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Delaware senator speaks at rally on ECU campus

BY BROCK LETCHWORTH
The Daily Reflector

Addressing hundreds gathered on the East Carolina University campus Monday morning, Democratic vice presidential nominee Joe Biden vowed that he and his running mate will rebuild America's middle class and regain the country's respect around the world if they are elected next week.

Biden also criticized rival John McCain's campaign for its continued attacks on Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama, comparing them to those faced by Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy during their campaigns.

LAW ENFORCEMENT agents have broken up a plot to assassinate Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, ATF officials said Monday.

The Delaware senator spoke during an Early Vote for Change Rally outside of Mendenhall Student Center.

Biden cited tax cuts for small businesses, affordable health care for everyone, improved American infrastructure and an energy policy which frees the country for the grip of foreign oil and focuses on alternative energy as keys to restoring the middle class.

"Barack Obama and I recognize that America does well when the middle class does well," Biden said. "When the middle class does well, the wealthy do very well. They do not get punished. And guess what, poor folk do even better."

The first step toward regaining America's respect worldwide would be ending the war in Iraq, Biden said, noting that he and Obama will lay out a timeline to draw down American forces and hand over the duties to the more than 400,000 Iraqi soldiers trained by America.

"It is time we get real here and start to look out for America's interest," he said.

Biden's most pointed remarks were reserved for McCain, the Republican.

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presidential nominee, and his campaign.

He dismissed McCain's repeated attempts to separate himself from President George W. Bush, telling the crowd that the GOP ticket offers more of the same: "failed economic policies."

"I know Halloween is coming, but John McCain dressed as an agent of change, that costume doesn't fit," Biden said. "Especially when you realize that John McCain is the one who for the better part of this past year said that we have made great economic progress under George W. Bush. He said he and George Bush share a common philosophy."

Biden also warned the crowd against what he called divisive tactics and continued attempts by the GOP to "tear down those who would change our nation for the better."

"The purpose of it is to deliberately further divide the country, cause they concluded the only way they can win is if they can divide us," Biden said of McCain's campaign. "It is also designed to distract you and your families from the things that really matter to your lives, the things that will really affect the well-being of your kids and industry."

Biden compared attacks on Obama to those aimed at Jefferson which questioned his Christianity and concerns about Lincoln wanting to take away individual rights. He went on to say similar attacks were mounted on Roosevelt, claiming he would destroy the American system of life, and Kennedy, who Republicans called a "dangerous choice in difficult times."

"Sound familiar?" Biden asked. "Well ladies and gentlemen, new ideas and new leaders are often met with new attacks and almost always negative attacks built on lies which are the last resort of those who have nothing new to offer. That is where we find ourselves."

Biden praised Obama for having a "steel spine," and said the Illinois senator has shown a "steady hand" when dealing with a turbulent economy and demonstrated "sound judgement to a nation desperate for a better day."

"He offers new ideas, new leadership and real hope," Biden said. "Our problems are too big, and for too long our politics have been too small. Barack Obama knows that we need to bring people together and remind them of what we have overcome in the past. He knows that is the way to unite America."

North Carolina, which has 15 electoral votes, is considered by many pundits to be a battleground state after voting for Republican presidents in all but one election since 1968. President Bush won the state by 12 points in 2004, but Obama has aggressively campaigned in the state since the primary season.

Biden is the third candidate from the two presidential tickets to visit Greenville this year. In April, Obama spoke during a rally at ECU's Minges Coliseum; Republican vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin also spoke at Minges earlier this month.

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Supporters: Biden a solid compliment to Obama

BY KATHRYN KENNEDY
The Daily Reflector

It was a chilly Monday morning for several hundred locals who turned out to hear vice presidential candidate Sen. Joe Biden speak at East Carolina University. They chatted quietly in wait outside the Mendenhall Student Center — some since 7:30 a.m. — clutching cups of coffee.

But as the day warmed up, so did the crowd. By the time Biden took the stage just after 11 a.m., the group cheered and waved signs enthusiastically.

