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THIS IS A NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC TELEVISION SPECIAL PRESENTATION. THE NEW HAMPSHIRE POLITICAL LIBRARY AND NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL PRESENTS POLITICS AND EGGS, 2007 CANDIDATE SERIES, WITH FORMER NORTH CAROLINA SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS. WITH SUPPORT FROM B.A.E. SYSTEMS, CLEAN HARBORS ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND FIDELITY INVESTMENTS.

James Brett/New England Council: I'm very honored to have senator Thompson with us here this morning for politics and eggs, as many of you know he was born in Sheffield, AL and moved to Lawrenceburg, TN, he earned his undergraduate degree from Memphis State university and his law degree from Vanderbilt. Also, some of you may be aware he became an assistant united states attorney in 1999, and became a special counsel to the senate committee on foreign relations, and special counsel to the senate intelligence committee, and in 1972, senator Thompson was appointed minority counsel to that very famous Watergate committee, in that year I was a capitol police officer and one of my assignments was to stand in front of the caucus and watch all activities, and I'll never forget the senators performance with the way he interrogated a young man by the name of Alexander Butterfield and the rest is history when we found he was able to unveil the president's tapings. He went on to become a U.S. senator, filling out the remaining time on Al Gore's senate seat, and then he went on to win re-election to a full six year term. After that he chose not to seek a further term. In 2005, Senator Thompson was named by President Bush as an advisor to Chief Justice nominee John Roberts, helping to move his nomination through the US Senate confirmation process.

At a speech given before the commonwealth club of California our guest speaker stated that after two years in Washington I've often longed for the realism and sincerity of Hollywood. Well senator Thompson followed in the footsteps of one of his political idols Ronald Reagan, he's appeared in I think more than 18 films, including no way out, line of fire, die hard 2, days of thunder, and the hunt for red October. He's become known for his portrayal of New York district attorney Arthur branch on law and order. He has been described as a conservative stalwart, who stands for tax cuts, balanced budgets, welfare reform, and conservative common sense judges who will apply the law to the constitution and not make it up as he goes along. Another quote by senator Thompson is, what I was yesterday, I am today and I'll be tomorrow. Please join me in giving a politics and eggs welcome to the honorable, Fred Thompson.

Fred Thompson/Presidential Candidate: Jim, thank you very much for that kind introduction, I've figured out how this thing works now, I get the eggs and you guys get the politics. I am delighted that you asked me to come by and spend a few minutes with you today, Jim thank you for reminding me of the good ole days, worked out pretty well in the end, I appreciate the reference to the acting days, for those of you who don't think I am much of an actor, let me tell you I convinced those guys going out for law and order that I was from New York. I rest my case. I also want you to know I have my priorities in order, when I was scheduled to catch a plane to leave Washington at 4, I did a little scrambling around and I saw the game and got here at 11 o'clock, I don't know what's in the water in this part of the country, with BC, the sox, and now the Celtics, Garnett and all, rest of the country is envious.

I want to talk to you for a couple of minutes about some of the things that are on my mind and then we are going to open it up. Our time is limited so its necessity to be a brief greeting. I think someone running for president of the United States, needs to answer the question what are you

doing and why are you doing it and I simply think the next few years are going to bring some decisions on the President's desk that will determine our country for a long long time. We're all going to have to look at our kids and grandkids and ask ourselves what kind of a world and country are they going to grow up in. What can we do, to make it for the better, I really feel like that our country is at a cross roads that with the next election we will be making fundamental decisions, like whether we are going to go down the road of a welfare state and isolationism in a growing government or whether we are going to adhere to the things that make this a great country and the basic principles that led us to the greatness that we have enjoyed in times past, and understanding every generation has a commitment to make sure we lead our country, especially when we found it. When I look at the principles I think about a strong national defense, every generation has its own unique challenges, but every generation has to make the determination that they are going to meet those challenges with commitments in terms of resources and national resolve to me that's a strong market economy, it means competition among Americans, competing in an open market, it means trade with other nations, our nation has prospered and been safe under those principles.

