



# **National Dialogue Regarding the Role of Behavioral Health in Public Life**

***National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing, and Media***

August 9, 2011

Atlanta, GA

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**AmericaSpeaks**



## AmericaSpeaks' Purpose

**AmericaSpeaks' mission is to reinvigorate American democracy by engaging citizens in the public decisions that most impact their lives**





# Principles for Effective Citizen Engagement

- **Linked to Decision Makers**
- **Demographic Diversity**
- **Informed Participation**
- **Facilitated Deliberation**
- **Discover Shared Priorities**
- **Clear Recommendations for Action**
- **Sustaining Citizen Engagement**



# Finding Common Ground on Our Fiscal Future

Diverse Group of 3,500 Americans Across 57  
Cities Weigh In on Nation's Fiscal Challenges



# 19 Town Meeting Sites

Albuquerque  
Augusta  
Casper  
Chicago  
Columbia  
Dallas  
Des Moines  
Detroit  
Grand Forks  
Jackson  
Los Angeles County  
Louisville  
Missoula  
Overland Park  
Philadelphia  
Portland  
Portsmouth  
Richmond  
Silicon Valley



3,500 People  
Across 57 Cities





# Video: America Speaks: Our Budget, Our Economy



[www.usabudgetdiscussion.org](http://www.usabudgetdiscussion.org)

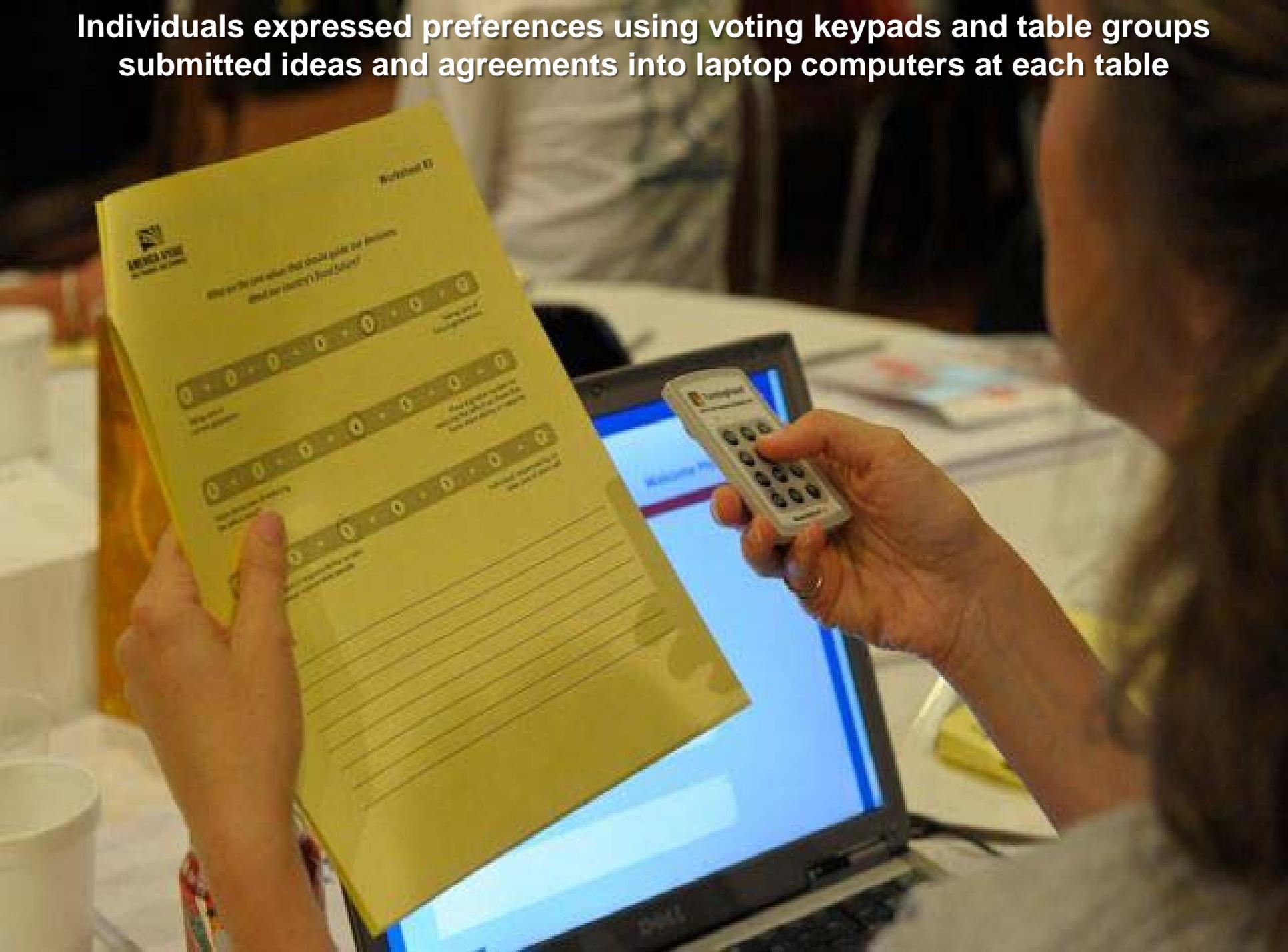


**Participants spent the day working in randomly assigned small groups with volunteer table facilitators.**



**Sites were linked by video, allowing participants to share ideas with others across the nation during periodic national reports.**

**Individuals expressed preferences using voting keypads and table groups submitted ideas and agreements into laptop computers at each table**



A “theme team” analyzed ideas coming in from across the country and reported back themes that emerged from the table discussions.





