

Experts unlike ruling in Facebook speech case

May 4 2012, By BROCK VERGAKIS , Associated Press

(AP) -- The "like" button on Facebook seems like a relatively clear way to express your support for something, but a federal judge says that doesn't mean clicking it is constitutionally protected speech.

Exactly what a "like" means - if anything - played a part in a case in Virginia involving six people who say Hampton Sheriff B.J. Roberts fired them for supporting an opponent in his 2009 re-election bid, which he won. The workers sued, saying their First Amendment rights were violated.

One of those workers, Daniel Ray Carter, had "liked" the [Facebook](#) page of Roberts' opponent, Jim Adams.

While public employees are allowed to speak as citizens on matters of public concern, U.S. District Judge Raymond Jackson ruled that clicking the "like" button does not amount to expressive speech.

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