

Print Debate

A Level Playing Field for Political Dialogue



John F. Kennedy

Senator John Kennedy, Democrat vs. **Vice-President Richard Nixon**, Republican
Presidential Campaign ★ November 3, 1960

Single Candidate Statement Forum

John F. Kennedy appears alone in the single candidate statement forum, as his opponent in the Presidential election, Richard M. Nixon, has twice declined Kennedy's invitation to a debate in the *Print Debate Level Playing Field*. Kennedy first wrote a letter to Nixon, inviting him to Print Debate. Nixon rejected that invitation. Kennedy then appeared in the *Print Debate Challenge Forum*, where he publicly invited Nixon to debate once again. Nixon also rejected that invitation. Thus, Kennedy appears here in the *Single Candidate Statement Forum*, to address Nixon's absence and take questions from the electorate.



Richard M. Nixon
Rejected Print Debate
Level Playing Field

Mr. Kennedy's Statements to the Electorate

Kennedy Addresses Nixon's Print Debate Absence

My opponent in the Presidential race, Vice President Richard Nixon, has declined the opportunity to engage in this debate. Surely, the American people deserve a fair and open exchange of ideas about the issues facing this great country. This forum is nonpartisan and unbiased. He is free to speak at length about his administration and his vision for America. I regret that he has chosen to spurn this challenge.

John Kennedy's Final Statement

I believe it is my responsibility as the leader of the Democratic party in 1960 to try to warn the American people that in this crucial time we can no longer afford to stand still. We can no longer afford to be second best. I want people all over the world to look to the United States again, to feel that we're on the move, to feel that our high noon is in the future.

I want Mr. Khrushchev to know that a new generation of Americans who fought in Europe and Italy and the Pacific for freedom in World War II have now taken over in the United States, and that they're going to put this country back to work again.

I don't believe that there is anything this country cannot do. I don't believe there's any burden, or any responsibility, that any American would not assume to protect his country, to protect our security, to advance the cause of freedom. And I believe it incumbent upon us now to do that. Franklin Roosevelt said in 1936 that that generation of Americans had a rendezvous with destiny. I believe in 1960 and sixty-one and two and three we have a rendezvous with destiny. And I believe it incumbent upon us to be the defenders of the United States and the defenders of freedom; and to do that, we must give this country leadership and we must get America moving again.

During this critical time in our country's history, those who would aspire to the Presidency must be prepared to answer the call of its citizens. If the Vice President is disinclined to join in a vigorous and fair debate, how are we to judge his fitness for the Presidency? I, again, call upon Mr. Nixon to join this debate.

John F. Kennedy's Top Goals

If I am elected president, I will do my best to restore our prestige in the world by forging stronger ties with Latin America, by working toward freedom in Cuba, by confronting Communist threats.

We must move into space. The Soviets are ahead of us there and the world is watching. Many countries equate space developments with scientific productivity and scientific advancement and now feel that the Soviet Union, which was once so backward, is on a par with the United States. The Soviet Union is turning out twice as many scientists and engineers as we are. We must meet this challenge.

Our schools are under funded and our teachers disgracefully underpaid. If elected president, I will work the Congress to increase funding for our schools and teachers. Education is the hope of the future.

I don't want the talents of any American to go to waste. I think the government has a responsibility to help all its citizens realize their potential. As president, I will direct that Title Three be enforced and that the decisions of the Supreme Court about civil rights are enforced.

John F. Kennedy Answers Citizen Questions

★ *Senator Kennedy, why do you think people should vote for you rather than Vice President Nixon?*

I think the question is what are the programs that we advocate, what is the party record that we lead? I come out of the Democratic party, which in this century has produced Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, and which supports and sustains many of the programs that are essential to the safety and prosperity of this country.

Mr. Nixon comes out of the Republican party. He was nominated by it. And it is a fact that through most of these last twenty-five years the Republican leadership has opposed Federal aid for education, medical care for the aged, development of the Tennessee Valley, development of our natural resources.



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Mr. Kennedy's Statements to the Electorate

The question before us is: which point of view and which party do we want to lead the United States?

★ *Senator Kennedy, you call for expanding some of the welfare programs for schools, for teacher salaries, medical care, and so forth; but you also call for reducing the Federal debt. How would you, if you're president in January, go about paying the bill for all this?*

Medical care for the aged, I would put under social security. The Vice President and I disagree on this. The Javits-Nixon Program would have cost, if fully used six hundred million dollars by the government per year, and six hundred million dollars by the state. The program, which I advocated, and which failed by only five votes in the United States Senate, would have put medical care for the aged in Social Security, and would have been paid for through the Social Security System and the Social Security tax.

I support Federal aid to education and Federal aid for teachers' salaries. I think that's a good investment. I think we're going to have to do it. And I think to heap the burden further on the property tax, which is already strained in many of our communities, will ensure, in my opinion, that many of our children will not be adequately educated, and many of our teachers not adequately compensated. There is no greater return to an economy or to a society than an educational system second to none.

I believe in the balanced budget. And the only conditions under which I would unbalance the budget would be if there was a grave national emergency or a serious recession.

★ *Senator Kennedy, just how serious a threat to our national security are these Communist subversive activities in the United States today?*

I think they're serious. I think it's a matter that we should continue to give great care and attention to. We should support the laws which the United States has passed in order to protect us from those who would destroy us from within. We should sustain the Department of Justice in its efforts and the F.B.I., and we should be continually alert. I think if the United States is maintaining a strong society here in the United States, we can meet any internal threat. The major threat of Communism is external and will continue.

★ *Senator Kennedy, last May, in Oregon, you discussed sending apologies or regrets to Khrushchev over the U-2 incident. Do you think now that that would have done any good? Did you think so then?*

I suggested that if the United States felt that it could save the summit conference that it would have been proper for us to have expressed regrets. In my judgment, that statement has

been distorted by Mr. Nixon and others in their debates around the country and in their discussions. Mr. Lodge, on "Meet the Press" a month ago, said if there was ever a case when we did not have law on our side it was in the U-2 incident.

Expressing regrets is the accepted procedure between nations; and my judgment is that we should follow the advice of Theodore Roosevelt: Be strong; maintain a strong position; but also speak softly. I believe that in those cases where international custom calls for the expression of a regret, if that would have kept the summit going, in my judgment it was a proper action. It's not appeasement.

★ *Senator Kennedy, in the past you have emphasized the president's responsibility as a moral leader as well as an executive on civil rights questions. What specifically might the next president do in the event of an occurrence such as Little Rock or the lunch-counter sit-ins?*

I think that the president operates in a number of different areas:

First, as a legislative leader. I believe that the passage of Title Three, which gives the Attorney General the power to protect Constitutional rights in those cases where it's not possible for the person involved to bring the suit is a powerful tool for civil rights.

Second, as an executive leader. There have been only six cases brought by this Attorney General under the voting bill passed in 1957 and the voting bill passed in 1960. The right to vote is basic. I do not believe that this Administration has implemented those bills which represent the will of the majority of the Congress on those two occasions with vigor.

Third, the president must act as a moral leader. There is a very strong moral basis for this concept of equality of opportunity. We are in a very difficult time. We need all the talent we can get. We sit on a conspicuous stage. We are a goldfish bowl before the world. We have to practice what we preach. We set a very high standard for ourselves. The Communists do not. They set a low standard of materialism.

Finally, I believe in the case of Little Rock. I would have hoped that the president of the United States would ensure that the Supreme Court decision was carried out. I would have used marshals to do so.