

Boston firehouse case analysis essay example

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



The racial divide in the fire department has presented discrimination issues and has resulted to some of the minority groups' firefighters missing opportunities for career growth. According to the case study, most minority firefighters will decline opportunities or seniority rights that may advance their careers simply because they may not feel welcome (City Firehouses 4). Secondly, another important fact to note is that most of the diversity gains that have resulted from the US Court decree that has lasted for over 30 years are beginning to disappear. This has been attributed to the court decision to end the consent decree where for every new white firefighter hired a nonwhite firefighter was to be hired. Seven years after this decision, most of the firefighters hired are white. The only thing that makes the numbers of minorities not to drop drastically is because most of the retirees since 2003 are white. However, effects of ending the decree will be felt when most of the minority firefighters hired in the 1970's being to retire (City Firehouses 3). Thirdly, another important fact to note is the self-imposed solutions that the minority groups have adopted (City Firehouses 1). This becomes critical especially since people cannot be forced to work where they do not feel comfortable. This form of a solution only compounds the problem of racial divide.

Problems are quite evident from the case. The ending of the consent decree has resulted to hiring of more whites than minorities. According to City Firehouses (1), almost 90 percent of the firefighters hired after the ending of the consent have been white. Furthermore, most of the high-ranking ranking officers are white. Secondly, hiring of new firefighters has been favoring retired veterans who mostly are white. Thirdly, another problem is the issue

of allowing new firefighters with relatives in the department to select their assignments (City Firehouses 2). Information provided by the Globe indicates that most of the new firefighters usually have relatives in the fire department.

Change is needed in the firehouse department. Figures such as only three high-ranking officers out of a possible 72 are non-white are extremely alarming. This indicates that most minority groups have limited access to opportunities. Additionally, the busiest fire stations normally comprise of a high percentage of white firefighters. The population of women firefighters is also low. The fire department has failed to take advantage of exemptions in the civil service laws that allow hiring of women for gender reasons or minority applicants that are bilingual (City Firehouses 3).

I would apply some of the interventions such as the diversity training. However, to ensure that the racial divide reduces, I would develop new ways of evaluating performance. Thus, firefighters would not be promoted based on passing their civil service exams rather they would be evaluated and promoted based on their performance.

The social identity theory is one tool that can be used to recognize the issue of racial divide (Barak 11). Since individuals will tend to associate in groups where they feel comfortable, further training of outstanding minority firefighters and promoting them may aid in reducing the fear that most of the minority fire fighters have about fighting and developing their skills to attain seniority. Additionally, incorporation of social creativity into the fire departments mission and vision may assist in changing the negative aspect about minorities.

Works Cited

“ City Firehouses Still Stuck in Racial Divide”. PDF file.

Barak, Michalle. “ Diversity Management: Toward a Globally Inclusive Workplace.” 2011.

Microsoft PowerPoint file.