

# Did Dem Leaders Stay 'Firmly Seated' During the Carryn Owens Applause?

Last night Carryn Owens became, in the words of the *New York Times*, [the face of bravery](#) and perseverance in America.

The widow of Navy SEAL William (Ryan) Owens was invited to attend President Donald Trump's speech to Congress Tuesday, less than one month after her husband was slain in the in the [Yakla raid](#) in Yemen.

Even for cold-hearted cynics who see the modern State of the Union Address as puffery and stale theater (that would be me), it was a moving moment. Watch for yourself:

It was powerful stuff. I choked up. It was without question the best moment of the best speech Donald Trump has delivered since announcing his run. I went to bed happy.

That changed in the morning. The first story on Facebook I saw

claimed something ugly. “Top Democrats Refuse To Stand, Clap For Navy SEAL Widow Honored By Trump,” [the headline reads](#).

It sounded fishy. Is it true? Well, it’s hard to say.

[EDITOR’S NOTE: Visual evidence has surfaced that shows that both Ellison and Wasserman-Schultz [stood and applauded](#) when Trump acknowledged Owens.]



The story I saw came from Ben Shapiro at the *Daily Wire*. My impression of Shapiro is that he’s a straight shooter, but he’s also one of the more partisan folks you’ll find in conservative media this side of Ann Coulter.

Both the video and the story are a bit unclear.

Shapiro writes: “Democrats originally stood for the widow. But then they sat.”

This appears to be a hedge on his rather provocative headline. I suspect the genesis of his narrative stemmed from the Tweet embedded in his story. Benny Johnson, chief content officer at IJR, claimed former Democratic Party Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz and new deputy chair Keith Ellison refused to stand. Period.

*Sobbing widow of slain Navy Seal receives 2 minute standing ovation.*

*Debbie Wasserman Schultz & Keith Ellison stay firmly seated, no claps*

– Benny (@bennyjohnson) [March 1, 2017](#)

Is Johnson's Tweet true? I have no idea.

The video clearly shows some Democrats standing and clapping (Bernie Sanders, for example). But I've seen no definitive evidence of Wasserman Schultz and Ellison sitting during the applause. My hunch is that Johnson made his observation from the media pool. (If, however, any readers have viewed clips online that would confirm Johnson's tweet, please send them our way.)

Whatever the case, the narrative is already going around the media. Vox writer Jeff Stein picked up the story that Ellison and Schultz *reportedly* remained "firmly seated," linking to Johnson's Tweet. As I type, the Blaze published [it's own story](#) based on Johnson's tweet, though it too admitted no visual evidence could be found.

Does any of this matter? I believe it does.

If Johnson's Tweet failed to note that Ellison and Schultz in fact stood and clapped during the first round of applause for Owens, it shows everything wrong with modern media. A simple tweet can lead to entire stories that confirm biases and go viral (Shapiro's story had 10,000-plus shares on Facebook in three hours on *Daily Wire*) but are based on false narratives.

If Johnson's Tweet is true, it shows everything that is wrong with modern politics. Decorum matters. People were in a fuss yesterday when Kellyanne Conway was [photographed](#) making herself at home on the couch in the Oval Office. It was a faux pas. But it's a trivial thing compared to two political leaders refusing to stand for a sobbing widow whose husband had just made the ultimate sacrifice in a foreign land for his country. It would show our politics are utterly poisoned (as are the hearts of the two Congressional leaders, one could argue).

I reached out Rep. Ellison and Rep. Wasserman Schultz. I'll

update if I hear back from either of them.