

Jason Shoultz: Good evening. Two candidates are vying to represent California's 7th district in Congress, incumbent Ami Bera and challenger Doug Ose. Tonight, those two men will debate here at the KVIE Television Studios. The one hour live broadcast begins now.

Announcement: The Bera-Ose 2014 California Seventh Congressional District Debate, sponsored by Capital Public Radio; the Center for California Studies at Sacramento State; Folsom Lake College; KVIE Public Television; the Los Rios Community College District; and the Sacramento Bee.

Jason Shoultz: In less than a month, voters will decide who will represent California's 7th district in the US House of Representatives. The 7th district is situated in eastern Sacramento County and includes the cities of Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova, and Folsom. This close race has attracted lots of national attention, and this is the only scheduled debate between incumbent Democrat Ami Bera and Republican challenger Doug Ose. Representative Bera was elected to the post in 2012. Doug Ose represented California's 3rd district from 1999 to 2005.

The path to Capitol Hill for either of them goes through the KVIE Studios tonight, and gentlemen, thank you so much for joining us. I'm Jason Shoultz, your moderator for the evening, and we have a panel of three journalists who will be questioning the candidates. Let's meet them now.

Marianne Russ, managing editor of Capital Public Radio; Dan Smith, the Sacramento Bee's Capital Bureau Chief; and Michaela Kwoka-Coleman of Folsom Lake College's online newspaper, The Talon. Also with us tonight, a studio audience, and they have been asked to save their applause for the conclusion of the debate. It's my job to make sure the rules are followed, questions are answered, and to keep an eye on the clock. And with that in mind, let's get started. We will begin with opening statements, and we decided those with a coin toss and we'll start with representative Bera. You have one minute.

Ami Bera: Thank you. I want to thank the moderators here. I want to thank the audience here, and those watching at home. My story always starts with the story of my parents who immigrated here from India in the 1950s. They settled here in California. This is where I've lived my whole life. My wife, Janine, and I have been married for 23 years, living right here in Elk Grove for the last 19. Our daughter Sydra just started her senior year of high school.

So when I ran for Congress, I ran on three simple promises. I promised to introduce and help pass No Budget, No Pay. A lot of it says if members of Congress don't do their job and pass a responsible budget, they shouldn't get paid. I kept that promise. I promised not to take any pay raises, and work across the aisle to get Sacramento County working again. I kept that promise. And I promised not to take a pension, and make sure we protect Social Security from being privatized. I kept that promise. It's been my honor to be a doctor in our community for the last 19 years, and to be your member of Congress for these past two.

Jason Shoultz:

Thank you. Now time for Mr. Ose's opening statement.

Doug Ose:

Thank you, Jason. When my wife and I sit and talk about the future for our children and our country, we focus in on an optimistic view for America, one that focuses on three or four things: that an individual can make a difference; that hard work pays off; that we're all in this together, and we need to get to work.

Sadly, today, my confidence in our country is shaken because Washington is broken. The economy is not creating jobs, and it's very uncertain whether it ever will. Obamacare is not working, and it's costing us jobs, and our water is being sent south.

My hope is that we'll fix those things. Congressman Bera has put politics before people in advocating for things that are adverse to this district. To paraphrase a candidate from 2012, trusting Ami Bera to solve these problems is like trusting a burglar to stay in your house when you're out of town and expecting your things are there when you get back.

Jason Shoultz:

Okay, thank you. Your time is up there. Thank you, gentlemen. We appreciate the opening statements. There are no rebuttals for opening statements, I should mention. It is time to move on to questions from the panel. The candidates were not shown these questions in advance, and had no say in deciding the topics for tonight's debate. Each will have 90 seconds to answer the question. They will also have 30 seconds for rebuttals. Now, we only have an hour, so I'm going to be strictly enforcing those time limits, gentlemen. Our first question by coin toss goes to Doug Ose and will be asked by Marianne Russ.

Marianne Russ:

Mr. Ose, let's start with healthcare. You mentioned Obamacare or the Affordable Care Act in your opening statement. You have said you support the repeal of it, but would keep certain aspects such as coverage despite preexisting conditions, but I'm wondering what

your plan is for the millions of Californians who now have health insurance under the state's healthcare exchange or the expansion of Medi-Cal? What would your plan do for them?

Doug Ose:

Obamacare is failing to address our healthcare needs. In fact, it's costing us jobs through all sorts of sectors dealing with small business and the like. The president promised that we would be able to keep our doctor, and that promise has proven to be untrue. The president promised that the price of healthcare would go down. That has turned out to not be true. And while there are a couple things within the 3,000 pages of the Affordable Care Act that have merit, the vast majority of the bill is not consistent with the needs of this country. What we need to do is make sure that people can have coverage for pre-existing conditions, that we allow them to shop across state lines to get the best deal, and that we allow them to pick their own doctor.

The problem is that Obamacare is killing jobs, and if you don't have a job, you can't afford to pay for the health insurance that you so desperately need. I'm in favor of repealing it and replacing it with something that works that doesn't kill jobs.

The other thing that really concerns me about Obamacare is that the legislation strips 716 billion dollars from Medicare, which is a safety net that our seniors have come to rely upon. That's bad policy. It's simply bad policy. If I were a senior and my representative were proposing that and defending that, I'd be seriously concerned about whether they really were worried about my interests.

Jason Shoultz:

Congressman Bera, the Affordable Care Act?

