

Abdul El-Sayed can't seem to get his citizenship story straight

Abdul El-Sayed's campaign says he was never a dual citizen of Egypt and the United States. El-Sayed himself said otherwise.

Newly surfaced video from a 2016 medical conference in Detroit shows the Michigan Senate candidate plainly telling an audience that he carried citizenship in both countries, the second documented instance in which he described himself that way.

"I carry dual citizenship, and I grew up spending most of my summers in another country where I understood what it meant not to have the right to self-govern," El-Sayed said at the GlobeMed conference.

The footage, first reported by the Washington Free Beacon, cuts directly against the explanation his campaign gave earlier this year when confronted with a separate record showing the same thing.

El-Sayed's 2014 academic résumé identified him as a citizen of both the United States and Egypt. His campaign later called that a mistake and said he had simply repeated incorrect information passed down by relatives.

"Abdul is not a dual citizen by any verifiable metric and never has been," campaign spokeswoman Roxie Richner said.

Richner said El-Sayed had been told as a child that his grandfather pursued Egyptian citizenship for him because his parents were born there. According to the campaign, El-Sayed later could not find documentation proving that citizenship had ever been granted.

The 2016 video makes that explanation considerably harder to sell. El-Sayed was no longer a child repeating something he had heard from family. He was a physician,

Detroit's health director and a grown man publicly describing his own citizenship status in unmistakable terms.

His campaign did not respond to the Free Beacon's questions about the newly uncovered video.

The dispute matters more now because El-Sayed is running for the U.S. Senate, where questions involving citizenship, foreign ties and national loyalty carry obvious weight.

El-Sayed was born in Michigan in 1984 to Egyptian parents and has spoken often about spending summers in Egypt while growing up. During the same 2016 appearance, he recounted being questioned by Egyptian police after publicly cursing then-President Hosni Mubarak.

His record involving Egyptian politics has also drawn scrutiny.

In 2012, El-Sayed signed an open letter alongside members of the Egyptian community urging then-President Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood-led government to purge elements of the media and police in order to consolidate control.

He has also referred to Egyptian comedian and political commentator Bassem Youssef as a "fellow Egyptian" and called him "hilarious." Youssef has faced criticism over antisemitic rhetoric and conspiracy theories involving Israel.

El-Sayed's foreign financial ties have also surfaced during the race. According to financial disclosure records cited by the Free Beacon, he owns rental property in the United Arab Emirates and carries debt connected to an Emirati real estate developer.

The central contradiction, though, is much simpler.

El-Sayed's campaign now says he never held Egyptian citizenship. Yet El-Sayed put dual citizenship on his résumé and later stood on a stage and said, in his own words, "I carry dual citizenship."