



# Why Discussing Politics in the Workplace is Just, Well, Bad Politics

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The start of the 2010 election cycle has brought a new fervor to regional and national politics. Discussions on these issues are becoming more frequent, volatile, and tensions resulting from these discussions are increasingly adversely affecting the workplace environment. Addressing the current political climate, it's vital for employers to be aware of the divide between expression and harassment in the workplace.

The increased frustration in our state and national elected officials and emotion behind many of the issues up for vote makes this election particularly sensitive in the workplace. This creates a highly-charged environment, in which discussions that may be mistaken for free speech under the First Amendment can actually open up a Pandora's box of legal concerns. It's important to consider the potential legal repercussions of political discussion at work, and guidelines for employers. Below are some "do's and don'ts":

- DO Evaluate Motives of Discussions
- DO Remain Neutral and Comply with State Laws regarding Voting Time
- DO Ensure Policies are Objectively Developed and Enforced
- DO Monitor Political Discussion
- DON'T Push Political Agendas
- DON'T Criticize, Joke or Jab
- DON'T Solicit Funds
- DON'T Gloat

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