



Notice: Constitutional Violation

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Mon, Jun 6, 2016 at 3:12 PM

To: JFarrow@chp.ca.gov, PFontana@chp.ca.gov

Dear Commissioner Farrow and Chief Fontana,

This office has been alerted to activities of California Highway Patrol (CHP) personnel that give rise to serious concerns of constitutional violations relating to the separation of church and state. Specifically, I refer you to a video posted on the CHP Facebook page on May 27 (and elsewhere as well) showing two uniformed CHP officers leading a group of individuals in prayer. A screenshot of the video is attached. This type of activity--and the agency's promotion of it via its social media page--is inappropriate and should be prohibited in the future.

Although all the details of the transaction in question are not clear from the video and the social media postings, it appears that the officers in question may have been involved in some sort of charity work at the time. Few would object to charity, of course, but the officers' engagement in proselytizing and leading prayer, while in uniform with a CHP vehicle idling nearby, is unconstitutional activity for public officials.

Please allow this to serve as notice that numerous California citizens and taxpayers object to such activity. We expect that necessary steps will be taken to stop it from occurring in the future. Department personnel should be instructed to refrain from such proselytizing and leading religious activity while on the job. The reasons for this are hopefully obvious without our relaying a legal memorandum to you, but if you have questions or wish to discuss it further we invite you to contact us.

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