

SELECTED COMMENTS OF  
REPRESENTATIVE KEITH ELLISON  
ON O'CONNELL/WODELE  
KSTP RADIO SHOW  
OF MARCH 12, 2003

ETHICS  
COMMITTEE  
April 7, 2003

Ellison:

Unfortunately our country does have a history here, McCarthyism happened the COINTELPRO program of the 1960's occurred, Martin Luther King was harassed, was surveilled. We know this happened. We don't want it to happen again and I think that in a democratic country we got to draw the line.

Ellison:

Let's add that right into the pot too. They advocate racism. They advocate anti-Semitism. But you know what? As a black man, I don't have any problem with you not liking me as long as you don't mess with me. You don't have to like me. There's nothing in this world that says that you have a right to be loved. It just doesn't exist.

Ellison:

This thing has a chilling effect. Meaning that, now you have people that are afraid. Now you got kids on that campus that might feel, you know I either want to have a parole board demonstration or anti-war demonstration but maybe I shouldn't get involved because I don't want to end up on a list. That is contrary to our democratic tradition. People should feel free to express themselves as long as they don't violate the law.

Question by interviewer:

You said earlier, Rep. Ellison, about how people who express their political points of views and you know should not be just because it's the political point of view that is a very unpopular one, should not be subject to, you know sanctions, right? I got to ask you, does the same go for Arlon Lindner?

Ellison:

Well, yeah, as a matter of fact, you know I mean I was quoted in the press earlier in this week sort of blasting old Arlon Lindner, I don't apologize for that for a moment, but I tell you this. The First Amendment says Congress shall make no law abridging the free exercise of speech and so on and so forth and there's like five things you can do as an American citizen, petition the government and press these kind of things and I would never invoke the powers of the state to restrict Arlon Lindner from expressing himself. I would never even dream of it. I would never think that you know, in this world you can say whatever you want to but you cannot sit back and expect that other people are not going to have an opposing viewpoint. The problem is when we use the instrumentality of the state to restrict people from saying what they want to say. That's a First Amendment problem.

Question by interviewer:

Well, putting him in the crosshairs of an ethics complaint may have a chilling effect on his ability to speak his mind, correct?

Ellison:

Yeah, that's right.

Question by interviewer:

And others ability to speak their mind. If somebody else has some very politically incorrect things to say and no matter what they are, the fact that some people are going to be offended enough to drag them up before an ethics hearing, would seem to me to be putting a chilling effect on it.

Ellison:

Well, yeah, I'm not saying that there won't be a chilling effect.

Question by interviewer:

That's your opinion.

Ellison:

Yes,

Question by interviewer:

(Regarding Lindner's comments ) But now is that an unethical statement if I was on the floor of the House?

Ellison:

Well, you know what, I tell you this, John, I don't think it is.

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