"Pirates Welcome Joe Biden," "Go Joel" and "Turn Carolina Blue," three proclaimed in colored marker.

About half of those attending the speech were ECU students, with others slipping away from work to hear the man they hope will be the next vice president.

Kinston resident Anthony Hall came out to show support for presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama and Biden, who he believes will bring more moderate and liberal policies to the White House.

"I mean, we had the moderates and liberals in there in the 90s with the Clinton administration, and it was prosper—

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ous,” he said. “Then you put the conservatives in there for eight years and they destroy the whole country. I think the Democrats are better suited to face the problems we're facing.”

Hall’s 4-year-old son, Darius, tagged along, looking very excited and singing to himself.

“I wish my dad would have taken me to events like this, but he wasn’t really into politics,” Hall said, smiling at the boy. “Look at Barack, he was a state senator ... Palin was a mayor. You start at those levels and you could be president one day. He might be the next Barack Obama.”

Many in the crowd said they’ve supported Obama since the primary but have little knowledge of Biden’s record.

Julie and Aaron Givens lived in politician’s home state, Delaware, before moving to Winterville six months ago. “We like what he did there,” Aaron Givens said before the couple was seated in the section directly behind Biden’s podium.

“I think Joe Biden was a good choice,” Julie Givens said. “He brings some of the experience that people are concerned about...he knows how D.C. works, how government goes on. He’s not the most exciting pick for me, but he’s a lot better than Palin.”

ECU student Nkeiruka Munagolou also heralded Biden’s experience, elated after his “really moving” speech.

“I think he makes a great running mate,” she said. “John McCain’s always saying that Barack Obama has no experience, yet he will appoint someone that nobody even knows until the election. He’s just criticizing himself. And Joe Biden, he seems like he knows what he’s doing.”

After the rally, volunteers with signs reading “VOTE NOW” and “We are voting today!” led a dozen registered voters to the ECU early voting site: the Newman Catholic Student Center sanctuary. There was a steady stream of people entering that location after the event, and only a short wait for those casting ballots.

Carrie May was the only non-student to stroll over with the group. A workday for Pitt County Schools allowed the middle school teacher to attend Biden’s speech.

“I was thinking of doing it a little later in the day, but hadn’t decided where,” May said of voting. “It just kind of worked out.”

She, too, was impressed by Biden, and said the ticket speaks to her beliefs.

“I really thought he nailed things,” she said. “I think the message Joe Biden gave today kind of sums it up: unity, and working together for common goals.”

As May was arriving at the polls, 18-year-old Ashley Hamilton was exiting after casting her first-ever ballot.

“I was excited,” the ECU freshman said. “I didn’t know if I’d be able to vote because I turned 18 Sept. 28. But I found out you can register to vote ahead of time.”

Hamilton said she voted for Obama-Biden because of “the way they carry themselves,” and a number of policies she supports. She said she values the role young people are playing in the presidential race this year.

“Often, we feel like we don’t really have an impact,” Hamilton said. “This time we actually feel that our vote really matters. It’s like a history in the making. We can be a part of it.”

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Analyst: Foreclosure crisis may take while to settle

BY TOM MARINE
The Daily Reflector

Fueled by falling house prices and weak underwriting standards, the mortgage foreclosure crisis that has frozen the credit markets may not stabilize until the end of 2009 or even 2010, a leading financial analyst said Monday at East Carolina University.

Speaking as part of a foreclosure conference series, Mike Riddle said it may take some more time before home prices bottom out and start to rebound, causing more homes to fall to foreclosure.

Moderated by Randall Parker, ECU professor of economics, the program addressed the impact of mortgage foreclosures on communities and the credit market. The program featured a series speakers, who discussed the key drivers behind the mortgage foreclosure and credit lending crunch, its impact on North Carolina and the response local housing market conditions received from the Federal Reserve, as well as state and local governments.

More than 200 people attended the event, many of whom were ECU students.

Riddle, a senior financial analyst at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, referred to the basic principles of lending — character, capacity, collateral and capital — and where they went wrong in the loan process.