Ami Bera:

Let's actually address that matter here claim-first. It's déjà vu all over again. Two years ago, Congressman Lungren made that same claim. The Sacramento Bee called it a lie. Your ads have made that same claim; the Bee has called it a lie. Congressman, how many times does someone have to call something a lie until you stop telling it?

Now, I look at the Affordable Care Act from the perspective of a doctor, and as a doctor, I've taken care of far too many patients who may have lost their job and they show up by volunteering at our free clinics for the last 19 years, and they may show up. Maybe they found a breast mass, and you can see the fear on their face and you want to work this up. And I'm frustrated as a doctor when you can't.

Now, the Affordable Care Act is not the solution that I would have come up with as a doctor and a healthcare expert, but it is now the law. So let's take this law. Let's fix it and let's make it better. Let's address the cost of care. That's why I've worked across the aisle to come up with no-nonsense solutions working with Republicans like the Small Business and Family Relief Act that helps lower the cost of care to the average Sacramento County family. That would be \$600 a year on average right back into their pockets.

Now, contrast that with what Congressman Ose wants to do. He wants to take us back to a time when health insurance companies were in charge, when women could be charged more than men, where if you had a preexisting illness you could be denied coverage. That's not progress; that's taking us backwards. Let's fix this, let's make it better, and let's move forward.

Jason Shoultz: Mr. Ose, your opportunity to respond.

Doug Ose: Congressman Bera has subscribed to the Washington, D.C. talking points that Nancy Pelosi has given him, and he just shared them with you. The Affordable Care Act strips 716 billion dollars from Medicare funding going forward. That's not my number; that's the Congressional Budget Office number. In addition, the consequence of the Affordable Care Act is that people get moved on to Medicaid and doctors are refusing to take Medicaid now because the reimbursements are too low. You're costing people coverage, congressman.

Jason Shoultz: Congressman, your chance to reply.

Ami Bera: Well, again, that's blatantly false. We'll leave it up to the Bee. We'll leave it up to KCRA, which actually looked at that ad earlier this week and said that was a false statement. But, again, if you want to keep repeating that lie you can go ahead and do it.

This is about doctors being able to take care of patients. This is about making sure people can get the healthcare that they need. I don't want to go backwards when women can get charged more than men, where if a person comes down with cancer they can be denied coverage. I want to move forward.

Jason Shoultz: Our next question comes from Dan Smith for Congressman Bera.

Dan Smith: Congressman Bera, two years ago you pledged to create jobs by slowing overseas job loss and by helping small business. But California's unemployment rate is still 7.4 percent. It's fourth largest

in the nation. What have you done in the last two years to create jobs in this region, and what are you going to do if we send you back to Washington?

Ami Bera:

Dan, thank you. That's a great question. Too many Sacramento County families and American families are still struggling. The middle class was hit hard by this recession, and people can talk about an economic recovery but for a lot of those families they're still living month-to-month, paycheck-to-paycheck, and the economy hasn't recovered. That's why when I ran, we ran on this promise. I wasn't going to take any pay raises until we got Sacramento County working again. I've kept that promise, and here's some things that we've done.

I got full funding for Folsom Dam. What that's done is that's the biggest federal project in the country right now. It's put hundreds of construction workers to work. It's going to help us with our drought. It's also going to help protect our community. My office has done dozens of small business workshops. Small businesses really are the backbone of creating jobs. We've shown those small business owners how they can actually access capital through the Small Business Administration, how they can use census data to better plan their expansions of business, and then we've worked with major employers like Siemens, Aerojet Rocketdyne, Intel, VSP. Those are major manufacturers, and in fact we've worked closely with Siemens to get locomotive contracts and they've just got their biggest light rail contract. That's going to create hundreds of jobs.

We still have a long ways to go because we were hit hard by this recession. Now Congressman Ose, when he was a member of Congress, he voted for tax breaks for companies that shipped jobs overseas. That's not going to help us recover. We've got to create those jobs right here and reward companies that build jobs in America.

Jason Shoultz:

Mr. Ose, what needs to happen to create jobs?

Doug Ose:

The question was about Congressman Bera's pledge to create jobs. Just last week, Congressman Bera spent federal dollars to advertise a small business workshop, the purpose of which was to meet with small business owners and educate them about tools that the federal government has and things that they can do or take advantage of. The problem was it's such an important thing for them. This pledge means so much. He didn't show up for the workshop. I don't know how else . . . I mean, 90 percent of this job, Congressman, is showing up, and you didn't show up for your own workshop. You

spent federal resources, brought all these small business owners in, and then you didn't show up to take their testimony or their input and I don't understand that.

Small business is the backbone of this economy. I'm a small business owner. I've been a small business owner since the day I got out of college. I know what it takes to create a job. I know what it means to sign the front of a paycheck, and it's not easy. Small business is not getting the assistance it needs from Congressman Bera in today's environment, and that needs to change.

Now, you mentioned VSP? I know the folks over at VSP, too. And just as an aside, the programs that you've been advocating for like the Affordable Care Act, you may not be aware of this, but VSP just got a bill two weeks ago for 25 million dollars, just a tax, because they provide health insurance to their employees.

Jason Shoultz: Congressman Bera?

Ami Bera: We agree we've got to create jobs to get people working again. In Sacramento County, we've now created over 30,000 jobs, but the jobless rate and the unemployment rate is still too high. It's still right around seven percent. So, too many families are struggling. It's important to my office, and it is core to our job, to go out there and work with those small business owners, so we do do workshops. We invite them in. My staff's direction is to be there to work on behalf of the people who live here, and I'm proud of that. That is part of our job.

