



Congressman Etheridge Assaults Student

A shocking video released today shows Congressman Bob Etheridge (D-N.C.) assaulting a student who asked him a question on a public sidewalk.

[The 71 seconds of footage opens](#) with a student in a jacket and tie greeting Etheridge with “Hi, Congressman, how are you?” The Representative seems to respond cordially enough but then mutters, “Who are you?” The student then asked a question the Congressman apparently found intolerable: “Do you fully support the Obama agenda?” At this point Etheridge stops, moves closer to the student, and asks more aggressively “Who are you?” Etheridge repeats this query one more time and then, shockingly, tries to grab the camera, interrupting the recording.

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When the video resumes a few seconds later, it is obviously being shot by another student and shows Etheridge with an extremely firm grip on the first student’s right wrist, restraining him. The situation degenerates further, as the Congressman continues to ask for the student’s identity and, despite no resistance or retaliation on the student’s part, ultimately grabs him around the back of the neck and places him in a one-armed quasi-bear hug (shades of Eric Massa of male-staffer tickle-fight fame?).

Obviously, the student’s answers of “We’re just here for a project, sir” and “I’m just a student, sir” didn’t satisfy the very agitated and possibly drunk Etheridge. But it should be emphasized that the student remained unfailingly polite throughout. Moreover, while it’s customary for interviewers to announce themselves, it’s understandable that an inexperienced, apparently teenaged student might be a bit intimidated by a much larger, 50-something man of power and influence asking his identity.

More to the point, however, the student was under no legal obligation to reveal his name and had every right to film and attempt to question a public servant on a public street. In contrast, Etheridge did have a legal obligation to not become physically aggressive with a young citizen exercising his constitutional rights. The Congressman could have just kept walking, as most cowardly public officials do. He could have told the student to call his office to arrange an interview. Instead, he stopped, engaged the kid, and then pulled a Sean Penn. It was assault, and he should be charged.

I’m adamant on this last point. Remember that if the student had retaliated and the police had been called, the onus absolutely would have been placed on him (armed with the video, I’m sure he’d later have been exonerated in court, but I can’t imagine that he wouldn’t have become acquainted with a jail cell). The power differential between statesman and citizen is already profound enough to intimidate many; the last thing we

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need is Congressmen placing their hands — as opposed to just their laws — on citizens with impunity.

Whatever the legal ramifications, however, the political ones are interesting. This video is Tea Party gold. I can just imagine a commercial showing the truculent Etheridge leaning toward the camera and snottily asking, “Who are you?!” and the narrator responding, “I’m the one who pays your salary, Congressman!” “Who are you?!” “I’m the one who’s going to vote you out of office in November, Congressman!” I suspect Etheridge’s career is over.

There is an interesting back story here as well. Not surprisingly, as of this writing, the mainstream media have not yet reported on this incident (this may change if those of us in the real media give it enough face time). But even more interesting is the sleight-of-hand of YouTube, where the video has been posted.

As of 1:08 PM Eastern Standard Time, the Etheridge assault video is listed as having 328 views.

But it has 2,102 comments.

Is there something wrong with this picture?

Understand that comments generally represent only about three percent of views. Additionally, the view counter was also stuck on 328 when I watched the video more than an hour ago. Is this a glitch in the system? I doubt it.

As I’ve reported before, it seems that YouTube cooks the stats of videos that don’t serve the leftist agenda. Why would they do this? Because if a video registers a tremendous hit count, it is placed in the site’s “Most Viewed” section, where it *receives far more exposure*. Thus, suppress the view count and you suppress the story.

Now, when I first leveled this accusation, many said I was off-base. They claimed that YouTube only updates view counters a few times a day or that there was some other technical explanation for the phenomenon. But if this is true, why is the Britney Spears music video “Circus” — which ran afoul of animal-rights imperatives by featuring circus animals — not on the first few pages of YouTube’s “Most Viewed, All Time” section as its view count (61,055,298) demands? It wasn’t present there last year when I was first informed of the deception, and it isn’t there now — although a video with fewer than one million hits occupies page four.

So now I conclude this piece at 2:02 p.m. The Etheridge assault video still registers only 328 hits, the mainstream media and Google (which owns YouTube) are still unfit to provide news, and the Congressman is still unfit for office.