

SHARRON ANGLE SAYS HARRY REID WANTS TO GIVE ILLEGALS SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

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Body

Harry Reid has voted "to **give illegals Social Security benefits** even for the time they were here illegally."

Sharron Angle on Tuesday, September 14th, 2010 in a campaign commercial

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THE RULING: BARELY TRUE

We've rated one claim in an ad by Nevada Republican Senate candidate **Sharron Angle** as False. That was a claim that Democratic Majority Leader **Harry Reid** voted "go **give** special tax breaks to illegal aliens."

The second charge in the ad is that **Reid** voted "to **give illegals Social Security benefits** even for the time they were here illegally."

Until a change in the law in 2007, illegal immigrants had a right to receive credit in their **benefits** calculation for **Social Security** payments they had made while working illegally, typically while using an unauthorized **Social Security** number. They received such credit only after they had received legal working papers and a genuine **Social Security** number. As much as several billion dollars a year are typically collected from illegal immigrants by the **Social Security** system.

Reid voted twice to uphold this system.

During a Senate debate over immigration reform in 2006, Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev., offered an amendment to prevent anyone from earning credit for **Social Security** payments made using an unauthorized **Social Security** number -- a provision that would mostly if not entirely affect illegal aliens. On May 18, 2006, the Senate voted on a motion to table -- that is, to stop consideration of -- the Ensign amendment. By a bare one-vote majority, the chamber voted to table the amendment. **Reid**'s was one of the 50 votes in favor of tabling.

Then, on July 19, 2007, Ensign tried again, proposing a similar amendment to the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007. Under the rules in effect, the amendment needed 60 votes to pass but only got 57, so it failed. **Reid** was one of the senators who voted against the amendment.

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So the fact that Reid voted "no" twice provides support for Angle's claim. But it isn't foolproof.

First, Reid also cast another vote on this issue that Angle's camp doesn't mention. On Oct. 23, 2007, during another immigration bill debate, Ensign offered a similar amendment. This time, the Senate passed it by an overwhelming 92-2 vote. Reid was one of 92 senators to support the amendment.

But that's not all. We also see problems with the ad's explanation of what was being voted on. For one thing, the vote wouldn't have given current illegals Social Security benefits, as the ad implies. Instead, Reid's votes affected the policy for former illegal aliens who were later made legal. For another, the vote was not about giving benefits but rather on whether to change the calculation process so that former illegals could get credit for money they had paid into the system years before, when they were illegal.

We consider these descriptions misleading, and in combination with the ad's decision to ignore Reid's contrary vote, we feel the this part of the statement deserves a rating of Barely True.

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About this statement:

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Sources: Sharron Angle for Senate, "Best Friend" (television ad), Sept. 14, 2010; Sharron Angle for Senate, backup information on "Best Friend" television ad, Sept. 14, 2010; Harry Reid for Senate, critique of Sharron Angle's "Best Friend" television ad, Sept. 15, 2010; Harry Reid for Senate, "Sharron Angle's Immigration Ad: Pure Unsubstantiated Lies" (news release), Sept. 15, 2010; U.S. Senate, roll call vote on the motion to table Ensign amendment 3985, May 18, 2006; U.S. Senate, text of amendment 3985, May 18, 2006; U.S. Senate, roll call vote on Ensign amendment 3352, Oct. 23, 2007; U.S. Senate, text of amendment 3352, Oct. 23, 2007; Text of 2006 immigration bill; FactCheck.org, "Republican Campaign Theme Debunked: Social Security for Illegal Immigrants," Oct. 10, 2006; E-mail interview with Judith Gans, program manager for immigration policy at the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy at the University of Arizona, Sep. 15, 2010; E-mail interview with Kevin Johnson, dean of the law school at the University of California-Davis, Sep. 15, 2010; E-mail interview with Michelle Mittelstadt, spokeswoman for the Migration Policy Institute, Sept. 15, 2010; E-mail interview with Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, Sep. 15, 2010; E-mail interview with Jon Summers, spokesman for Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., Sep. 15, 2010; E-mail interview with Jerry Stacy, spokesman for Sharron Angle, Sep. 16, 2010

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Graphic

PHOTO (2) VIDEO - YouTube: In Nevada, Republican Sharron Angle released an ad calling her opponent, Democratic Sen. Harry Reid, a "best friend" of illegal immigrants

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