



Georgia High School Seeks to Prohibit Student Protest Against Teacher's First Amendment Violations

A teacher at River Ridge High School in Woodstock, Georgia, is accused of violating students' First Amendment rights on September 2 when she asked them to remove their pro-Trump t-shirts. Now the school is threatening to prohibit a protest planned for September 27 to show opposition to that teacher's actions.



River Ridge
High School

The students captured a video of their RRHS teacher, Lyn Orletsky, demanding two students who were wearing "Make America Great Again" t-shirts to turn them inside out, comparing the pro-Trump logo to a swastika. "You cannot wear a swastika to school.... You cannot wear 'Make America Great Again' like that," the teacher insisted. "Please go, at least for this class. I don't care what you do in other classes."

Another student present in the classroom during the incident and clearly perturbed by what he was witnessing, asked the teacher to clarify her position. "Wait, so both of them have to like flip their shirts inside out because it says Trump on the top?" a person in class asked the student in the video, which was reportedly recorded Thursday.

The teacher attempted to claim that her issue was not with the fact that the shirt said the word "Trump" on it, but specifically the "Make America Great Again" slogan. "Because it says 'Make America Great Again,'" the teacher replied. "The Neo-Nazis.... I'm not saying about Trump, but the slogan."

Following the incident, the Cherokee County School District placed Orletsky on leave for her actions.

When this incident came to the attention of State Senator Michael Williams, a Republican candidate for governor of Georgia, he called on students and parents at the school to stage a protest, which his campaign helped organize. Williams stated that the teacher acted in violation of the students' First Amendment rights and should be fired for her behavior.

There remains some confusion over whether Orletsky has in fact been terminated for her actions. A letter obtained by *Turning Point News* seems to indicate that she was. "The purpose of this correspondence is to provide you with an update on your child's math class," the letter signed by school principal Darrell Herring reads. "Ms. Orletsky no longer is your child's math teacher, effective immediately."

However, according to Williams, school officials have not been entirely truthful in this regard. "The school attempted to deceive the people of Georgia," Williams stated, "with claims the teacher had been 'removed' from the classroom. I've now learned she is simply being moved to a new classroom of



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children to discriminate against. She must be fired and immediately. No other resolution is acceptable. Had this been about Hillary, ANTIFA would have already burned the school down.”

According to Williams, until the school officially announces that Orletsky has been terminated from her position at River Ridge High School, the protest, planned for September 27, will take place as scheduled; however, the school is now threatening to bring in police to stop the protest, the *Daily Caller* reports.

School spokeswoman Barbara Jacoby asserted, “School police officers and other public safety personnel will be monitoring the driveway entrances and elsewhere on campus to ensure students and employees stay safe and secure; and the campus will be on Code Yellow all day.”

Throughout the school day, access to the campus will be restricted to just River Ridge students and their families and employees.

Williams contends that the school is infringing on its students’ rights to a peaceful protest under the guise of safety concerns “just five days after Cherokee County Chief Marshal Ron Hunton told the *Cherokee Tribune* that our protest was lawful.”

“The school claims to have pre-determined that our peaceful protest ‘will significantly disrupt teaching and learning and may endanger the safety of more than 3,200 students and staff,’” Williams said in a statement provided to The Daily Caller News Foundation. “The arrogance of such statements is insulting to myself and our peaceful protestors. We will not be intimidated by your deceitful statement meant to prevent our lawful right to assemble. The protest will continue as planned. Once again, this school has failed to properly handle simple situations.”

The incident at River Ridge High School is sadly not the first of its kind. At Wall High School in central New Jersey, teacher Susan Parsons was suspended (with pay) after censoring a photo that was to appear in the school’s yearbook because the student was wearing a pro-Trump “Make America Great Again” shirt. The photo that appeared in the yearbook was edited so that the logo was no longer there and the shirt appeared to be plain black.

That was not the only time a pro-Trump reference was edited out, the *Washington Post* reports. Another student, Wyatt Dobrovich-Fago, had worn a vest with a Trump campaign logo for his yearbook picture, which also appeared to be cropped out, and Dobrovich-Fago’s sister was also missing a Trump quote that was meant to appear beneath her photo.

Wall High School announced it would reissue the yearbooks to include the unedited photos of the students.

Wall Township School Superintendent Cheryl Dyer wrote in a letter to parents that the school district “does not condone any censorship of political views on the part of our students.”



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