"We got away from this," he said. "Essentially, we were saying if you can't afford a normal 30-year mortgage, we'll just put you in an (adjustable rate mortgage). It's a bet by the borrower and the lender."

These ARMS, which were key to the subprime loan, have been a critical component of the rising number of mortgage delinquencies and foreclosures across the nation, Riddle said.

Until the crisis eases its hold on the economy, he said, it will continue to have a spillover effect on construction and land development.

Steve Sanderford, senior retail lending specialist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, displayed a number of graphs that showed North Carolina has not been hit as hard by the foreclosure crisis as other parts of the country, namely California, Nevada and Florida.

He also presented a case study on the dramatic rise of foreclosures in Prince William County in northern Virginia.

To illustrate his point, Sanderford told stories of eviction sales and families living without utilities.

"As you walk around these zip codes, you see the impact," Sanderford said. "There is a face to this crisis."

As part of his time, Robert E. Carpenter, associate professor of economics at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, explained how increasing defaults on mortgages affect the value of other financial assets, meaning how problems on main street transfer to Wall Street.

Similarly, Carpenter also touched on how the problems facing the U.S. economy could ripple through financial institutions all over the world.

"Uncertainty in the U.S. financial markets led some institutions to retreat from providing funds to European money markets," said Carpenter, who is also a visiting senior financial economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond.

"That put a lot of pressure on the European financial institutions and lending markets."

Following their presentations, Parker facilitated a discussion between the audience and the speakers.

Parker provided a historical overview, which referenced to the Great Depression, to help answer the question, "Why are we where we are?"

Parker said housing busts take a longer time to recover than stock busts, and until banks start lending again, that will hurt economic growth.

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Panelists seek ways ECU can assist soldiers

BY JOSH HUMPHRIES
The Daily Reflector

The university hosted a symposium on the challenges facing wartime military personnel and how state universities can help returning soldiers.

Officials want to see better working relationship between North Carolina’s universities and the military to provide services to soldiers in the state.

East Carolina University hosted a symposium on the challenges facing wartime military personnel returning from deployment Monday at the Allied Health Sciences building.

Soldiers returning from wars in Afghanistan and Iraq often face mental health problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder or addictions and their families often require services from health professionals as well, officials noted.

The symposium, they said, was a starting point for a working relationship with ECU and the military.

It was attended by more than 140 professors, students and military officials and led by Dr. David Cistola, associate dean for research in ECU’s College of Allied Health Sciences. Presenters from various health fields associated with returning veterans gave presentations and participated in panel discussions.

Cistola said the primary goal of the symposium was to begin discussing ways the military and ECU can work together to address four issues facing military personnel: research, workforce training, clinical service and tele-health, services delivered by phone.

“We wanted to have an exchange so we know what is going on,” Cistola said. “We wanted to discuss how we can develop innovative partnerships to solve these problems.”

There is a shortage of services for military personnel and their families in North Carolina, a state where thousands of soldiers are based, said Col. Edward Crandell of Womack Army Medical Center at Fort Bragg.

Crandell said there will be a need for psychiatric services for military families in North Carolina long after the war in Iraq is over.

“If the war ends tomorrow, we will continue to see residual effects in veterans and active duty military personnel for some time,” Crandell said.

ECU’s medical school is producing doctors who may end up working in eastern North Carolina and serving military families, officials said.

Cistola said the symposium also addressed issues regarding the workforce. Presentations were made on how soldiers returning from a war are trained for the workforce and the role that universities can play in that training.

“We have to start thinking about how active duty and veterans continue their education and prepare themselves for the workforce,” Cistola said.

This year marked the fourth rehabilitation and allied health symposium at ECU. This was the first year that the symposium featured outside speakers and the first year that the university brought in military experts in the various health fields.

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See SOLDIERS B3
CONWAY, Ark. — A shooting that left two students dead at the University of Central Arkansas did not appear to be random, police said Monday as the school's president pronounced the campus secure.

Two suspects were being questioned and two others were being sought after Sunday night's shooting, which wounded a third person at the 12,500-student campus.

