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If Americans will remember anything about last week's televised forum of the presidential candidates, it is that Vice President Bush is tired of Democratic criticism of the government's AIDS policy.

"A lot's going on in AIDS," Bush said on the two-hour NBC program. "And to hear these guys wringing their hands about everything being wrong with this country, I'm sorry, I just am all depressed, want to switch over to see 'Jake and the Fat Man' on CBS. Sorry."

Here, as transcribed by NBC, is what the Democrats did say about the nation's fight against AIDS:

Moderator Tom Brokaw: Another subject that is of vital importance to the American public in this presidential election year—we have a national epidemic in America called AIDS. If someone is identified as an AIDS virus carrier, should he or she be quarantined? Sen. Simon?

Sen. Paul Simon: No. We have to move on research, and we're not spending enough on research. We have to move on education. If Margaret Thatcher can move on education in Great Britain, we have to move on it. And third, we ought to appropriate adequate funds for the voluntary test centers. Right now there is a two-month wait in Chicago, a three-month wait in Minneapolis, three-month wait in San Francisco. That waiting period is dynamite. People who know they have AIDS do not spread it, generally. But if those people have to wait, that really is dynamite. We ought to move on it quickly.

Brokaw: Huge controversy in Massachusetts about the explicit nature of some pamphlets that were distributed about safe sex and the AIDS environment. Would [illegible] say about education and treatment as there is anywhere in the country. I think the problem here in Washington is that we have an administration that's almost embarrassed about it. Look, this is the most important, the most serious public health problem we've had in our lifetime. And I would like to be a president working with the Congress who steps up to the plate, who recognizes that, understands it, commits the funds for research, for education and prevention, for testing, and for treatment—compassionate treatment for those with the disease.

Brokaw: Mandatory testing, Congressman?

Rep. Richard Gephardt: No, except in some limited cases. But what we really need is what we've said here, research and education. And that takes leadership. Anybody can say, let's test everybody in the country. It would cost billions of dollars to do that. It wouldn't solve any of our problems. We need leadership to give us the kind of education research programs that will really cut away at the problem and get us to the good outcome.

Brokaw: Senator Gore, you want to jump in here?

Sen. Albert Gore: I do. I think it's important to realize the magnitude of the failure by the Reagan-Bush administration. A conservative prime minister of England, Margaret Thatcher, saw only 350 cases of AIDS, and launched a nationwide comprehensive education and prevention campaign. We've now had more than 40,000 cases of AIDS, and still they have done nothing. They appointed a commission, and the two leading members of the commission resigned in utter disgust about the [illegible]

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testing and confidentiality of data. The historians are going to wonder, when they look at the 1980s, whether or not we even had a president and a vice president during the early 1980s, the early years of the AIDS epidemic.

Brokaw: I want to ask you, Gov. Babbitt, do you think that there ought to be any restrictions on AIDS carriers working in the public sector, schools, for the government, in areas where they come in contact with the public?

Bruce Babbitt: Tom, I agree on every—you know, unaccustomed as I am to agreeing in the budget issues, I agree with every single thing that has been said by these candidates tonight. You know, I listen to [Sen.] Jesse Helms [R-N.C.] saying we should quarantine AIDS carriers. I listen to [Education Secretary] William Bennett saying we should keep them in prison, beyond the expiration of their terms. I don't know what they're thinking about. And it seems to me, the plain simple answer is, we ought to spend less time listening to the right-wing politicians and more time listening to the medical people. And the answer is, the testing and quarantining simply drives the problem underground. And there are very few exceptions. And the exceptions, we can get some advice from the medical people.

Brokaw: Briefly, Rev. Jackson?

Rev. Jesse Jackson: Tom, leadership. We can give out pamphlets and do research, that's important. There was a march in Washington Oct. 11, [of] 600,000 to 800,000 gay and lesbian people. Of all the people here tonight, of the 12, I'm the only one who showed up, who had the courage and compassion to stand with