Jason Shoultz: Mr. Ose, you have an opportunity for one last rebuttal.

Doug Ose: The fact of the matter is Congressman Bera spent yours and my tax dollars organizing and advertising a small business workshop. 10, 12, 15 small business owners showed up, and he didn't. This is called representative government for a reason. If you call small business owners in, you ought to give them the courtesy of going and listening to their testimony.

Jason Shoultz: Thank you, gentlemen. The next question goes to Mr. Ose from Michaela Kwoka-Coleman.

Michaela Kwoka-Coleman: Mr. Ose, you have two daughters in college so you must know that it is a significant challenge for many families to pay college tuition. What steps do you think Congress should take to help those who can't afford college?

Doug Ose:

This is a great question, Michaela. I appreciate you mentioning it. I know my younger daughter is your age. The first thing we need to do is we need to get this economy rolling so that the kids in high school and college today can finish their education with a certainty that when they get done, they get to come out and find a job in their chosen profession. Right now, this economy remains uncertain and jobs are at risk. This is a function of the policies that President Obama, Nancy Pelosi, and Congressman Bera have passed and continue to pass that are adverse to our interests. There are four or five things that I want to mention to you.

A) We get the economy rolling. That gives us the chance to create the jobs for these young people. B) We figure out what it is that we need in this economy. Do we need engineers? Do we need basket weavers? What do we need? And then we find a way to incentivize those disciplines that allow us to advance our economic needs. We need to find a way where – and Congressman Bera doesn't have anything to do with this that I know of, and I know he shares my view about this – the UC system recently changed its admission process to increase the number of overseas and out-of-state solicitations they make for student enrollment. I just kind of went “Wait a minute, we paid for the UC system. Those slots ought to be for our kids, not for somebody out of state.” I mean, I'm sorry my time's up; I could talk about this quite a ways. But the point is we've got to get the economy rolling so the kids in school can be able to come out and get good jobs so they can afford to pay the debt that they otherwise incur.

Jason Shoultz:

Congressman, how can college affordability be addressed?

Ami Bera:

Michaela, that's a great question. You know, I'm a lifetime Californian. I went to our public schools from Kindergarten through high school, did a year's work of community college work along the way there, and went to undergrad and med school. I paid \$393 a quarter to go to med school. Can you believe that? Our daughter is a senior in high school, and Janine and I sit down there and it doesn't cost that today. Kids are graduating with hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt.

We've got to make college affordable again, and that was a promise that I grew up with here in California, this promise of higher education, that if you had the desire and the abilities, you were guaranteed the ability to go to college. The UC system is one of our greatest assets here in the state. It's one of our best brands. So yes, we've got to fight in Congress to make sure we keep interest rates down on student loans, but the bigger question is how did it go from

\$393 a quarter that I was paying going to a public university to what kids today are paying to go to medical school? \$40,000 a year, and maybe even higher than that now.

What we have to do is we have to get to the root cause and actually start bringing the cost of education down. That's an investment that's made in us. I am only here because of the education that I received, and I know none of that was a handout. I worked incredibly hard to get where I am, but that opportunity existed. And this state and this nation made those investments, and we've got to start investing again in your generation. There is no greater investment that we can make than in our young people.

Jason Shoultz: Thank you, congressman. Mr. Ose?

Doug Ose: I want to go back to this. I think we're in broad agreement about the value of the UC system and things like that. We both were graduates of the UC system. A member of Congress has the opportunity to use their influence to reverse this disproportionate assignment of student slots to out-of-state or foreign students. We also have an ability as a member of Congress to exercise the ability to control costs. We need to do that. It's an appropriate role for a member of Congress.

Jason Shoultz: Congressman Bera, what do you think about that?

Ami Bera: You know, I agree. These are public universities. I was the Associate Dean of Admissions at UC Davis Medical School. We're paying for the public universities here, and our students in California should be given priority to go to those schools. Now, I can't tell the regents what to do, but absolutely, I do use the bully pulpit. And, in fact, we started the UC caucus with a Republican, Jeff Denham, one of my colleagues, and this is the California Public Higher Education Caucus so it's our community colleges, our Cal State schools, because we've got to advocate for this.

Jason Shoultz: Advocating for education, thank you both. Appreciate that. Marianne Russ, your next question is for Congressman Bera.

Marianne Russ: Congressman Bera, as you well know, California is in the midst of a three-year drought. Farmers are leaving fields unplanted; wells in the Central Valley are running dry; local cities are relying more on groundwater. Yet, there is still no agreement in Washington on legislation to assist California. You mentioned the Folsom Dam project, but what else are you doing to help the region and the state cope with the drought?

Ami Bera:

You know, we're in the third year of the worst drought of our lifetime. This is unprecedented. And it's affecting every family. It's affecting our economy. It's affecting food prices, so it's hurting. We've been working from day one to try to address this drought, working with folks at the various water agencies. We've got flows at Folsom Lake reduced to their lowest levels. We've been able to keep them down.

Folsom Dam, as you mentioned, we got the funding for Folsom Dam. When completed, that will allow us to hold on to more water during dry years and then we obviously also have a flood risk here so in years that are really wet it will keep our community more safe.

But we've got to do more. Congressman Ose and I actually agree on a lot. We've got to increase storage capacity. We've done dozens of workshops working with the residents in the community and the water districts to let people know what they can do as well, and Sacramento County residents should be very proud of themselves. We've reduced our water consumption by about 20 percent. Now, we've got a ways to go.

Long-term, though, we have to make sure we fight against proposals like the tunnels the governor wants to build, the BDCP. I've been working with my colleagues, and we've taken a lead against the BDCP because it doesn't create additional water.

