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Letter to the Editor

On October 15, ProPublica reporter Chisun Lee interviewed me about ACORN. She sought me out as a member of the McCain-Palin Honest and Open Election Committee. At the conclusion of the interview, she said something along the lines of “Wow, you told me some stuff that I didn’t know would happen.” Imagine my surprise yesterday when I read the article suggesting I thought NOTHING fraudulent could happen. I regret to say the article made only selective use of my quotes to distort my responses given during the interview. Here are three points made during the interview that I believe are worth putting on the record:

1. On a general level, whenever thousands of erroneous voter registrations applications are submitted, and when this all becomes public, the existence of these fraudulent registration applications tends to diminish the integrity of the entire electoral process in the eyes of the average person. Regardless of what happens to these applications, this is not healthy for our democracy. Specifically, of the 1.3 million voter registrations submitted by ACORN this year, approximately 400,000 of those registrations are not valid. These invalid applications can overwhelm registrars, especially if submitted late in the registration process en masse. That means that registrars either fall behind in registering new voters (which can result in long lines and confusion on election day) or rush all new registrants through (increasing the number of phony voters on the rolls).
2. Because we are not aware of all of the fraudulent applications submitted by ACORN, we have to assume that some number get through the registrars checking process and onto the voting lists.

While it is true that “Mickey Mouse” or the Dallas Cowboys will likely be caught in the registration process, and in any case not attempt to vote on election day, that is NOT necessarily true when someone takes names from the local phone book and submits them. It is entirely possible for someone to check the current rolls, find out who is not

registered, find those names in the phone book and submit “phony” registrations. Perhaps it is a high rise residential building. The person behind the fraud has the voter registration cards sent to his or her address (perhaps also in the high rise) and then he or she has numerous “votes” available to use on election day. Furthermore, since the cards were deliverable, the county clerk thinks that the person certainly exists and lives at that address. This is most likely to occur when the phony voters then vote absentee—in which case they are NEVER asked for identification in most states. This takes a little thought, but it’s certainly not beyond belief.

Our system is predicated on a check and balance in the polling place (i.e., a legitimate Republican and Democratic judge). But the reality is that this check is NOT in place for most absentee ballots. Further, in some precincts—usually, but not always, in urban areas—it is almost impossible to find honest/legitimate judges representing both parties. Thus, the door is opened to potential fraud, particularly when you are dealing with registration rolls which are not clean.

3. We need to get partisanship out of election administration. Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner’s partisan actions during the 2008 election cycle are the best example of why we need a change. She attempted to deny one MILLION McCain absentee voters their ballots, and to keep observers out of early voting centers, until courts ordered her otherwise. And she has never accounted for her failure to implement an accurate statewide voter registration list, as required by HAVA.

In the weeks following the interview, evidence has surfaced of voting fraud tied directly to fraudulent registrations, including:

- In Hamilton County, Ohio, a special prosecutor has pulled the ballot of a Connecticut resident who visited Ohio during “Golden Week” where the visitor both registered and voted on the same day. The special prosecutor is leading a voter fraud investigation in Hamilton County.
- One dozen Obama staffers reached an agreement with the Franklin County, Ohio prosecutor to withdraw their fraudulent voter registrations and the ballots they cast illegally in Ohio, and in return will not be prosecuted on felony charges.
- In Knox County, Ohio, an Obama volunteer pulled his already-cast ballot because he did not meet residency requirements.

Tomorrow is election day, and the McCain-Palin campaign hopes that EVERY qualified voter will have an opportunity to vote—one time.

Very respectfully,

Ronald D. Michaelson / BGH

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cc: McCain-Palin 2008 Honest and Open Election Committee

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