Though investigators have not determined a motive for the shooting, "It does not seem at this time that it was a random act," campus police Lt. Preston Grumbles said.

Interim president Tom Courtway canceled classes Monday but said they would resume Tuesday. "Our campus is safe," he said.

The victims were shot in an alley between a dormitory and the Snow Fine Arts Center. One victim died on the sidewalk; police said the others rushed into the dorm, where paramedics found them.

Student T.J. Frix of Russellville said he heard five gunshots as he studied for a communication exam in his dorm room.

"I was like, 'Maybe it's just fireworks,'" he said.

But soon, two bleeding men lay in the hallway right outside his room. Frix said he saw the surviving victim writhing on the floor in pain from his leg wound. Two resident advisors performed CPR on the other man before paramedics rushed into the dorm, Frix said.

University police Lt. Rhonda Swindle said one person being questioned turned himself in, another was pulled over by police during the night and police believe they know the identities of two other suspects. All four are male, none are students and none has been arrested, police said.
1960s ECC not a racist atmosphere

I am writing in response to the feature article in the Oct. 18 Daily Reflector concerning Laura Elliott, the first black student to graduate from East Carolina College. According to the article, Elliott attended ECC from 1962 until 1966 and experienced many acts of racism. I was born and reared in Greenville. I am a white male and I too attended ECC from 1962 until 1966. I don’t know where The Daily Reflector got its information for this article, but I can assure you that the article was not factual. I was there and there was definitely not an atmosphere of racism on campus during that period of time.

This is a very serious allegation and should have been fully substantiated before going to print. This article definitely did not serve our community well. The Daily Reflector needs to review its own motto, “Truth in preference to fiction.”

JOHN R. HODGES
Winterville
Suspect indicted in UNC slaying

GREENSBORO — Federal prosecutors have indicted one of the two men accused in the slaying of the student body president at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

A federal grand jury returned an indictment Monday against 22-year-old Demario Atwater. The indictment on a charge of carjacking resulting in death could allow federal authorities to seek a death sentence.

State prosecutors had already charged Atwater with murder in the March 5 death of 22-year-old Eve Carson, of Athens, Ga.

U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey must approve seeking a death sentence in the federal case. Prosecutors said Monday he has yet to do so.
Going off to camp is an American tradition that millions of children participate in every year. Children who require special attention for heart disorders also have a weekend camp they can attend in eastern North Carolina, thanks to East Carolina University's College of Human Ecology.

Camp WholeHeart is a special camp for adolescents with congenital heart defects. This year's camp, the fourth, at Camp Don Lee in Arapahoe was held on the weekend of Oct. 18 with 24 campers from eastern North Carolina, most of them from Pitt County.

The camp is organized by Dr. Priti Desai, professor of child life at ECU.

"I knew camp would be beneficial for children and families in our rural and underserved region as our campers are more likely to feel isolated both by rural living and by their serious health issues," Desai said.

"The presence of a serious congenital heart defect often results in an enormous emotional and financial strain on families. Camps and family support groups are vital to successful coping for children and teens with a chronic health condition."

Most of the campers at Camp WholeHeart have conditions that require monitoring by medical professionals during activity.

"These are kids that wouldn't get to go to camp anywhere else because they are so fragile," said Peggy Novotany, director of marketing and communications for the College of Human Ecology at ECU.

"We are trying to let the community know because there may be more kids who could take advantage of it."

The campers have a good time with various activities tailored for their special needs.

Ayden Middle School student Erika Stilley, 13, has tricuspid atresia, a condition that does not allow the heart to function properly when a child is born. She has had three open-heart surgeries at the Children's Hospital of Eastern North Carolina.

For Erika, the camp's talent show and dance are a major draw. She looks forward to seeing the friends she has made at the camp over the years.

Erika's mom said she waits for the camp all year and marks it on her calendar.

"It is an incredible opportunity for Erika," said Heather Stilley, Erika's mom.

"She looks forward to going every year. She gets to be around other children who have experienced the challenges that she has with a congenital heart defect."

