

## Home Depot worker wears 'under God' button more than year, then gets fired

By By BRYAN GARNER WPTV Newschannel 5

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OKEECHOBEE — Trevor Keezer didn't start working at The Home Depot to make a religious statement. He just wanted to earn money for college.

"I want to go to school to become a nurse," said the 20-year-old Okeechobee resident.

Keezer says for 19 months, ever since he started working as a cashier at The Home Depot in Okeechobee, he's worn a button with an American flag on it that reads: "One nation under God, indivisible."

Keezer sees the quotation, taken from the pledge of allegiance, as his way of supporting American troops at war, and of expressing his Christian faith.

In December, his older brother Army Spc. Steven Keezer Jr., is scheduled to deploy to Iraq for his second tour of duty.

For more than a year, Keezer says none of his managers mentioned the button on his Home Depot apron, except one supervisor who commented she liked it.

"She actually wanted to wear it," Keezer said.

Then, last month, when he started bringing his Bible to work, Keezer says his manager confronted him about the button.

"That's when I was told it had to come off, or I would be sent home. So they sent me home for six straight days without pay. And then today they terminated me," he said.

Craig Fishel, a spokesman for The Home Depot, said he could not comment on specific personnel issues, but added, "The company's dress code policy states that we do not allow noncompany buttons, regardless of their message or content."

Fishel says Home Depot has a "proud history" of supporting the military, and that it sanctions several of its own buttons for employees to wear, including one that reads: "United We Stand."

Keezer said he preferred to wear his button because “you can’t have country without God. Every pin they showed me had no ‘God’ on it or anything.”

Fishel says the company gives employees several warnings when they violate the dress policy before terminating them.

But Keezer says, “It never crossed my mind to take off the button because I’m standing for something that’s bigger than I am. They kept telling me the severity of what you’re doing and I just let God be in control and went with His plan.”

Keezer says he was a model employee at Home Depot and he liked his job.

“I was cashier of the month and I’ve won six ‘Homer’ awards — that’s the highest award you can get at Home Depot.”

Keezer has the support of his family. “I’m so proud of him,” said his mother, Francine.

Local business owners are rallying to his cause, too.

Jim McCoin, owner of Cowboy’s Barbecue and Steak Co., said, “Amen. I am proud of him. If you can’t stand for what you believe in, then why be there.”

McCoin says he’d like to order some of the “One nation under God” buttons for the employees of his two local restaurants.

As for Keezer, he says he didn’t set out to make a religious statement, but now that he has, he believes he’s done the right thing.

“I want to be a voice for the rest of the Christians and for the citizens of this country to stand up for the country. You know, quit being told to sit down. Say what you want to say and don’t be afraid of the consequences,” he said.



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