We also have to have smart plans. The climate has changed. We've lost our snow pack. Now, my opponent, Congressman Ose, thinks the climate science is sketchy. He doesn't necessarily believe the climate has changed. I think it has. So, we have to come up with new ways to catch water, store it, and move the water.

Jason Shoultz:

Mr. Ose?

Doug Ose:

The question is about drought. I wish a member of Congress had the ability to make it rain, but they don't. But a member of Congress does have the ability to get the Bureau of Reclamation to reduce the outflows from Folsom Dam at a time when we are at historic lows in terms of rainfall. When I was in Congress before, I worked on that. For the past 15 months, I've been talking about reducing the outflows from Folsom Dam because of the very real possibility that we're going to need that water, and here we are. We need the water.

Congressman Bera has declined to make any effort to reduce the outflows from Folsom Dam. He has today, or recently at least, come out in opposition to the tunnels which is opposite of what he was in

2010 when he was in favor of the tunnels. My problem here is we need solutions. We've got to protect our water resources and stop spending it – excuse me, stop sending it south. You understand, please, additional releases from Folsom Dam constitute taking our water and sending it south to Los Angeles. Congressman Bera has not spoken up on this. He has not picked up the phone and talked to the bureau about reducing outflows. That's why we're sending out thousands of feet per hour more than are flowing into Folsom. That has to stop.

Jason Shoultz: Congressman, reducing outflows. Your chance to respond.

Ami Bera: Sure, let's tell the truth here. Back in January, we went straight at fish and game. We kept the fishing season short, and they reduced Folsom Dam outflows to the lowest levels possible. We've kept those levels at very low levels. We talk on a constant basis with the bureau, with the various water agencies, and work with them to guide. There is more water in Folsom Lake today than there was back in January, but there's not enough. We're in a severe drought. That's why I've fought against the Republican plan that actually wants to take water and move it south. You support that plan.

Jason Shoultz: Mr. Ose, your chance to respond.

Doug Ose: I remember when the Bureau of Reclamation spokesperson was trotted out in front of the building and said "Well members of Congress, they don't usually contact us to talk about water releases." That was in direct response to direct comments that I had made, and after I made them, you said nothing. We need to save this water, and a member of Congress has the ability to do that, and Congressman Bera has not stepped up and done his job.

Jason Shoultz: Thank you, gentlemen. If anyone does know how to make it rain, please let us know. Let's move on to our next question. Dan Smith from the Bee for Mr. Ose.

Dan Smith: Mr. Ose, California business groups have called for the House Republicans to support an immigration bill that not only secures the border, but provides a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants. If elected, will you encourage the House Republican leadership to support this approach, and please tell us why or why not.

Doug Ose: Senior member of the House Republican leadership, that being the speaker, supports reform of our immigration laws. He's been very clear about that. Congressman Bera knows that. I know that. Read

the Bee, it's in there. I think the first step that we need to take on immigration is to secure our borders and our ports of entry to prevent additional individuals coming in here that we don't know who they are or where they come from.

The problem is that the folks who are in leadership on the Democratic side today were the lieutenants the last time our country tried to take on reform in immigration in the mid-80s, and they were part and parcel after the passage of the '86 reform in not implementing the Republican side of the deal. So, the problem we have here is there is no faith that Mrs. Pelosi or Steny Hoyer or any of the others are going to actually do anything, that they will sit at the table and actually do both sides of the deal. That's what Republicans are worried about, that this comprehensive immigration that Congressman Bera is about to talk about, it's undefined. It doesn't allow us to control who comes in.

And I do want to add one thing, though. I know Congressman Bera's parents immigrated here from India. That's a good thing. They came here legally. I'm for legal immigration consistent with our laws. I'm delighted his parents are here, even given these circumstances, but the fact of the matter is we have a legal system. We need to enforce our laws. We need to start by closing or securing the border. Secure the border.

Jason Shultz:

Congressman Bera?

Ami Bera:

I'm glad my parents are here as well and that they were able to immigrate. You know, look, we're an immigration of immigrants, and we've been built as a nation of immigrants one successive group after another, but we've got to solve this comprehensive immigration bill and problem. We agree, let's secure our borders. I am a co-sponsor, though, of the comprehensive immigration bill that passed in a bipartisan way out of the Senate. It is a no-nonsense bill that does have plenty of funding in there to secure our borders, but it also starts to address the larger immigration issues. We should want the best and brightest to come here, but we should also want them to stay here and build their companies here and create those jobs here.

If you look at the bill, this is a bill that the congressional budget office says will add over a hundred billion dollars to our economy. It's a good bill. It's supported largely by the business community, by the farming community. It passed in a bipartisan way, and it is a good bill. Congressman Ose, you didn't actually answer the question as to whether you would support and co-sponsor that comprehensive

immigration bill. I think it's a smart approach, and I think it's the right thing to do.

Jason Shoultz: Mr. Ose, you do have a chance to respond to that question.

Doug Ose: Again, I just need a definition of what comprehensive means. In Congressman Bera's view, that means all the folks who are here illegally are given amnesty and citizenship. That's what he's after. I'm not prepared today to go that far. I want to have the borders secured, then I want to have a calm, dispassionate discussion about how we improve our immigration system. That's how our system works best; that's how we need to move forward.

Jason Shoultz: We'll close out the discussion on immigration with 30 seconds from you, Congressman Bera.

