her father is Janet Reno." While you ultimately apologized to President and Mrs. Clinton for your slur against their teenaged daughter, the [New York Times](#) reports that you never apologized to Janet Reno? *What does your crude joke say about your character? What should Americans think of a man who brushed off his vulgarity to "this is the bad boy?"*

*Also available online at:*

<http://www.perspectives.com/blog/archives/001031.htm>