

INTELLIGENCE SQUARED US AUDIENCE IN NEW YORK DECLARES CALIFORNIA IS THE FIRST FAILED STATE

*58% of Audience in Agreement after Spirited Debate on California's Financial Crisis with
Gray Davis, Van Jones, Andreas Kluth, Lawrence O'Donnell
Bobby Shriver and Sharon Waxman*

NEW YORK – January 20, 2010 - Intelligence Squared US (IQ2US), the Oxford-style debate series, an initiative of The Rosenkranz Foundation, hosted a highly spirited debate on Tuesday night on the crisis currently facing the State of California. The debaters shared a love of their State but disagreed on whether California had actually failed. At the start, many in the audience at NYU's Skirball Center were undecided on the issue. Both teams had persuasive arguments and were effective in moving these undecideds. But in the end, the team arguing for the motion, "California is the first failed state," swayed more to their side and they won the evening.

As the debate began, 31% voted for the motion, 25% were against it and an additional 44% were undecided. The debate shifted most in the crowd out of the undecided category and the proposition was ultimately upheld with 58% voting for it, 37% voting against it and just 5% remaining undecided.

The evening's winning team argued for the motion and included Santa Monica City Council member **Bobby Shriver**, *The Economist's* **Andreas Kluth**, and journalist and founder of TheWrap.com **Sharon Waxman**.

Arguing against the motion was former California Governor **Gray Davis**, former member of the White House Council for Economic Policy **Van Jones**, and MSNBC senior political analyst **Lawrence O'Donnell**.

Among the debate's highlights:

"I think if you support—which I do too—a constitutional convention...When did people have constitutional conventions? The National Constitutional Convention was...when there was a big old mess at hand. You don't have a constitutional convention when things are going great." – **Bobby Shriver**

"...our private sector is the envy of the world, and innovation will lead America into a future that is brighter and stronger. Our public sector is on the mend and will get better." – **Gray Davis**

"You cannot seriously say that the public sector is on the mend—at the very moment when they are dismantling entire government programs that were intended to protect the weakest." – **Andreas Kluth**

"In California, we have quadrupled—in the past two years—the amount of venture capital flowing into the state, because we are trying to solve the biggest problem humanity faces: the problem of global warming, and the biggest problem our country faces: the problem of energy independence. California is leading and succeeding in that." – **Van Jones**

“If you live in California and you read the news every day, it is a litany of failures, rogue laws, gridlocks, budget...Pick your billion, 20 billion this week, 30 billion last... whatever the hole is that has to be filled, the latest service to be cut, the latest milk and cookies that will not be served...this is the lives of the people of the state of California, it’s not a joke.” – **Sharon Waxman**

“So when you want to have this debate about failed states and failed state governments—with the state legislature that you have—having it here [in New York] is cheeky.” – **Lawrence O’Donnell**

John Donovan, correspondent for ABC News *Nightline*, is moderator of Intelligence Squared US debates. Dana Wolfe is the executive producer.

To view transcripts and videos, download audio or video clips or learn more about Intelligence Squared US please visit: <http://www.intelligencesquaredus.org>.

Launched in September 2006, the goal of Intelligence Squared US, an initiative of the Rosenkranz Foundation, is to raise the level of public discourse and promote a realization that, on contentious issues, those who challenge the conventional wisdom have intellectually respectable and often persuasive viewpoints. We encourage citizens to “Think Twice” about their opinions and participate in the conversation, and we provide a forum for balanced discussion that transcends emotion and ideology. Through an annual series of 10 live Oxford-style debates, IQ2US brings together experts and audience around public policy and cultural issues. In fact, the live audience participates in each debate by voting on the propositions at the top and bottom of the debate evening. IQ2US debates air on the Bloomberg Television network and are heard on more than 200 NPR stations nationwide.

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