**AMERICA SPEAKS**  
Our Budget, Our Economy

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# Federal Budget 101

**An Introduction to the Federal Budget  
and Our Fiscal Challenges**

June 26, 2010: Albuquerque, NM; Augusta, ME; Casper, WY; Chicago, IL; Columbia, SC; Dallas, TX; Des Moines, IA; Detroit, MI; Grand Forks, ND; Jackson, MS; Louisville, KY; Missoula, MT; Overland Park, KS; Pasadena, CA; Philadelphia, PA; Portland, OR; Portsmouth, NH; Richmond, VA; Silicon Valley, CA; and elsewhere across the country...

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# Options Workbook

June 26, 2010



**What Are Our Options?**

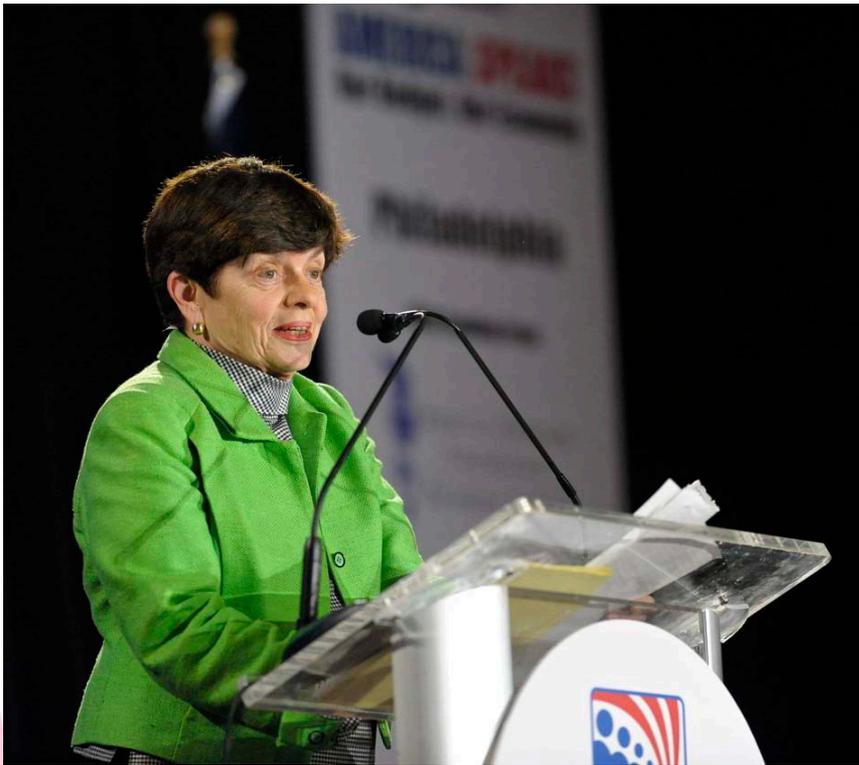


**Participants received two guides that provided an overview of the issues and reviewed the pros and cons of 42 spending and revenue options. Experts were also available on site to answer questions that came up during the discussions.**



## **7 Hour Agenda**

- **Hopes and Ground Rules for Civil Discussion**
- **Economic Recovery**
- **Shared Values**
- **Making Tough Choices: Parts 1, 2 and 3**
- **Individual Voting on Tough Choices**
- **Messages to Our Leaders**
- **Taking Action**



**Participating in person or via video:**

**Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND)**  
**Senator John Cornyn (R-TX)**  
**Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC)**  
**Former Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM)**  
**Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC)**  
**Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH)**

**Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-PA)**  
**Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**  
**Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA)**  
**Rep. John Spratt (D-SC)**  
**Dr. Alice Rivlin (*Member of the National Fiscal Commission & Co-Chair of the Debt Reduction Task Force*)**

*“The most important thing I learned from this process is that ordinary citizens could tackle a complex issue, filter it civilly through their own perspective, and come up with consensus. I literally did not think this was possible.”*

- Fran G., Portland, OR

*“We had a very diverse group that ranged from recent high school grads to retired and from inner city Chicago to high end suburbs. I learned that while our perspectives may be different our problems are the same ... I also learned that we are all in this together.”*

-Don B., Chicago, IL

*“It was so refreshing to have civil discourse among people of different ages, persuasions, and backgrounds. Congress could learn a lot from our experience. The tone of our discussions was polite, respectful, and everyone contributed.”*

- MaryEllen S., Albuquerque, NM

*“It was a life changing event. I would do it again tomorrow.”*

-Ray M., Overland Park, KS



## So, Why Engage the Public?

- **Create a stronger public constituency and mandate for change**
- **Educate the electorate about the challenges facing government officials**
- **Involve the public in being part of the solution and taking action**
- **Gain unique insight and new options**



Thank You!

[www.americaspeaks.org](http://www.americaspeaks.org)