Ami Bera: Comprehensive means let's actually address a broken immigration system. Let's secure our borders. Let's make sure we get the best and brightest to come here to America, but we let them stay here and build their jobs here. Let's address the issue of folks working on farms and so forth. Let's pass the comprehensive immigration bill that's supported by business, by the farming community, by pretty much everyone.

Jason Shoultz: Thank you, gentlemen. It's now time to move on. We'll give our panelists a break and let each candidate ask each other a question. This was agreed to by both candidates, and by coin toss, Doug Ose does get to go first. Representative Bera has 90 seconds to respond with a 30 second response available for Mr. Ose. Go ahead, gentlemen.

Doug Ose: Congressman Bera, ten times you have voted to protect legislation that strips 716 billion dollars of future funding for Medicare recipients. Why do you do that? That's just bad policy.

Ami Bera: Well, it's déjà vu all over again and the same debate. We'll leave it up to the Bee and the media to decide whether that claim is a lie or not. When it comes to Medicare, though, I look at this as a doctor. My parents are on Medicare. We have to do everything we can not only to protect Medicare but to strengthen it, to make sure it's there not just for today's seniors but also for our kids and grandkids. That's why I have fought against attempts to cut Medicare.

You know, the president of my own party wanted to cut the Affordable Care Act and Medicare Advantage. Sorry, he wanted to cut Medicare Advantage. I stood up as a doctor and pushed back

because Medicare Advantage actually is working. It's offering preventive services. It's diagnosing diseases early and keeping people healthy. We fought back. We rallied folks, both Democrats and Republicans, and we pushed back and we won. That's because this is about protecting Medicare. Now congressman, you supported a budget that actually turns Medicare into a voucher plan and ends the Medicare guarantee as we know it. That isn't protecting Medicare. This is about making sure my patients – our parents – have the care that they need.

Jason Shoultz: You have an opportunity to respond, Mr. Ose.

Doug Ose: Congressman, there is just no way around it. You voted to cut 716 billion dollars from Medicare. The Congressional Budget Office, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office which works for Congress which is where you work says this bill cuts 716 billion dollars from Medicare funding. I don't understand why you can't say why you stripped that funding. Ten times, congressman. Ten times. My parents, your parents, our neighbors, they all are going to be thrown – well, who knows where they're going to be thrown?

Jason Shoultz: Thank you. We need to move on to the next question, and this will be asked by Congressman Bera.

Ami Bera: Congressman, in your three terms in Congress, can you name three votes where you stood up to Wall Street bankers?

Doug Ose: You bet. The first was when the Wall Street bankers decided that they wanted to hide behind the campaign finance laws and not disclose to whom they were giving money. I was a co-sponsor of McCain-Feingold that allows Americans to know where money comes from.

Ami Bera: Three votes, congressman.

Doug Ose: Just bear with me here. Where money comes from, and to whom it goes. In contrast, Congressman Bera has made a career so far out of taking money from Wall Street and in turn granting them an exemption from the Affordable Care Act.

Ami Bera: One vote, congressman.

Doug Ose: The other items that I stood up to Wall Street on have to do with their desire to have special treatment under tax laws, and special provisions for their unique enterprises, something that you have routinely and regularly voted to defend. You not only carved out an

exemption for yourself and your colleagues in Congress from the Affordable Care Act; you also carved out an exemption for Wall Street. I mean, I don't understand what your fealty is, what your loyalty is, to Wall Street. It's just totally Kafkaesque in my mind that you do this.

Jason Shoultz: Congressman, you have an opportunity for a short reply.

Ami Bera: Congressman Ose couldn't even name one vote where he stood up to Wall Street bankers. That is because he is protecting Wall Street banks. You know, he voted to deregulate Wall Street banks that became too big to fail and took us into this recession. I'm going to stand up for the middle class. I'm going to protect our seniors, and that's what this election is all about.

Jason Shoultz: Very good. Thank you, gentlemen. It's now time to move back to our panel questions, and the next question is for Congressman Bera and will be asked by Michaela Kwoka-Coleman.

Michaela Kwoka-Coleman: Congressman Bera, California just adopted the Yes Means Yes law which creates the standard on all California campuses that the absence of no does not mean consent for sex. Sexual assault on college campuses is not just a California issue, but a national one. Do you believe that Congress should adopt a similar policy?

Ami Bera: Absolutely. As a father of a daughter, yes means yes. This is about domestic violence against women has gotten out of control, and we have to get a handle on it, and Congressman Ose and I agree on this. You know, we both are supporters of the Violence Against Women Act. It is important, and I'm sure he looks at it the same way that I do as the father of a daughter, that we have to address violence on campuses. We have to make sure that all women are protected, and that's why I advocated – I spoke on the House floor to pass the Violence Against Women Act that protects all women. So, yes.

Jason Shoultz: Mr. Ose?

Doug Ose: I'm a strong supporter of making sure that our campuses are safe for our young men and women including the threat of violence against women. I am delighted that the California legislature passed and the governor signed the legislation you're referring to. This has been a central theme of my previous public service that we cannot allow inappropriate behavior by young men or women on our campuses. The Violence Against Women Act provided significant funding to address these issues through local law enforcement and the like. I

was one of six Republicans at the time to vote in favor of that. One of six.

There is, within Title 9, a provision that requires different campuses and universities to provide reports on the incidence of such crime. Some comply; some do not. I think it's an appropriate role for a member of Congress to insist that universities comply with the Title 9 provisions of these reports. The reason they don't do it has to do with the fact that they do not want to put out in public adverse information for future students and their families to consider when they get around to thinking about college. This is something that strikes right at the foundation of representative government. You're either going to stand up and try to address this, or you shouldn't be in office.