Stilley said her daughter doesn't like contact sports and must limit her exercise, but the activities at Camp WholeHeart are designed for children like Erika.

"This gives her an opportunity to do her own thing, to dance, sing and be around children that have felt the way she does," Stilley said.

"It's really great."

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Biden takes message to campus

Young voters like those at ECU are key to Democrats' strategy.

BY MARK JOHNSON
STAFF WRITER

GREENVILLE - Democratic vice presidential candidate Joe Biden on Monday visited one of the key territories his party is counting on to help win the White House: a college campus.

Biden addressed an East Carolina University crowd in which students appeared to be in the minority, but the visit reflected how much Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama is counting on the youth vote. Democrats are hoping a wave of new, energized voters will help propel them to widespread victories on Election Day.

The modest-sized ECU crowd of about 400 didn't display a surge of support in this Eastern North Carolina town, but students said the campus is dotted with signals that this year was different.

Mary Morgan Mills, a freshman elementary education major from Charlotte, said the Obama campaign routinely sets up a table for voter registration in the commons area where students eat lunch. "They're always handing out fliers," Mills said. "I've seen a [John] McCain table once."

Librarian Rita Khazanie, 55, said students seem more attentive and enthusiastic than in years past.

"Everybody seems to know more about the issues," Khazanie said. "It's not just, 'I'm going to vote for somebody.' It's, 'Here's why.'"

What Rachel Sykes, a senior public relations major from Selma, noticed is not that her friends say they're going to support Obama but that so many have already done it.

Biden delivered a 25-minute speech, part of which mocked Republican efforts to distance McCain from President Bush.

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"I know Halloween's coming," Biden said, "but John McCain, dressed as an agent of change - that costume doesn't fit."

During visits Monday and last Thursday, Biden made five stops in North Carolina. Four were on college campuses.

"There are more students eligible to vote in North Carolina than the number of votes by which North Carolina's presidential vote was decided in 2004," said Paul Cox, spokesman for Obama's North Carolina campaign.

Younger voters typically don't show up in the polls, with their participation rates trailing far behind older voters. Obama's campaign, however, has invested heavily in campaign staff in North Carolina and other states. Part of their mission has been rounding up volunteers, including on college campuses where they "storm the dorms" for voters, Cox said.

Biden spoke directly to students, emphasizing that they have the most at stake because they have so much life ahead. He highlighted how Obama wants to broaden the definition of the kind of public service that helps earn money for college beyond serving in the military.

"If you commit to our communities, our hospitals, our schools, the underserved areas," Biden said, "If you serve our country, we will get you to college."

College students provide a relatively untapped reservoir of support, said Peter Francis, a political science professor at ECU. Though students are busy, many of them have more time for political activity than working voters who are raising families. They're also more comfortable using technology - e-mail, texting and the like - that has become an effective and successful means of reaching voters for modern campaigns.

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In campaign's dark corners, whispers entice the gullible

BY MARTHA MENDOZA
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barack Obama is not a member of a socialist party. Neither Obama nor John McCain is a foreigner. Sarah Palin is not Trig's grandmother. And Joe Biden is not dropping out of the race.

Oh, and none of them are having sordid affairs.

But it's rumor season again in this country, and with just a week to go before the election, both campaigns are frantically knocking down these rumors — often spreading virally on the Internet — along with a steady stream of other nasty hints and allegations that range from the questionable to the outrageous.

One thing you can believe: It will only get worse between now and Election Day.

"With just days left to go in the campaign, it's use it or lose it time. If you're a candidate, now's the time to get it out, to sear it in voters' minds just before they go to the voting booth," said

BIDEN WOOS ECU

STAFF PHOTO BY TAKAAKI IWABU

At East Carolina's Greenville campus, the Democratic vice presidential candidate angles for college-age voters.

University of California, Santa Cruz, psychology professor Anthony Pratkanis, who researches propaganda and social influence.

The trouble with rumors, as representatives of both campaigns say, is that even refuting them means they are repeated. Nonetheless,

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RUMORS
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they say that sometimes you have to talk about it, explain why it’s false and move on.

