

*Below is a transcript of John Glenn's ending rebuttal statement delivered during a debate with Howard Metzenbaum that took place at the Cleveland City Club on May 4th, 1974. At the time of the debate Glenn and Metzenbaum were running against each other in the Ohio Democratic Primary for U.S. Senator. In a speech given a few weeks prior to the debate Metzenbaum stated that Glenn had never held a real job.*

Senator Glenn: "Howard, I can't believe you said I have never held a job.

"I served twenty-three years in the United States Marine Corps. I served through two wars. I flew 149 missions. My plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire on twelve different occasions. I was in the space program. It wasn't my checkbook; it was my life on the line. It was not a nine-to-five job where I took time off to take the daily cash receipts to the bank.

"I ask you to go with me, as I went the other day, to a Veterans Hospital and look those men, with their mangled bodies, in the eye and tell them they didn't hold a job. You go with me to any gold-star mother and you look her in the eye and tell her that her son did not hold a job.

"You go with me to the space program, and go as I have gone to the widows and orphans of Ed White and Gus Grissom and Roger Chaffee, and you look those kids in the eye and tell them that their Dad didn't hold a job.

"You go with me on Memorial Day coming up and you stand in Arlington National Cemetery, where I have more friends than I'd like to remember, and you watch those waving flags. You stand there, and you think about this nation, and you tell me that those people didn't have a job.

"I'll tell you, Howard Metzenbaum, you should be on your knees every day of your life thanking God that there were some men – some men - who held a job. And they required a dedication to purpose and a love of country and a dedication to duty that was more important than life itself. And their self-sacrifice is what made this country possible.

"I have held a job, Howard!"

*John Glenn won the primary election and went on to win the general election in November. In 1975, Glenn started the first of his four terms (1975-1999) in the U.S. Senate.*