Jason Shoultz: That sounds to me like you both agree that the Yes Means Yes law should be nationwide. Is that correct?

Ami Bera: Absolutely.

Jason Shoultz: No disagreement here. Should we move on, or would you like a rebuttal?

Ami Bera: Yeah, well, it shows we can actually agree on things. When Democrats and Republicans are willing to work together and put people first and put our kids first, we can get things done.

Jason Shoultz: In that case, we will move on. Marianne Russ has the next question.

Marianne Russ: Mr. Ose, the Ebola crisis became more real for Americans today when the first person to be diagnosed with the virus in the US died. Also today the Obama administration announced it would begin screenings for the disease at several US airports. What additional action should the government take to make sure the government is safe, especially in regard to hospitals and transportation systems?

Doug Ose: Dealing with a challenge like Ebola is extremely difficult. In 2005, the United States government under the Bush administration adopted rules that were in place until 2010, the point of which was to allow screening from areas where Ebola or other various diseases break out in terms of trying to keep it from coming to the United States.

In 2010, much to the dismay of many, the Obama administration repealed those rules and went back to what existed before. So, essentially we were defenseless at that point. I believe ten days ago

there was a hearing in the House Foreign Affairs Committee at which the three American survivors who were airlifted out of Liberia were asked to testify. I believe, Congressman Bera, you were there. There wasn't a single question posed by Congressman Bera to those three people about what protocols need to be adopted to protect this country from having Ebola come here and affect our population. I think the administration has finally stepped up and started taking the Ebola threat seriously. I applaud them for doing that. I wish they had done it weeks ago when it first broke out in August, if I recall, because I think we'd be far further along to making sure the homeland was protected.

Jason Shoultz:

Congressman Bera, are we behind the eight ball on Ebola?

Ami Bera:

Well, I look at this as a doctor and a public health expert. I was medical director for Sacramento County post-9/11, so we did a lot of work when we were worried about anthrax and potential smallpox on how you get ahead of things like this and contain it in triage.

Now, I was on the phone with Tom Frieden, Dr. Frieden, the head of the CDC last week. I've been paying very close attention to Ebola, looking at it from the perspective as a doctor and public health expert. In that conversation, Tom reassured us that we are safe here, but we do have to step up screening mechanisms. I support the president's stepped-up screening mechanisms.

We have a terrific public health infrastructure here, but we have to screen people in-country in West Africa and then we also have to work with border and customs agents here in America to make sure if people are developing symptoms, that we're isolating and identifying them. Now, if we want to get ahead of Ebola, it's going to have to happen in West Africa, and I support the president sending some of our resources there to build the infrastructure, to build those isolation suites and so forth. It's incredibly important. But, again, we have a public health infrastructure here that's fantastic and that will help us. We don't need to panic at this juncture. What we do need to do is get ahead of this in-country. I support the president's plan.

Jason Shoultz:

Mr. Ose?

Doug Ose:

Ebola is non-partisan. It affects everybody without regard to your party registration. My point here is that I stipulate that Congressman Bera knows more about public health than I do. My concern here is that he sat through a public hearing of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee that he sits on, dealing specifically with testimony

from Ebola victims who had been airlifted to the United States for treatment, and he didn't ask a single question about the protocols necessary to protect the homeland.

Jason Shoultz: Congressman, there is a specific addressed to you in the hearing. You want to reply to that?

Ami Bera: Well, again, I've been at the forefront of this working with the CDC, talking to the CDC, and working with the CDC to get ahead of this. You know, they're the preeminent healthcare organization in the country, or in the world actually, better than the World Health Organization, and they're really taking a lead here. So, my conversations are directly with the head of the CDC.

Jason Shoultz: Thank you, gentlemen. We will move on from Ebola to Dan Smith with a question for Congressman . . . oh, I'm sorry, we have a follow-up by Marianne. Yes?

Marianne Russ: My apologies. Mr. Ose, you mentioned protocols, but I'm curious what protocols specifically you would support. For instance, restricting flights from West Africa?

Doug Ose: Yes, I think that protecting the homeland is the number one job for the federal government and its elected representatives, and if that involves under circumstances that hopefully the CDC and Dr. Bera will share with us, then yes, I'd restrict air flights. I do think that the testing at the point of embarkation as opposed to the point of debarkation in the United States makes sense. I mean, this is a very real, serious threat that cannot be dismissed because you didn't read your national security briefing or you weren't willing to ask questions. This is something that members of Congress need to jump into and get their hands all over.

Jason Shoultz: Congressman, banning flights?

Ami Bera: I agree with him that Congress has to take this very seriously, which is what I do. I would not ban flights at this juncture, but I would certainly step up screening in-country as well, so before people get on that flight, and I would work with customs and border security here in our homeland when people land to also do the screening. And, again, in conversation with the CDC, with Dr. Frieden, that is the protocols that are being put in place.

Jason Shoultz: Very good. Now we will move on to Dan Smith from the Bee with a question for Congressman Bera.

Dan Smith: Congressman Bera, Congress has not updated its war authorization in twelve years, but still the United States is conducting airstrikes against the Islamic State. We asked readers for some questions, and Judy Pierce from Sacramento submitted this one. She says “I think it is more likely that I will be killed by a drunk driver, criminal, or mentally-unstable person than by a terrorist. Do you think going after the Islamic State is an effective use of our limited dollars?”