It's followed us in the application of the free market rule of law and conservative principles have also been successful we need to adhere to that. The government was built on the principle that the government shouldn't tax its people and spend their money to death, the country where a small town boy without any visible prospects could play by the rules and have every aspiration to achieve the American dream, but I think about my country and that's the kind of country I'm determined to do my part, that I hand off to others having done my part to make it stronger and better. I've had an opportunity to see my country from a lot of different vantage points. I started out with my folks who came in off the farm at a young age, didn't go to school went right to work, grew up and went to work in a factory and decided that maybe I was cut out to be a scholar and I was going back to school, I didn't get to be a scholar but I went back to school, to do the things that Jim mentioned, the last thing I did out of my senate service was answer the call on what occasion I could help chief justice Roberts through the confirmation process in the senate so to help Condeleeza Rice to become chairman of a national advisory board of distinguished Americans, I'd been on the intelligence committee, I've served as chair of the government affairs committee, which has jurisdiction over issues concerning nuclear proliferation, which is a growing problem around the world with fissile material going unprotected at a lot of sites. We're doing what we can to protect but because of that background I got to serve my country. Last but not least I got to serve 8 years in the senate.

I didn't go to the senate to become a career politician. I put time limits on myself. I was able to win two elections by twenty points each. I left apparently as popular as when I went in, maybe it was because I was leaving, I was pretty popular, but a totally wonderful experience. But from time to time I think its not a bad example, even if it might be counter-intuitive for some people, to step up when they feel like their country could use them again. That experience tells me that there are really only a handful of things that are extremely important, we'll have a chance to talk about all of them, everything gets back to three as far as I'm concerned. The number one issue being the security of this country, we've yet to come to terms with the security of this nation to the fact that we are in a global conflict that will not be resolved when the Iraq war is resolved, there are different issues we have virtually open borders at a time when enough fissile material that would make the size a grape fruit devastate an entire city, we can not have that. The issue of immigration is important for a lot of different respects. A few years ago I made a promise to the us people that we'd have amnesty and clear it up and secure the borders, they came back this year and tried to sell the same horse twice, I said no, we secure the borders first, and we've had that debate first, a lot of elements involved as far as fairness to American cities, and schools, and states and public services and things of that nature. Fairness of those immigrants that have come here and played by the rules in many cases, to play by the rules and become many citizens. The other aspect is national security, it is an integral part of that issue, a nation that cannot protect its borders cannot remain a sovereign nation. We must secure the borders and

enforce the law, I put out a plan and be glad to talk about it in detail, I want to put that out there for you and it's important for a number of reasons, but the least of which is not national security, that ranks up at the very top. There's no reason to think that the terrorists don't know where these sanctuary cities are. I'll just say with that, the will and resolve of the American people to do what's necessary to protect themselves.

The number two issue to me dealt with issues of peace and security is the issue of prosperity. That's our other obligation. The federal government is not responsible for everyone's individual welfare in terms of their desire to work, but our fiscal policies are extremely important, because underlining everything else has to be growth of our economy. What does it take to grow our economy? If one thing is certain it is that lower taxes and tax rates equal a growing economy. It's happened every time in history. In the 20's, the Kennedy administration, Reagan administration, and in 2001 when I was happily there to help pass one of four different tax cuts when I was in the U.S. senate and again in 2003. That is the primary reason for the fact that we've had 23 successive quarters of economic growth in a time we experienced 9/11 and oil prices and things of that nature. Yet, some think that the government is entitled to this windfall in the end of 2010 and tax cuts expire that all this revenue is going to fall into the laps of the federal government. We live in a country which bears the second highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world. We are higher than all our European competitors. It's making our companies, so many of which have to compete in the international market, less competitive. It's making it so fewer companies locate here than otherwise would. We need to go down at least as far as 28% which would put us in the competitive norm. Before we went down from there, a lot of people don't like to use the world corporate because it conjures up some fat guy in the back of a room with a cigar. It's about investors, workers, and jobs, companies staying here, this is one of the things that can address this problem.

The other thing we need to do for prosperity is to recognize the dilemma we are headed for. Every expert and who looks at this says that our entitlement programs are unsustainable. We are blessed with a growing retirement community. We are living longer because better health care and other things, but we are turning this blessing into a curse for the next generation. We are borrowing money from places like China. We are borrowing from those yet to be born, to pad a situation that is unsustainable and needs to be addressed. I have talked in terms of making social security, there are no free lunches, but we can do a few common sense things now to set us on the right path and we can sustain social security that would keep it sustained for future generations. I can't imagine of something so obvious and so important to so many people where so few politicians even want to talk about it. They immediately change the subject because they are fearful of dealing with it because they will get slammed politically, and those trying to save social security will get accused of destroying it for some reason. People are fearful then, no one ever comes out with a plan. I say if you can't run for president by telling the truth then you shouldn't run for president. The flat truth that we have to do something or we're going to lose our programs.

