



JUST THE FACTS!

TITLE: "GAS N' GUNS TODAY...AND TOMORROW?"

EPISODE #: 16

HOST

Welcome back to Just the Facts, the weekly vid-cast from FactCheck.org, I'm Emi Kolawole, and it was a busy week for us this week and for Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama - with talk of a gas tax holiday and mailers about guns.

GRAPHIC: MAILER QUOTE

HOST

Like this postcard that claims "Obama told a group in Chicago he favored a ban on the manufacture, sale and possession of handguns. Then [he] told people in Idaho he was for the 2nd Amendment, in order to get their votes."

Overall, we find the mailer to be plausible. The "group in Chicago" refers to a Chicago nonprofit group that asked Obama's 1996 Chicago state Senate campaign to fill out a questionnaire about handguns.

GRAPHIC: CHICAGO QUESTIONNAIRE

It asked if Obama supported state legislation to ban the manufacture, sale and possession of handguns, a ban on assault weapons and and/or if he supported mandatory waiting periods and background checks. The Obama camp responded "yes" to all of the above.

HOST

Obama has since said his handwriting was not on the questionnaire. But it was. And he's since said that he never supported an all-out ban on handguns. And we haven't found any evidence to the contrary. But, if that's true, then the reason behind Obama's answer on the questionnaire remains a mystery. So did Obama tell Idaho voters he was for the 2nd Amendment to get their votes? Well, we don't check motive, so we leave that last part up to you. But he did say this to an arena of supporters in Boise:

VIDEO: OBAMA BOISE RALLY

OBAMA:

And then there are people who say, 'Well, he doesn't believe in the Second Amendment,' even though I come from a state -- we've got a lot of hunters in downstate Illinois. And I have no intention of taking away folks' guns.

Obama's website claims he believes the Constitution creates an individual right to bear arms. But he told the Chicago Sun-Times this in an April 25 interview:

GRAPHIC: CHICAGO SUN-TIMES QUOTE

HOST

"My view continues to be that the Constitution, I believe, does provide a right to bear arms; but that local communities, and state governments, as well as the federal government, have a right to common-sense regulations and firearm ownership [rules.]"

Obama's motives aside, we find the claims to be pretty much true, at least in a literal sense. Obama, or at least his state Senate campaign, filled out a questionnaire that claimed he supported a ban on the manufacture and sale of handguns, and he told Idaho voters he was for the 2nd Amendment. But if you believe that an Obama campaign staffer filled out the questionnaire without Obama's review, and if you consider Obama's support for regulations on handguns – then that muddies the waters a little bit. Now, let's move on to the gas tax holiday and this misleading claim from the Clinton campaign:

VIDEO: Clinton Ad

ANNOUNCER:

Hillary's fighting to use the windfall profits of big oil to pay to suspend the gas tax this summer and save families \$8 billion.

HOST

It's true the gas tax nets \$8.5 billion in revenue. It's also true economists agree the gas tax holiday wouldn't work. If the cost of gas came down briefly, then a rise in demand would drive the cost right back up again. But that didn't stop the Obama campaign from replying with this mislead:

VIDEO: OBAMA AD

ANNOUNCER:

Barack Obama's plan? Take on price gouging by oil companies. Tax their windfall

profits. Invest in alternative energy. Give working families a permanent \$1000 tax cut to help with rising costs.

HOST

Price gouging is a popular claim among Democrats, but federal regulators have found that it's market conditions, not price manipulations, that drive the cost of gasoline. And the ad is wrong to imply Obama's tax cut would actually help with rising cost of gasoline in the short term. Rather, his \$1000 tax credit is not a new proposal – it's part of an economic plan he released last fall, and it wasn't even created to address the rising cost of gasoline.

And that's it for this episode of Just the Facts! We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who voted for us for the Webby's People's Voice Award. We took home three awards this year, two Webby's People's Voice awards, and one jury prize. So thank you so much for that. And for more on the gas tax holiday exchange between the candidates and Clinton's mailer attack, be sure to check out our website at www.factcheck.org. I'm Emi Kolawole. Thanks for watching and see you next week.