Ami Bera: These guys, the Islamic State, ISIL, these guys are terrorists and these guys are the worst of the worst. That said, this is a challenge that has to be dealt with by the people in that region, the Iraqis, the Jordanians, the Saudis. I did support the president’s limited airstrikes and so forth because we have to degrade ISIL. We have to combat them and we have to set them back. But I’m against putting ground forces in the Middle East again. We’ve been down that road before. The Iraqi people have to be willing to fight for their country. We can’t send our men and women into harm’s way to fight for their country; they have to be willing to do it. The Syrians have to be willing to do it, and the Saudis and others have to be willing to do it.

I also believe the 2002 AUMF has expired. We have to repeal that and we have to give – if we’re going to do this, it has to be a limited authorization. Now, contrast that with Congressman Ose. We were at a forum last week, or two weeks ago, a candidate forum, and this same issue came up. Now, you were in Congress and voted for the biggest foreign policy failure of our lifetime, the Iraq War. In that forum, you talked about wanting to put troops on the ground again. That’s, in my mind, that is the wrong approach.

Jason Shoultz: Mr. Ose, you have an opportunity to respond.

Doug Ose: Dan. That’s a great question. Congressman Bera, you weren’t listening last Saturday. So, the authorization to use military force in 2002 which was given to President Bush, under the same circumstances, the same set of facts, I would go ahead and vote for it again because protecting the homeland and preventing people from getting away with killing 3,000 Americans is very much a responsibility of the federal government.

I wish that those like Congressman Bera who wish to Monday morning quarterback had stepped forward when we were confronted with 9/11 and told us all they knew so we wouldn’t have made the mistakes we did, but we did make mistakes. We didn’t have his counsel at the time, and that’s a loss for the entire country.

I do believe that the president has not paid attention to ISIS, that it has manifested itself into something that is quite serious that is going to require a joint effort. I'm very concerned that the president's efforts on the international front are failing to create the coalition that will address the very real question that every military expert has said, which is we have to have boots on the ground. Dan, I've got to tell you, I'm really tired of war. But in these jobs, like a member of Congress, you can be tired but you still have to confront it. This, however, is not the number one national security issue we face. I'm hoping we get to the number one, which is the possibility of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons. That cannot be allowed to happen.

Jason Shoultz: Congressman Bera, you have an opportunity to reply.

Ami Bera: Look, I'll give Congressman Ose the benefit of 2002, but in hindsight, knowing what we know today, was that vote to authorize the Iraq War a mistake?

Jason Shoultz: You can reply, Mr. Ose. It's your opportunity.

Doug Ose: Well, again, I think the number one foreign national security issue, rather than talking about something ten years or twelve years ago, remains the possibility that Iran is going to get nuclear armed. We have had a parade from the president and his allies in Congress like Congressman Bera that says we can trust the Iranians; we've got a paper document. It reminds me of Neville Chamberlain in the 30s. The Iranians are not to be trusted. The reality of them having an operable nuclear weapon is a catastrophe, and he's done nothing to address that.

Jason Shoultz: Okay, we need to move on to our next question, and this will come from Michaela Kwoka-Coleman to Mr. Ose.

Michaela Kwoka-Coleman: Mr. Ose, the images from Ferguson, Missouri were impossible to ignore this summer. Many Americans have begun to focus on the increased militarization of our police forces. These military-grade weapons and equipment are supplied by the federal government. Do you agree that our local police are becoming too militarized? Why or why not?

Doug Ose: Michaela, this is a great question because it affects everybody's life on a daily basis or potentially daily basis. This is the kind of question I like to deal with. We have a history in this country of providing assistance to local law enforcement by discharging to them equipment from the military that is out of service or out of

date. There have been instances where those discharges have proven excessive, and we need to carefully examine the parameters under which we release this equipment to local law enforcement.

I will tell you, local law enforcement is up against a wall. The people they are having to deal with to protect our neighborhoods and our schools and our families are increasingly well-armed with heavy ballistic equipment. I do not want to send local law enforcement out into a situation where they're outgunned just by orders of magnitude, so I'm very sensitive to how we address that. What happened in Ferguson is a tragedy. I'm hoping we get to the bottom of what happened. I'm hoping that Attorney General Holder, his task force, will share with us the facts in a timely manner. And if somebody has done something wrong, then they need to be held accountable.

Jason Shoultz: Congressman Bera, are police too militarized?

Ami Bera: Absolutely. I don't want to see tanks rolling down the streets of Sacramento or battalion uniforms in Sacramento. I agree, law enforcement is doing a wonderful job. They've got a tough job, but I don't want to see militarization of law enforcement. The other issue in Ferguson, though, is the issue of race relations, and we've seen a number of incidents here in California with the CHP officer and the homeless woman. It just reminds us that we have a long way to go on race relations. We're not there where we need to be; we still have a ways to go. And, again, it's a stark reminder. Michaela, your original question though is I don't want to see militarization of our local officers.

Jason Shoultz: Mr. Ose?

Doug Ose: Well, I think that reflects Congressman Bera's lack of understanding of the kind of situations local law enforcement finds itself in increasingly. Notwithstanding what happened in Ferguson which was a tragedy, and equipment that was used that shouldn't be used, the fact remains that in our neighborhoods and our communities there are people who are significantly heavier-armed than our law enforcement people, and we have to find a way to protect our neighborhoods and our people.

Jason Shoultz: Congressman Bera?

Ami Bera: Look, I'm a strong supporter of law enforcement. We work closely with the sheriff and local law enforcement agencies, and they need the equipment that they need, but I don't think they need heavy-

armed vehicles and so forth. I just think that crosses the line, and I think many would agree. And if they have them, they're going to be tempted to use them.