The third issue, that I think underlines all others, is the fact that Washington has no credibility with the American people. I don't think anybody believes anything coming out of Washington any more, you look at the numbers whether it's the presidency or U.S. congress, you look at either one of the parties, I think people look at all that and look at the spending and pork barreling and our government, inadequate, saying we really don't believe in politicians any more who will tell us anything to get elected. If we don't have what it takes, to come together under good leadership who's telling the American people the truth, we can't defend ourselves internationally or at home, we can't do the right things domestically, all these things have to be dealt with bipartisanship. When a leader comes forth now a days and says here's the problem. We've looked at it, analyzed it. We got all the experts together in the same room. They come to a conclusion. Here's the problem, here's what we need to do, and we'll get through this. When that speech is made, who's going to believe it? That's dangerous for our country. Underlining that is what's going on with the

mechanics of our government, because in so many respects it's dysfunctional and not working. My committee had jurisdiction with operations of government. I put out a report in 2001, that says government's fraud, waste, mismanagement, lack of accountability, that was 2001, government at the brink, well 9/11 happened and everything kind of changed from the stand point of focus, I'd like to think the administration would have done a lot more things had it not been for 9/11. But now we have to get back to a situation that's growing even worse. We have an outgrowing civil service system, financial mismanagement wasting billions of dollars, cannot pass audits or standards we set for companies. We are way behind the curve for information technology. The government is struggling with 100's of millions of dollars to get computers to talk to each other. It's happened at agencies like the FBI and IRS.

300 billion dollars owed to the IRS today that they can't collect. All across America we are interacting with that and dealing with it, that's not good. Loss of confidence in our government is not good, I say that as a conservative who believes Americans want government limited to the powers set forth by the constitution, strong enough to defend us, but competent to do the basic government things. Those are the things that require strong leadership. Beginning with understanding the nature of the problem and understanding the nature of the world that we're living in. Understand the nature of what's going on with our government. That's the nature of the world we're living in and addressing it in a truthful and forthright way with nothing to lose. Except, in my case, the American people sending me back to being the happiest man you're ever met.

If you can address those things, I have a feeling the American people are better than the politicians give them credit for. We need to address these things and respond to that theoretical speech about coming together and doing the right thing. That's exactly what my candidacy is based on. Thank you very much. (applause)

James Brett: This is the portion where we are going to have the Q & A, but all I ask of any of you that if you are going to ask a question, wait for the roving microphone to come to you and also identify yourself for purposes of letting everyone know who you are. So let's begin the questions. The gentleman in the back with the white...

Question: Morning. My name is Wayne Jennings. With the New Hampshire Awareness Council. Welcome to New Hampshire. It's good seeing you. As President, you will have to deal with the challenge of dealing with Race Relations and diversity in America. Are you up for the challenge? And do you have any experience dealing with this particular subject and would you mind talking about it briefly? Thank you.

Fred Thompson: Dealing with this subject, as Americans, I had my own experience growing up in a small town in Tennessee. And looking back upon that now, I know that there were an awful lot of people who viewed a lot of things through the wrong prisms in those days. I have been a part of the growth of my country that I have seen change over a period of years. We have had a lot of change, a lot of good thing. I firmly believe that there's more that brings us together as Americans than separates us out. I think that doing the right thing and speaking the truth and having policies that allow anyone to come up in a country that is fair, that is free, where no one is encumbered by anything other than the issues of talent and willingness and desire for anybody can live the American dreams as so many people have. Some people are still encumbered because of race. Some people are encumbered because of their gender. Some people are encumbered because they came from a background – I have trouble describing this. My mama is back home listening to this and I have to be careful how I say it. But I don't want to embarrass her but she would be the first one to tell you. No formal education. Had to go to work. And turn into the best parents anybody could have and gave me moral support. That's the advantage I had. I had nothing in terms of the riches. But I had the firm loyal support. I don't know how a president can create that other than to know it's the truth and use the bully pulpit of America to speak the truth about that and encourage Americans to do the right thing. I feel that – I have always thought one of the most important things people need to keep in mind as he aspires to the presidency is at the end of the day and all the part at this San Battle Battles and you get into the mud wrestling in the primary and you really get into the mud wrestling in the general election and are you gong to be mean

enough, are you going to be aggressive enough. Are you go kick hard enough and all that. I don't think the American people want a mud wrestler. I do think the American people want someone who understands that at the end of the day he represents all the people. All the people. Everybody.

Every American has a seat at the table, in effect, and everyone is listened to. Get your platform out there here, rights issues, you think are important, I have listed I guess you probably saw my top three. And I'd be glad to talk about any others. But at the end of the day, you believe that's good for the country? Not this group or that group but it is good for the country. Because if it's good for the country it's good for all groups. Yes sir?

Question: Thank you, senator. I'm from health care Massachusetts. Polls consistently show health care seems to be the top check Issue on the mind of the voters. My question is what do you see as the challenges in that area in the area of health care. As president would you address them?

