

Workplace Bullying Laws on the Horizon?

News

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Philadelphia Partners Lori Armstrong Halber and Rick Grimaldi were quoted in the *SHRM Online* article "[Workplace Bullying Laws on the Horizon?](#)"

The article reported that 25 states have introduced workplace bullying legislation since 2002. The proposed laws would allow workers to sue for harassment without requiring a showing of discrimination.

Critics contend that these laws would encourage frivolous lawsuits. Lori said that workplace bullying may lead to the boldest proposed change in U.S. employment law since the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. But how do you define bullying?

She noted: "In an effort to avoid litigation, employers would be mediating all sorts of employee interactions. They'd be hearing things like 'He was mean to me,' and 'She doesn't like me.'"

The question raised is whether or not they can they protect workers from bullying while not opening up employers to scores of meritless claims or imposing a civility code on the workplace. Rick explained that what we're talking about is legislating civility.

"Other employment laws were designed to provide equal opportunity to classes of people who historically were not afforded those opportunities. In that respect, legislating civility would appear to be a new employment law phenomenon."

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