“It’s obviously an unfortunate development that we’ve seen in this election season, more than in elections past, but ultimately we trust the voters and their good sense,” said McCain spokesman Brian Rogers.

Obama’s spokesman Tommy Vietor said the campaign’s strategy has been to “confront these rumors head-on” with a designated Web site — stopthesmears.com — and to make sure precinct captains are given factual information to counter the “ridiculous false rumors that have swirled in this campaign.”

“Our experience is that voters are smart, voters are resolute, they’re not going to be swayed by these things,” said Vietor.

Recently, rumors about Obama, mostly floated online and on conservative radio and television talk shows, have intensified. They usually come in the form of questions.

“Who wrote Obama’s autobiography, ‘Dreams From My Father?’ ” asked conservative Web sites and talk shows last week, hinting that the writing is similar to that of William Ayers that Ayers must have been the true author. He wasn’t.

As old as Jefferson and Adams

Although this year’s rumors have been ferocious and often bizarre, the phenomenon of whisper campaigns, misinformation and smears is as much a part of our nation’s roots as elections themselves.

Thomas Jefferson was accused of being anti-Christian; his opponents warned that he would destroy the religious fabric and values of the country and promote an orgy of rape, incest and adultery. John Adams, opponents said, was pro-monarchy and was planning to marry his son to the daughter of King George III.

“These smears are a great American tradition, going back to our earliest contested elections,” said Pratkanis.

Eight years ago, McCain lost a strong lead in the South Carolina GOP primary, and possibly even the presidency, after what a campaign aide later described as “a textbook example of a smear.”

Using e-mail and push polls, Republican opponents spread the false rumor that his adopted Bangladeshi daughter was actually his biological and illegitimate black child. That lie was enough, observers say, to cost McCain South Carolina.

Obama has faced the vast majority of false rumors in this long election season. But when Alaska’s Gov.

WHY FALSE RUMORS WORK

According to neuroscience experts Sam Wang and Sandra Aamodt, the authors of “Welcome to Your Brain,” the human brain stores the facts you learn in a way that disassociates them from the context in which you learned them. For example, you know that the capital of California is Sacramento, but you probably don’t remember how you learned that.

This process is called “source amnesia,” and it can also lead people to forget whether a statement is true. So the very act of debunking a lie, and thereby repeating it, can actually reinforce the lie in people’s brains.

Whether they know it or not, those who traffic in political smears are exploiting source amnesia to spread their misinformation. If the message is initially memorable, its impression will persist long after the lie is debunked.

SOURCE: THE NEW YORK TIMES

Sarah Palin was tapped to be McCain’s running mate, a deluge of rumors began about the little-known Republican from a remote state.

Three days after her selection, reporters from a dozen national media organizations, including the AP, lined up at a Palmer, Alaska, courthouse counter and, one after another, paged through a divorce settlement of a friend of Palin’s to see whether she was named as the cause of their strife. She wasn’t.

“Terrible and false rumors have dogged Senator Obama for the past two years, no doubt, but the Republican ticket has quickly caught up. At one point, there were 93 separate rumors about Palin, ” said Nick DiFonzo, a psychologist and rumor expert at Rochester Institute of Technology in upstate New York. “I think everyone’s a loser in this situation.”

Rumors are often most effectively floated when a candidate is first introduced, so that voters see everything that follows through the screen of those initial rumors.

Or they’re floated just before the election, so that the smears are fresh in voters’ minds when they go to the polls.

Andy Martin, a self-described “anti-Obama nemesi,” is the source of some of the most vicious rumors about Obama including current claims that the candidate lied about who is real father and that he is not a U.S. citizen.

“Look, the way I see it, one person’s rumor is another person’s fact,” said Martin, who is also known as a prodigiousfiler of lawsuits with anti-Semitic overtones. He said spreading rumors is “insulting and I never do it.” But he has conceded that his own claim that Obama is secretly a Muslim, something Martin repeated on nationally broadcast television and radio talk shows, is false. Obama is a Christian.