

Bleeding Heartland

It's what plants crave.



Liveblogging John Edwards in Marshalltown

by: [noneed4thneed](#)

Fri Jun 15, 2007 at 15:10:14 PM CDT

I am at a John Edwards event in Marshalltown. The room is packed. Probably around 200 people are here. People are standing in the doorways and out in the halls. I see a couple of city council members and local leaders from the UAW and ISEA here. Edwards is coming from Des Moines where he is taping an episode of [Iowa Press](#) that will air on IPTV tonight at 7:30 pm (Friday, June 15th) and on Sunday, June 17th at 11:30 am.

Edwards has arrived and says Elizabeth is on her way to Iowa right now and sorry she can't be here now. He says he is going to be focusing on health care, but feel free to ask him about anything.

In his health care plan you can stick with private insurance or enter a government plan that is basically Medicare plus. In his plan preventative care is 100% covered, which receives a loud applause. Currently, 30 to 40 cents on every dollar spent on health care are administrative costs. Everyone is covered in this plan which would be mandated by the government.

\$90-\$120 billion per year and mostly paid for by repealing Bush's tax cuts for people that make over \$200,000 a year, which gets a lot of applause.

To lower costs we need to take on insurance companies and drug companies and deal with some inefficiencies that exist. Need to create competition. Require by law that 85% of money goes towards providing health care and not admin. costs.

Offer companies that development these breakthrough drugs money up front for access to the patent. Also need to allow the federal government to negotiate drug prices and allow importation of drugs from Canada.

Using technology such as electronical record keeping save money and reduce the number of medical mistakes.

The big 3 car companies are spending \$16-17 billion per year on health care costs and it is a large burden on these businesses.

Edwards closes his speech by saying we need strength, bold ideas, and be visionary. It

will take all of us to bring about the change that is needed. Now Edwards opens it up to questions...

The first question asks if he would require oil companies to invest their large profits in building refineries.

Edwards says one long term solution is to cap carbon emissions (receives applause). He would auction off these caps, which would raise billions of dollars and then invest in renewables and build the infrastructure. He says Americans will need to conserve and uses the line Americans need to be patriotic about something other than war. He says we need to use coal sequestration technology and not build anymore coal plants until this technology is available. This was surprising to hear since there is a \$1 billion coal-fired powered plant proposed to be built in Marshalltown.

The second question comes from a young kid. He asks what we can do to people that live in places like India that don't have the resources to live. Edwards says 3 billion people live on less than \$1 a day. All of these things are connected and you can't look at them in isolation. Get off our addiction of foreign oil means we stop funding the terrorists. Imagine what happens if America leads the world off carbon based fuels. Oil rich countries won't be able only invest in oil production and will invest in other things like health care and education.

The third question is from John Day from [Iowans for Sensible Priorities](#). Day asks about reducing our nuclear arsenal and using that money saved on health care and education. Edwards says he would stop building more nuclear weapons like bunker busters. America should lead on getting rid of all nuclear weapons worldwide.

The next question is how to make Social Security sustainable. Edwards says you need to talk about Medicare and Social Security. Medicare is in a tougher situation and a lot of things his health care plan would help solve some of these inefficiencies. On Social Security, it much more stable than Medicare. He would not raise the retirement age or cut benefits. He would look at changing the cap, which is currently at 90,000, and creating a bubble, so the most wealthy pay. He mentioned he doesn't think it would be far to raise taxes on a family that makes \$110,000 and has kids in college. That is exactly what we don't need, but a bubble would help the situation.

Here comes the immigration question. He is asked about what he thinks about what Congress is supposedly doing about immigration. Edwards laughs at the supposedly part in the question. He says some border fence should be used, but it is ridiculous to build a fence on the entire border. He says companies should face a stricter fine if they hire people here illegally. This got the loudest applause so far. He says we shouldn't create a permanent underclass here with guest workers. We should require immigrants to learn English and allow a path for citizenship. He disagrees with the Senate bill in that it makes it requires a touch back provision, which is not able to be done by many immigrants who work paycheck to paycheck and he thinks the Senate bill had a too difficult process to gain citizenship. It would take 13 years, which is too long, and is too costly. He agrees

that illegal immigrants should be fined, but the Senate bill calls for a too large of a fine.

The last question is from a high school teacher who says that her and her colleagues go to work everyday, work hard, and burdened by No Child Left Behind. What can you do about it?

Edwards says he is going to do something about, which gets some very loud applause. He says the first problem was that is has been under funded. These tests are taking away from teaching. He would test student's progress from beginning of the year to the end of the year instead of comparing one group of kids against another group. Another thing to improve education, America needs to desperately invest in early childhood education.

I didn't catch the last question. Edwards is using it to summarize the top issues, which he says are Iraq and moral leadership in the world, a health care system that is a mess, and energy. He says the two America's that he talked about in 2004 is even truer today. Some things that will help are providing universal health care, as well making college more accessible, and making it easier to join a union.

He thanks people for coming and says it is great to be back in Marshalltown. The scum begins as the crowd converges on the candidate.

I will do a follow up post with more opinion and thoughts on his health care plan and his comment about coal-fired power plants.