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# Edwards and Forbes debate covers Alito, taxes, poverty

## Edwards, Forbes offer their views at NKU forum

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**HIGHLAND HEIGHTS** - In a meeting of political heavyweights, former U.S. Sen. John Edwards and Forbes magazine editor Steve Forbes discussed "Governing in America: The Power Behind the Politics" on Tuesday night at the 2005 NKU Alumni Lecture.

Edwards, running mate for Democratic presidential nominee Sen. John Kerry in 2004, spoke in broad terms, calling for new leadership.

"There is a hunger in America, a hunger for our country to be about something big and important, that people can be proud of," he said.

Forbes, a Republican candidate for president in 1996 and 2000, was more pragmatic. After stating, "The purpose of America is to enable people to have the opportunity to discover what's unique about themselves, and to develop those talents to the fullest," he cited specific problems and gave solutions to each.

Edwards continued the "Two Americas" theme - one poor and one privileged - he used during the campaign to illustrate the gap between rich and poor.

Forbes said Edwards' "Two Americas" argument is flawed.

"People don't see themselves as medieval peasants," he said. "We are a very mobile society."

Forbes sees the tax code as too complex, but at the expense of economic growth, not at the expense of average citizens.

He has advocated a simplified tax code and a flat tax.

"A family of four would have no taxes on the first \$46,000 of income. No tax on savings. It could be done on a sheet of paper," he said.

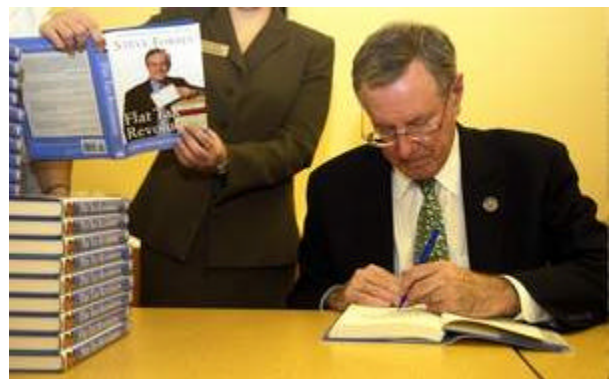
Referring to a 9-million-word tax code, he said "complexity is power" for Washington. His idea for getting a simplified tax code would start with Congress.

"Have each of them do their own taxes without the help of software. Then we'd get results," he said.



**ZOOM** The Enquirer/Ernest Coleman  
Former U.S. Sen. John Edwards with Northern Kentucky area high school students who attended his debate Tuesday with two-time presidential candidate Steve Forbes, part of the NKU Alumni Lecture Series.

### ADVERTISEMENT



**ZOOM**  
Steve Forbes, two-time presidential candidate and editor of Forbes magazine, signs copies of his book, "Flat Tax Revolution," at NKU on Tuesday.

Edwards also targeted the tax code as needing an overhaul.

"It's overly complex with special loopholes to the rich," he said.

Edwards said that capital gains are taxed at a lower rate than wages, showing that the current system "values wealth more than work."

On the debate over Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito, Edwards, who served on the Senate Judiciary Committee, said judges should reflect the views of the president, but the current nominee "has a very narrow interpretation of the commerce clause"

"Solving important issues of the day depends on a broad interpretation of the commerce clause," he said, mentioning issues such as civil rights and health care.

Forbes said the role of a judge is "to adhere to the constitution and not remake the world." He credited much of the acrimony over Supreme Court nominations to the courts deciding issues like abortion, which he said are best left to legislatures and public debate.

Ronald Edwards, majoring in speech communications, said "it's exciting to have people here of a presidential level. It goes to show that NKU has made it big-time."

Communications instructor Sam Lapin assigned his students to attend the discussion.

"It was great for students to see people of this caliber," he said.

Past Alumni Lecture speakers include former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, former presidential candidates Bob Dole and George McGovern, former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo and journalist Bob Woodward.

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