Fred Thompson: I think the issue that is most important to people in that area is health care costs. I think we mostly recognize the fact we have the best health care in the world. I mentioned my mother, and we have a chance to talk about that from a lot of different vantage points quite often. Most of the Nobel Prize Winners come from here. Most of the innovations and the break through come from the United States of America. You know about the drugs that are being produced to help people live longer and healthier lives. First we do no harm. First we don't take for granted that most wonderful blessing is keeping us and our loved ones alive a lot longer and healthier a lot longer. Let's don't mess that up. Now we ought to be able to get the same thing at a lower price. That's what it amounts to. And that has to do with bringing efficiencies or inefficiencies out of the system.

There's only two ways to go as I see it. And that is to have a single payer big government takeover or to make the markets more efficient. When I mention those principles a while ago I thought that made us great. I mentioned the market economy. I mentioned competition and I mentioned trade and I usually throw in federalism and the nature of the divided government we have, not only the federal between federal and state levels because of the innovation that's going on out there among the states and the experimentation. That's how we really got welfare reform. We adopted a good idea that works...

But I think fundamentally, the pinpoint in on a couple things, in a complex subject. I think we got to go back and revisit the change. The tax structure we have. Back during World War II we have fixed our tax structure that in effect most people get their insurance through their employer. It's a situation where third party payers make determinations for us that the government could be making for us or we could be making for ourselves. I think we ought to be making them ourselves. Under our current system people have very little idea what anything costs. They have very little competition in the marketplace because they don't look. They don't need to look.

There's no inducement to do the things we have to do for buying automobile insurance or for anything else. I think if we give the inducement to the individual and let them tailor a plan, with a tax code that reflects this. Let them tailor a plan for their own needs. A lot of people, younger people would want catastrophic coverage. Nobody can take care out of that out of their own pockets now a'days.

But also have a health savings account that could be used for day-to-day expenses. A country that has one open market in effect, where anybody can offer you coverage would be another good thing. Now, as I say, I am a federalist. But I have to recognize that with regard to this national issue that we have, that a lot of states have requirements that mandates and you got to put this in your policy. You can't put that in your policy. We need to open that up. We need to let people buy policies from wherever they want to the buy them from in the free marketplace. And

make those policies portable so that you are not tied to employment. You can move from job to job as so many people do now. You have seen the numbers. The average person coming into the market place... how many jobs do they have in their lifetime? We have got an old world system facing a new world kind of situation and the answer generally speaking is open it up, make the market more efficient and face responsibility, with help for those who need help with the individual person who will be smarter and better and it will result in lower prices. And that in effect will help the uninsured problem. Because the lower the prices are, if you are uninsured will help. Now I am not one who feels that we should force people to do municipal of anything. Especially when it comes to health care and health care coverage. So I don't believe in individual personal mandates. You got a great number of people out there, the experts tell us who can afford coverage and choose not to get it. A great number of people who are entitled to government assistance to get coverage who choose not to get it. I don't know that you ought to be able to totally guarantee that everybody's insured. But I do know that those who want insurance which is most everybody, the lower the price, these are going to be for them. Yes, sir?

Question: Senator, my name is Wayne, political science professor. It seems to me that the non proliferation treaty and the regime is broken. North Korea, Syria, actively pursuing or end up pursuing nuclear weapons. The U.S. faces serious challenges in the days ahead. I wonder, as president what you will do to either restore those treaties or directly deal with these states that are pursuing nuclear weapons.

Fred Thompson: That's a very good question and I think the answer is you have got to do both. A regime or a treaty in and of itself will not bail you out of your own bad policy or some other country's desire to cheat under the treaty. North Korea is, was a member of the – of the non-proliferation treaty. The countries left and right, it doesn't mean anything. They sign on and by signing on they assistance with their peaceful nuclear program. And the problem with that is the difference between peaceful nuclear program and turning it into something you can make weapons grade material is basically a turn of the key and we help them all up to this point and then they help themselves the rest of the way. So we have got to continue to urge people to adhere to the treaty. The IAEA as I am sure you know investigates alleged violations and that sort of thing. Something they're not even let in to adequately investigate so we don't really know what's going on. These treaties are secondary to the policies of the USA. We have to have good sound policies that leave ourselves open to the opportunity to have any kind of peaceful transition or any kind of friendly relations with those countries. But understanding the nature of the world that we live in. It's a dangerous place full of dangerous people, many of whom want to kill us. You mentioned North Korea. Now they're apparently saying they want to enter into an agreement with us. That they will stop what they're doing. The only problem with that is North Korea has never lived up to an agreement in the history of the country.

