

## Attorney Charged with Contempt for Wearing Black Lives Matter Pin to Court

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Andrea Burton refused to take off a Black Lives Matter pin in court. Photo courtesy of New York Daily News. [/caption]

*Summary: An Ohio lawyer was jailed for refusing to remove her Black Lives Matter pin while in court.*

Last Friday, Andrea Burton found herself facing time in jail. But the Ohio attorney may have had her First Amendment rights violated in the process, the Daily Beast reports.

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Burton appeared in Youngstown, Ohio municipal court in front of Judge Robert Milich in order to represent a client. That Friday, she also chose to make a statement by wearing a pin that said “Black Lives Matter,” which is the name of a growing social movement that spotlights police brutality against black Americans. Milich ordered her to remove her pin, but she refused and was charged with contempt of court.

Burton is expected to appeal the charge.

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Andrea Burton was removed from court last Friday. Photo courtesy of New York Daily News. [/caption]

Milich told The Daily Beast that a Supreme Court ruling allows him to ban political symbols in the courtroom. However, the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio said that the judge had overreached, possibly violating her right to free speech.

Mike Brickner of the Ohio ACLU said that it was typical for judges to have tight control of their environment, and this includes the way a person dresses because clothing could affect the outcome of a trial. An example Brickner provided was if family

members wore clothing with the victims' face on it. But he said that non-disruptive clothing has been protected. For instance, a judge once asked a prosecutor to remove an American flag pin, and he refused. Eventually, they litigated the situation and found the prosecutor was allowed to wear the pin.

Brickner said that Black Lives Matter is not a political statement but a "statement that black lives are important and recognizing that black people are historically and systematically discriminated against in the United States."

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Milich disagreed that Black Lives Matter is not a political statement. He told WMFJ, "There's a difference between a flag, a pin from your church or the Eagles and having a pin that's on a political issue."

Do you think Burton should or shouldn't have been allowed to wear a Black Lives Matter pin in court? Let us know in the comments below.

Source: The Daily Beast