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# Tomorrow's debate should focus on terrorism

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In a [survey of Americans](http://www.gallup.com/poll/187622/trust-government-protect-against-terrorism-new-low.aspx) (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/187622/trust-government-protect-against-terrorism-new-low.aspx>) released Friday, December 11, Gallup found that “Americans’ confidence in the federal government’s ability to protect citizens from act of terrorism has dropped to a new low of 55%.” Americans’ concern that they could become victims of terrorism is trending up substantially, reaching just nine points below the high of 59% registered after the 9/11 attacks.

These readings come on the heels of successful terrorist attacks in Paris, France, and San Bernardino, California. Not surprisingly, [terrorism has become the top issue for voters](http://www.gallup.com/poll/187655/americans-name-terrorism-no-problem.aspx?g_source=Politics&g_medium=newsfeed&g_campaign=tiles) ([http://www.gallup.com/poll/187655/americans-name-terrorism-no-problem.aspx?g\\_source=Politics&g\\_medium=newsfeed&g\\_campaign=tiles](http://www.gallup.com/poll/187655/americans-name-terrorism-no-problem.aspx?g_source=Politics&g_medium=newsfeed&g_campaign=tiles)), with the 2016 Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary less than two months away.



[http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/RTX1Y5T7\\_marcorubio\\_stage\\_december2015-e1450104685586.jpg](http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/RTX1Y5T7_marcorubio_stage_december2015-e1450104685586.jpg)

Candidate Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) speaks at a the Defend and Reform Veterans and Military Town Hall at Noah's Event Venue in West Des Moines, Iowa, December 10, 2015. REUTERS/Scott Morgan.

Let's hope CNN dedicates a meaningful amount of time in the Republican debate in Las Vegas tomorrow night to the issue of terrorism. Voters deserve to hear how candidates plan to defeat Daesh and increase America's national security. Questions that require answers in the debate include:

- How do the candidates plan to militarily defeat Daesh and bring an end to the Syrian civil war, including the possible deployment of troops?
- Does a large American military presence back in the Middle East first require substantial military commitments from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Turkey?
- Where do the candidates stand on reforming America's visa programs and getting more access to data on travelers to the United States?
- What powers should the federal government have to detect terrorist activity and what safeguards will they use to protect our civil liberties?
- Should the federal government restructure itself to improve its effectiveness and does it require more money or money spent better?
- Is there a broader role for local law enforcement given their significantly greater assets and historical reach into our communities?

Americans deserve to know what the candidates plan to do, and how those plans are different from the failed policies of President Barack Obama. They deserve specifics.

Though I remain frustrated that so many candidates polling so low nationally continue to be invited to the main stage debate, the upside is that the nine candidates will provide viewers with a diverse set of opinions and leadership styles. Moderators should press each candidate — not just Donald Trump — on what he or she plans to do and should avoid the childish lure to pit candidates against each other.

It is time for a serious debate on an issue that threatens our very way of life.

This article was found online at:

<http://www.aei.org/publication/tomorrows-debate-should-focus-on-terrorism/>