Israeli's have bombed a facility in Syria. And nobody is saying anything, and I don't know, I used to, you know, before I started running for president, kind of ironic, when I was working with the international security advisory board, I had a high civilian clearance. I don't have that anymore. I don't tend to know the answer to this question. But not knowing, I can say that I suspect, and what some of the experts suspect is that the Israelis thought the Syrians were getting ready to build same kind of design the North Koreans have. At the same time the north Koreans are saying we will stop what we're doing, they may be outsourcing their stuff to Syria. That's the kind of situation that we have got. Iran, of course, now says they have 3,000 centrifuges, well on their way to the ability to produce this material. Nobody knows exactly when that might be. We don't know how good our intelligence is. It's one of the pitiful things that is known as the aftermath of Iraq. We learned how bad our intelligence is. Doesn't make it better for us to know the Israelis and English and French and everybody else thought the same thing. It just goes to show you how wrong you can be. You can't afford to be that wrong in the future with regard to what's doing what anymore. You can't go around putting out every brushfire in the world. America did not be the world's police.

But we have to be the leaders and we have got to have the best intelligence available. And we have got to still maintain the status that has allowed us to say to our allies you don't need to have nuclear weapons, Japan or any other country that falls into that category. Because we are here and it's in our country's interest for there to be a stable world. We are going to do all we can to maintain a stable world.

That means we got to be strong. We have got to be strong in every day and especially we have got to be strong in terms of our will and determination to hang in there and do whatever's necessary at any particular time, not going invading willy nilly in the future. There might be a lot less of that in the future—than in the past. But—but understand me that we don't have the one big enemy anymore, Soviet Union with Missiles pointed either way, where a philosophy of deterrence worked—deterrence worked. We have Al-Qaeda and other terror-related organizations. We have these dangerous nations that are in the process or already have weapons of mass destruction capabilities. All these things around the country. So we have got to integrate the policy of prevention as well as -- that won't work against crazy people lots of times. So we have got to be more sophisticated and have a bigger arsenal of weapons. I am not talking about—I'm just talking about strategy. That's the kind of world we live in. We have to try to adhere to it to try to understand that in and of itself is not going to solve any problem.

Question: I'm representative Clark from Bedford. Proud to have you here. New Hampshire is suffering under unfunded mandates from the federal government that our state is a very small budget. We don't have sales or an income tax. And these unfunded mandates in the federal government are really hurting the state's budget process. How would you address that?

Fred Thompson:

Well, I would do the same thing that – the approach I take with regard to the war. I would enforce the law. Now, you go back and see to see exactly how they're interpreting this or interpreting the law but one of the first things we did in 1995 was pass a substantial unfunded mandate law in the United States Congress. Dirk Kempthorne, later went on to be governor of Idaho, I guess, and later second—he was the floor leader on this. So we're not supposed to be imposing unfunded mandates on the state like that with certain exceptions. So it gets down to what you are talking about. But let me just make a broader philosophical statement. That has to do with relationships between the federal and state government. I talk a lot about this because it's fundamental and a lot of issues can be poured into this cup that I am about to talk about and your particular unfunded mandate would certainly be a part of that. Our forefathers set up a system of divided power. They knew that tyranny that they had left, they knew how human nature worked and centralization and the dangers of all that so they gave us the three branches of the federal level and gave us our system of federalism which basically says not all answers are to be found in Washington, D.C. and we have got these laboratories competing with one another and experimenting by themselves to come up with ideas. And the constitution preserves that. And says that, in effect, says to me, that the states and localities have been doing something for a couple hundred years, the burden is on you, sir, to prove that the federal government ought to take it away from you. That's why I cast a couple of votes when it was 99-1 and I was the one. Because there were good government mom and apple pie and nobody could vote against this. It was good but the idea behind it but you can't take that away from the people who are supposed to be resolving it. The first question should always be should government be involved? And I come in from a no income tax state, too. Secondly, at what level of government? Now, unfunded mandates of the federal government says, ok, states, you can continue to do this but you got to do it this way and that way and another way to cause you to raise your own taxes to do it, that's like a takeover. It violates the principles of federalism among other things. And there are sound reasons not to do that. So I will take look at your particular situation, but those are the principles that I would apply. Thank you.

[applause]

James Brett: I just want to thank the senator for finding time off his busy schedule to stop by for “politics and eggs” and I want to give the senator with a small token of appreciation. We will give you this coffee mug so you can say to your friends in Tennessee that you have been mugged at “politics and eggs.”

Fred Thompson: Thank you.

[applause]

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