What Employers Need to Know About Union-Organizing Apps

News
10.09.15

Jeff Weintraub was interviewed by the *Memphis Business Journal* on October 9, 2015. In the interview, Jeff provided a legal prospective of what steps employers should take to prepare for the proposed mobile app for unions.

Memphis Business Journal: What is the impact a mobile app for unions would have on employers if implemented?
Jeff Weintraub: Employees have the right to have discussions among themselves about unionizing, of course — a mobile app simply makes it easier to do so. I see the potential app as another tool in a union's arsenal when it targets an employer.

Would a mobile app increase the number of workers in unions?
I don't think the app per se would increase the rolls of union workers. Union representation of workers in the private sector is down to 6 percent by some estimates. However, the recent changes from the National Labor Relations Board in election rules has led to a significant increase in the filing of organizing petitions at the Board. The app would seem to be a perfect fit with these new "ambush election" rules.

How far out do you think this technology is from being used in the workplace?
There's no technological reason I know of that would prevent such an app from being available to unions very soon.

People in unions make the argument that they need a better tool to communicate. Why is communication currently a problem?
I've heard some union officials say that — it is a disingenuous statement. Communicating about unions or other topics is definitely not a problem for employees today.

Would a mobile app simplify the process for unions in terms of organizing and voicing concerns?
I don't think the app would necessarily simplify the process of employees expressing their concerns. Employees already know how to say what's on their minds.

Is the Century Foundation the only entity really pushing the app, or is a larger group of support mounting?
I've heard about others creating such an app. I don't believe there's really a serious technological challenge.

Bottom line, what would a union app mean for employers?
The app is yet one more tool for unions in their organizing efforts, and employers should take all such organizing efforts seriously.

Anything to add?
Employers will want to be aware of new union-organizing tools, like this possible app. But the real bottom line is that employers who wish to avoid unionization should be taking steps now to discover and address any problems in their workforces. When we're assisting an employer in a union election, we want to find out as quickly as possible where the problems are — but, frankly, it is much more important to figure out what the problems are long before the union comes calling. Put simply, employers should never take their employees for granted.

To read the full article, please visit the _Memphis Business Journal_.

Please reach out to our Media team for any news inquiries.

Related People

Jeff Weintraub
Senior Counsel
901.526.0431
Email