Jason Shoultz: I should follow up, there is some federal legislation to limit the amount of equipment that is going from the federal government – the Pentagon – to local police departments. It sounds like you would support that legislation?

Ami Bera: I would.

Jason Shoultz: And Mr. Ose?

Doug Ose: I'm not familiar with the legislation. If it has reasonable limitations, I would support it. I do want to make sure that the listening audience is aware I have a longstanding history with law enforcement in this community. I'm endorsed by the district attorney; I'm endorsed by the sheriff; I'm endorsed by law enforcement union groups all around this district. They trust me. They know that when I talk to them, I talk to them straight, and they know that if I say that's unreasonable, then they know I mean that, but they also know I deliver.

Jason Shoultz: Well, we are running out of time. We have time for one last question. We'll just have one response each, and we'll give you one minute each. We'll start with Marianne Russ.

Marianne Russ: Congressman Bera, more oil is coming into California by rail, and about a fifth of it is the highly flammable Bakken crude oil. After several disastrous explosions elsewhere in the country, state lawmakers have made some attempts to improve public safety, but primarily it's a federal issue. What would you do to increase the safety of rail cars moving through our community?

Ami Bera: Well, we've been talking about it in Congress. It worries me because those railcars come right down the middle of Sacramento, right down the middle of Elk Grove. If one of those cars were to explode, that would be a disaster. We've been pushing the Department of Transportation to be more transparent with us. At least with local agencies, let them know when those cars are moving through. And then, yes, I support working with the state and what the state of California is doing in terms of increasing standards. First and foremost, we've got to keep our community safe, and if these time bombs are going through our communities, at least let us know when they're coming through. But I think we've got to think about how to make this more safe.

Jason Shoultz: Mr. Ose?

Doug Ose: I actually support the legislature's efforts to advise communities of the safety questions. I mean, I've seen enough accidents at rail crossings to know that can quickly get out of control. I actually was shaken out of my bed in 1972 when the bombs went off in Roseville that had been ignited by virtue of a railcar fire, so I have more than a personal experience in this.

One of the things we need to do, though, in addition to improving the safety of the railcars with double holes and thickening up the skin on the outside is we need to get the railroads to go back into their rail beds and fix the foundation on which the rails are set. That's the primary safety issue is if the rail bed isn't safe with cars, it doesn't matter how thick the sides are, the cars are going to go over and we're going to have a catastrophe.

Jason Shoultz: Thank you, gentlemen. Well, we are out of time for questions this evening. We do need to move on to closing statements, and for those, you do each have 90 seconds. And by coin toss, again, Representative Bera gets to go first.

Ami Bera: Well, again, I want to thank the moderators. I want to thank the audience here and those watching on television at home. You saw two different visions of leadership tonight. Mine is leading by example. When I ran for Congress, I ran on three simple promises. I promised to introduce and help pass No Budget, No Pay, a law that says if members of Congress don't do their jobs and pass a responsible budget they don't get paid. I kept that promise.

I promised to fight against efforts to privatize Social Security, and that I would return my pension until we strengthened Social Security and Medicare. I kept that promise. And I promised not to take any pay raises and work across the aisle to get Sacramento County working again. I kept that promise. That is leadership by example.

Now, contrast that with Congressman Ose. When he was a member of Congress, he took multiple pay raises. He voted for tax breaks for companies that ship our jobs overseas, and he voted to privatize Social Security. And tonight we talked about the Iraq War, the biggest failure of foreign policy in our lifetime. He didn't move away from that vote, even in hindsight knowing what we know today. It's been an honor serving our community for the last 19 years as a doctor. It's been my privilege being your member of

Congress these last two. I would be honored to have your vote on November 4th.

Jason Shoultz:

Congressman, thank you. Mr. Ose?

Doug Ose:

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for letting me spend this hour with you in your homes and here in this audience. Jason, you've done a great job. Leadership matters, ladies and gentlemen. We see that across the country and around the world. Right now, we don't have it. Washington is broken. Simply put, our country is on the wrong track. Congressman Bera is in Washington, and he's not doing anything to change the direction of policy or our prospects. He's voted to increase taxes by 2.6 trillion dollars. He's voted to – those of you who own a home, he's voted to deny you, to take away the home mortgage interest reduction. He's voted to take 716 billion dollars away from Medicare funding over the next ten years. He's voted to increase fuel taxes on the gas we buy for our cars and our pickups. He's done nothing to protect our water. In fact, he's been silent on controlling the releases from Folsom that amount to thousands of gallons per second of water that we desperately need, and he sends it south. That's not leadership; that's abdication.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have a record in this community of getting things done using real-world experience. I'm asking you tonight to join me in my quest to get our country back on track. We can do this. Leadership matters. God bless the United States of America.

Jason Shoultz:

Thank you, Mr. Ose. Thank you, Congressman Bera. I think you'll both agree we covered a lot of ground and gave folks something to think about on all the various issues. Of course, I also want to make sure I say thank you to our esteemed panelists, Marianne Russ from Capital Public Radio, Dan Smith from the Sacramento Bee, and Michaela Kwoka-Coleman from the Folsom Lake College online newspaper, The Talon. Of course, thank you to our studio audience tonight. They did keep the applause down and their opportunity to applause comes basically now as we end. We also want to thank the viewers at home. Make sure you are informed now. You've heard from both candidates. It's now your job to go out and vote on November 4th. Good night.