



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on October 12, 2012

## Bus Driver Fired for Comment to Student Over Romney Yard Sign

Milwaukee area news sources are reporting that a school bus driver for the school district of New Berlin, a Milwaukee suburb, was fired after she berated a 12-year-old student riding her bus because his family displayed a Romney yard sign in front of their house. According to a blog site entitled [Freedom Eden](#), the 81-year-old driver, who had been sparring with the boy for some time about the sign, went as far as suggesting the boy, who attends a New Berlin Catholic school, should have been aborted.



The blog post suggested that the bus driver might have had a particular aversion to signs promoting Mitt Romney for president, and on the day of the incident began to needle the student about the sign in his family's yard, prompting the boy to note that President Obama is pro-abortion. "Maybe your mom should have chosen abortion for you," the driver allegedly responded. According to the blog post, other children on the bus confirmed that the driver did, indeed, make the remark.

The boy's mother brought the incident to the attention of Michael Bennett, the manager of [Durham School Services](#), the bus company for the school district, who promised to look into the allegations. Bennett later told the mother that the driver had been suspended for the rest of the day, but a follow-up statement by the company said that the driver had been terminated for making "an inappropriate remark to a child."

The company said that prior to the infraction, "the driver had an incident free record while serving the community as a Durham school bus driver for more than 20 years. Notwithstanding, the driver's remark was insensitive and inappropriate. Durham has apologized to the family. We remain strongly committed to the safe transportation of students in the community."

Some extra investigation on the part of Milwaukee's [WTMJ](#) radio station revealed that the abusive language by the bus driver, identified as Carol, came as the result of a little abuse by the kids on the bus, including the son of Debbie Hartlaub, the 12-year-old who was the target of Carol's attack. According to the mother, the problems began after she put up the Romney sign in her yard. "It started with him and another student chanting at the back of the bus," recalled Hartlaub to WTMJ. "They were chanting Romney, Romney, which is goofy and inappropriate, but he's 12."

Bus driver Carol, whom the kids knew was an Obama supporter, told WTMJ that the chanting was clearly meant to taunt her. "And they kept it up, and kept it up," she recalled. "And they had other kids doing it, too. And it got louder and louder and it just got to the point where I couldn't take this anymore, you know."

Carol expressed regret for her inappropriate statement about abortion, saying that she "would have never said that" under normal circumstances. "It's like I didn't have control over it. It was when they



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got me so upset already." WTMJ reported that Carol was "devastated" over losing her job. "It's my livelihood," she explained.

Debbie Hartlaub, who gave no indication that she was concerned over her son's disrespectful behavior toward the elderly woman, instead offered this response to WTMJ: "You know what? My son is my son. I could care less about her bus job being her livelihood."

Hartlaub added that she had reported Carol to the Waukesha County Health and Social Services for verbal abusing her child.



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