

Office politics: Skip the Bumpersticker?

Publication

10.29.10

With this year's election season being particularly heated and the temperature still rising, both employers and employees should be cautious about politics on the job. The First Amendment generally won't help those whose political passions boil over at work and an employer can generally limit employees' political speech in the workplace.

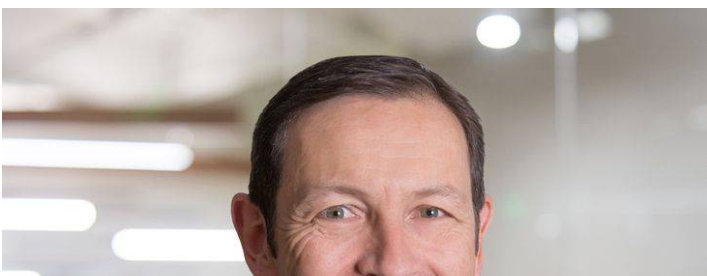
While an employer cannot discriminate against you because you're affiliated with a particular political party, remember that if you're focusing on politics to the detriment of your job, you may be open to performance-related dismissal. Too much time spent volunteering, canvassing and attending political events may be detrimental to job performance.

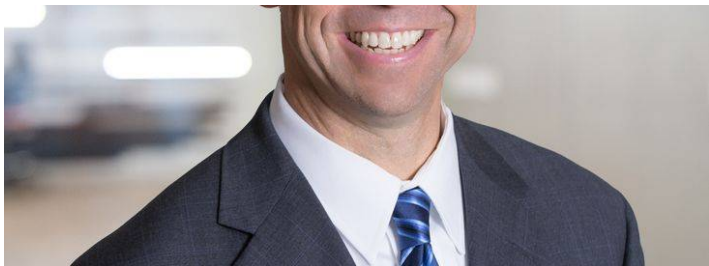
Employers, too, should be cognizant of the fine line between expression and harassment in the workplace. When it comes to political expression at work employers should be mindful of the following:

- Monitor political discussions at work
- Ensure that policies regarding politics in the workplace are objectively developed and enforced.
- Remain neutral and comply with state laws regarding voting time.
- Avoid pushing partisan political agendas.
- Do not solicit funds on behalf of outside political interests and don't allow employees to do so.
- Employers should avoid inappropriate jokes, jabs or comments about political affiliations - even if made in jest.

This article appeared in the October 29, 2010 issue of [ColoradoBiz Magazine](#).

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