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JUST THE FACTS!

TITLE: "THE END IS NEAR (HERE)!"

EPISODE #: 43

HOST

Welcome back to Just the Facts! the weekly vid-cast from FactCheck.org. I'm Emi Kolawole and, by the time you see me next week we will hopefully know who the next President of the United States is going to be, and the freshmen members of the 111th Congress.

But, before you head to the polls, let's take a look at some of the ads that are slinking around the airwaves trying to mislead you. Like this ad from the National Republican Trust PAC:

VIDEO: NATIONAL REPUBLICAN TRUST PAC AD "SOCIAL SECURITY FOR ILLEGALS"

ANNOUNCER

Barack Obama's plan gives a driver's license to any illegal who wants one.

HOST

Don't believe a word of it. First of all, Obama has no plan to give driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. He's on the record saying "I'm not proposing that's what we do," when asked if he supported the idea. And Mohammed Atta, the 9-11 attack mastermind, whose Florida driver's license is featured in the ad, entered the United States legally and didn't need a driver's license to board a plane anyway. But the ad goes on:

ANNOUNCER

Obama's plan gives illegals Social Security benefits and raises taxes for his health care plan to cover them. Who pays? You do.

HOST

Except you won't, Obama has made clear that his plan would not provide health care benefits to illegal immigrants. As for social security, that's a mangling of Obama's vote on the immigration bill amendment, that would not have provided one penny of social security benefits to illegal immigrants. He merely voted to keep the current law unchanged. Which means nobody would receive benefits unless, and until, they become

legal, even if they were paying social security taxes while they were working in the United States illegally.

VIDEO: NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION AD “IMAGINE”

Now let’s switch gears to the more established National Rifle Association:

ANNOUNCER

Imagine your child screaming in the middle of the night when a convicted felon breaks into your home. Worse, he comes back a second time. You use a firearm to defend yourself and your family. Unbelievably, Barack Obama voted to make you the criminal. It's a true story...

HOST

That “true story” bit is misleading since the visuals are the product of someone’s imagination. The true story didn’t involve a woman or violent, forced entry. In fact, the real incident took place in Wilmette, Illinois with homeowner Hal DeMar shooting intruder Morio Billings. Billings had entered DeMar’s home using a set of stolen keys, and DeMar shot Billings while he was in the process of robbing his home. Wilmette had a long-standing ban on handgun possession. So DeMar was charged \$750 and charged with a violation of the handgun ban. Billings, on the other hand, was sentenced to seven years in prison. But the ad goes on:

ANNOUNCER

Obama voted four times to deny citizens the right of self-protection even in their home.

HOST

That’s a mischaracterization of Obama’s position. It’s true Obama voted to uphold the enforcement of local gun bans but that’s not the same as denying citizens any right to self protection. All Obama did was object people like DeMar from being able to escape the penalty for owning an illegal handgun even when they shoot it in self defense. And, besides, local gun bans are becoming a thing of the past; the Supreme Court ruled against them in June, and Wilmette promptly lifted its gun ban.

But let’s detour away from the ads and focus on another important issue: your voting rights.

GRAPHIC: “YOUR VOTING RIGHTS” GRAPHIC MONTAGE (1)

You may have heard the rumor that polling officials will prevent anyone wearing campaign paraphernalia from voting.

There’s an element of truth to this. According to the Election Protection Project of the nonpartisan Lawyer’s Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the law differs by state. So

it's recommended that you leave your button-clad Stetson or campaign t-shirt at home before heading to the polls.

GRAPHIC: "YOUR VOTING RIGHTS" GRAPHIC MONTAGE (2)

Our next voting rights rumor cuts to the heart of the recent economic downturn: can foreclosed homeowners be prevented from voting?

The short answer is: no. We spoke with Jon Greenbaum at the Voting Rights Project of the Lawyer's Committee, and he told us that foreclosure records are a "poor basis" for challenging an individual's right to vote. He went on to say:

GRAPHIC: GREENBAUM QUOTE

"Just because you're on a foreclosure list, that in itself shouldn't provide a sufficient basis to challenge somebody. It's no indication the person has actually moved. They might still be intending to move back to the house".

GRAPHIC: "YOUR VOTING RIGHTS" GRAPHIC MONTAGE (3)

Another issue at hand is whether or not individuals convicted of a felony can vote.

The answer is: It depends on which state you live in. Both Kentucky and Virginia bar individuals found guilty of a felony from voting, while Maine and Vermont do not. The remaining states bar former felons from voting, depending on a variety of factors including the length of time served without a subsequent arrest, or the nature of the crime committed.

And that's it for this episode of Just the Facts! Remember, no matter who you're voting for, be sure to get to know the facts on our website at www.factcheck.org. I'm Emi Kolawole, thanks for watching and see you next week.