IND: Ethical Dilemma Paper

Name

Affiliation

Date

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According to the case study targeting tattoo, being the police chief of a medium-sized city, I have informed about an issue with an officer. The officer, named Newton, has recently got tattoos on his arms, which become visible in the summer uniform of the police force. One tattoo is that of a swastika, and the other one is of a naked woman. The tattoos are causing great outrage among the fellow officers, who are refusing to respond to the call of service in which they would have to partner with Newton. Upon being called for an explanation and resolution of matter, Newton remarks that the first and fourth amendments of the constitution of the United States of America have given him the right of freedom of expression, and there is no specific policy in the police force regarding getting the tattoos as well, so there is restriction on him. The case scenario has given rise to the ethical dilemma that there is no restriction on getting the tattoos, and it is making the police officers uncomfortable as well.

According to my point of view, Newton is not a problem employee; however, the situation has turned out to be problematic. Newton is just practicing his freedom of expressions, to which he has the authority and rights as well, according to his remarks. However, the situation is problematic in the way that the police officers are expected to have a certain code of conduct and appearance as well, which is being affected due to the tattoos of Newton. They not only highlight the thinking and ideology of Newton but also have the potential of harassing the people who interact with him, even if he does not say a single word or take a slight action. The police officers have to deal with the victims, as well as the suspects or criminals and the tattoos of Newton also have the tendency of harassing the victims or not letting them trust him as police officers which makes the situation even more problematic (McMullen, & Gibbs, 2018).

Although there is no written or approved a policy regarding not getting the tattoos in the police force, there is a general rule that the police officers or even the military officials have to follow. They have to keep their appearance neat and clean, which means that they cannot have long hair or another fashion style that conflicts with their neat appearance. Getting the tattoos is also one of the scenarios which can conflict with the neat appearance of the police officials. There is no restriction on getting a tattoo over that part of the body which would be covered under the uniform. At the time of being selected in the police force or military, the candidates are thoroughly examined to check that aspect and exclude the people whose appearance conflict with the standard code of conduct or appearance (Lande, Bahroo, & Soumoff, 2013). In the case of Newton, he did not have any tattoo at the time he was recruited to the police force, and he has got it recently. Moreover, the tattoos depict the personal ideology of Newton which cannot only conflict with the thoughts and ideology of people working with him but can also threaten their existence (Oliver, 2016).

Being the chief of police, I can take action in response to the complaint on the grounds that police officers are expected to not go against the code of appearance. The tattoos of Newton specifically depict swastika and a naked woman, which are the tattoos not generally accepted in the society and are in conflict with the role and responsibility of Newton. Being the police chief, I do have the right to reasonably regulate the appearance of employees and require a professional appearance. It is specifically important for the police officers because they have to deal with the sensitive conditions and tattoos like newton's can cause a great threat to the resolution of matter (Wood, 2017). The scenario becomes clear by the example that if Newton responds to the call of a young girl who is facing the threat of rape. The young girl would never feel safe to explain the scenario to Newton if his tattoo of a naked woman would be visible and can become the victim of greater danger trying to escape from him.

The disciplinary action that I can take against Newton is to ask him to get his tattoos removed or cover them, in every kind of situation. Moreover, he can also be fined to go against the general code of appearance. In the case of implementing the policy against such tattoos, the rule does not impermissibly discriminate against Newton due to the reason that any other officer would have received some kind of warning and actions for getting the tattoos. The major purpose of the police force is to ensure the security and safety of the society, and there would be nothing left for them to protect if they cause a threat to society due to their own actions or ideology. The potential issue or ramification which should be considered while taking disciplinary action is the constitutional right of freedom of expression. However, in the case of police officers, they are expected to follow the law and serve the people, and utilize their freedom of expression in their personal life and not while being in their uniform (Simpson, 2018). There is no particular U.S. Supreme Court decision, which can be used to advantage in response to this matter.

Targeting tattoo is a sensitive matter in the case of police officers. They have to deal with the victims, suspects, and criminals, so they are expected to have the appearance of a positive figure. The society still holds a stigmatized view about tattoos and the tattoos of Newton cause an uncomfortable feeling to other people, due to which he can be charged with the policy of hiding or removing his tattoos.

References

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