

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 8, 2012

## **“Obesity Is Not the Government’s Business” Decides Intelligence Squared U.S. Audience**

**John Stossel and Paul Campos Win Debate over Pamela Peeke  
and David Satcher**

*Debate will air on NPR stations nationwide and be telecast on WNET/Thirteen  
on March 31 at 3 PM*

NEW YORK – February 8, 2012 – Last night, Intelligence Squared U.S. continued its spring 2012 season with a sold-out debate and a victory against the motion “Obesity is the Government’s Business.” In the final tally, John Stossel and Paul Campos won the Oxford style debate by convincing 16% of the audience to change their minds and oppose the motion. Overall 55% of audience members agreed that government should be involved in public health initiatives to combat obesity (see full numbers below).

**Watch the full debate streaming at Fora.tv here:**

[http://fora.tv/live/intelligencesquared\\_us/obesity](http://fora.tv/live/intelligencesquared_us/obesity)

Supporters of the motion, Dr. Pamela Peeke and former Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher, sought to prove that the government should be responsible for promoting initiatives that encourage healthy lifestyles, more physical activity, and proper nutrition. But at the end of the evening, it was Stossel’s and Campos’ arguments that there is no real evidence that obesity is killing us and that government should stay out of our private lives—especially since public health interventions have not worked in the past—convinced the audience to oppose the motion.

This latest intellectual matchup was IQ2US’s 58th debate and was presented in partnership with Slate.

ABC News correspondent John Donvan is the moderator, and the executive producer is Dana Wolfe.

**Key Excerpts For the Motion:**

DR. PAMELA PEEKE:

“Government cannot solve the obesity problem alone. A problem as large as obesity, pun fully intended, requires all sectors of society to bring our thinking to the table. So I argue for government private sector partnerships. Shouldn't be just the government at all. When we initiate a voluntary campaign or an effort, we want to be able to offer people options and opportunities because if there is no choice, there can be no moderation.”

DR. DAVID SATCHER:

“Government is the collective efforts of a society to create the conditions in which people can be healthy. So that's what we see as government. We believe that there is no substitute for individual responsibility. Let's make that clear. It's why I wrote the *Prescription [to the American People]*. But individual responsibility can only take place in an environment where there is equal opportunity, there is equal access to the opportunity for a healthy lifestyle.”

### **Key Excerpts Against the Motion:**

JOHN STOSSEL:

“I don't think it's any coincidence that this biggest push for more food regulation comes at a time when Congress is obsessing about paying for everybody's health care. When government pays, it's drawn into your personal life, and this is not a good thing. It's not true that only government can do these things. Free people can control their own lives. Government will propose to control you because you eat too much. Will they next try to ban skydiving and extramarital sex? How about another try at prohibition? That might save money. You going to have the government teach poor people to serve asparagus when we have a \$3.8 trillion spending already?”

PAUL CAMPOS:

“Here's what we don't know. We don't know how to produce significant long-term weight loss. We just don't. We don't know if such weight loss would be beneficial. This hypothesis has not been tested for the very good reason that since we don't know how to produce it, we can't test the hypothesis. We don't know to what extent, if at all, the generally weak associations between obesity and increased health risk are products of a causal relationship as opposed to markers for other things....”

### **Before the debate, the IQ2US audience voted as follows:**

- 55% of audience agreed with the resolution
- 19% of audience against the resolution
- 26% undecided

After careful consideration of the points by the audience, John Stossel and Paul Campos won the debate: the team that moves the most votes at the end of the evening is determined the winner.

- 55% of audience agreeing with the resolution (+0%)
- 35% of audience against the resolution (+16%)
- 10% undecided (-16%)

To learn more about the debate and review a detailed breakdown of how the audience voted pre- and post-debate, please visit our Facebook page at: <http://www.facebook.com/Think2Twice>

The showdown at NYU's Skirball Center in New York City (566 LaGuardia Place) puts the leading public intellectuals in the limelight in front of a live audience for nearly two hours of heated debate.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- To view transcripts and videos, download audio or video clips or learn more about Intelligence Squared U.S., please visit:

<http://intelligencesquaredus.org/index.php/past-debates/obesity-is-the-governments-business/>

- NPR will air the debate on stations nationwide and the podcast will be available to download. Please check with your local NPR stations for additional details or visit:

<http://www.npr.org/series/6263392/intelligence-squared-u-s>

- WNET/Thirteen will air this debate Saturday, March 31 at 3PM

## **ABOUT INTELLIGENCE SQUARED DEBATES (IQ2US)**

Rethink your point of view with Intelligence Squared U.S. (IQ2US), Oxford-style debates live from New York City.

Based on the highly successful debate program based in London, the Intelligence Squared Foundation has presented over 50 debates on a wide range of provocative and timely topics. From global warming and the financial crisis, to Afghanistan/Pakistan and the death of mainstream media, Intelligence Squared brings together the world's leading authorities on the day's most important issues.

Since its inception in 2006, the goals have been to provide a new forum for intelligent discussion, grounded in facts and informed by reasoned analysis; to transcend the toxically emotional and the reflexively ideological; and to encourage recognition that the opposing side has intellectually respectable views.

The Rosenkranz Foundation initiated the Intelligence Squared U.S. Debate Series and continues to provide major support.

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