



# Trump, Clinton Talk Workplace Law At First Debate

Insights

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The topic of labor and employment law made an early appearance at last night's presidential debate between Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton and Republican candidate Donald Trump. Although typically not a needle-moving topic garnering much by the way of mainstream attention, the two nominees were able to spend some time discussing their positions on subjects that could directly impact the workplace during their first head-to-head encounter.

## Opening Question Leads To Workplace Law Discussion

In fact, workplace law played center stage in the very first answer provided by a candidate when Clinton answered the evening's initial question. Moderator Lester Holt asked Clinton why she believes she is the better choice over her opponent to create the kinds of jobs that will put more money into the pockets of American workers. Clinton's answer quickly veered towards making the "economy fairer," and to do so, Clinton advocated for "raising the **national minimum wage** and also guarantee[ing], finally, **equal pay** for women's work."

Clinton also supported the concept of increasing the number of companies that employ a **profit-sharing** system for their workers. "If you help create the profits," she said, "you should be able to share in them, not just the executives at the top."

Finally, Clinton concluded her answer by backing a proposal that would introduce **paid family leave** and **earned sick days** for American workers. She suggested that these steps could be financed by closing corporate tax loopholes and "having the wealthy pay their fair share."

None of these proposals should come as a surprise, as the candidate herself has frequently indicated support for them. They are [listed on Clinton's website](#) and in the [Democratic party's national platform](#) adopted at this summer's convention.

## Trump Indicates Support For Many Similar Programs

The moderator then asked Trump the same question – why he is a better choice for putting money into the pockets of American workers – and he spent the majority of his time discussing how our country was losing jobs to Mexico and China and the various ways he would attempt to remedy the situation. With regard to workplace laws, however, Trump stated that he was generally in agreement with respect to Clinton's position. Specifically, on the topic of **child care** and similar proposals, he said "I think Hillary and I agree on that. We probably disagree a little bit as to numbers and amounts and what we're going to do. but perhaps we'll be talking about that later."

Unfortunately, the debate did not circle around again to discuss these topics with any further specificity. However, with several presidential debates remaining on the schedule, and six weeks remaining in the campaign before Election Day, there is ample time for these positions to be fleshed out in more detail.

### **Federal Regulations Also Discussed At The Debate**

Trump may have been referencing workplace laws at a point not much later in the debate when the two candidates were discussing their competing visions for the nation's economy. Responding to Clinton's charge that his economic plan would lead to another recession, Trump contended that Clinton's plan would "drive business out" because her **proposed regulations** "are a disaster."

He stated his belief that Clinton would "regulate these businesses out of existence," and indicated that business owners and corporate executives were most pleased with his plan to cut regulations. Although workplace law was not specifically mentioned during this exchange, the Republican national platform proposes that major new regulations should be approved by Congress before they take effect, which could impact many workplace issues.

Clinton disputed Trump's charge and said that her proposal would "cut regulations and streamline them for small businesses." Unfortunately, again, neither candidate had time to expand upon these concepts because of the limited time afforded at the debate. The discussion then shifted to tax proposals, and did not return to workplace law during the remaining time.

### **Full Overview Of Candidates' Positions**

If you are interested in reviewing a summary of each candidate's position on labor and employment matters, you can review our September newsletter article: "[President Trump? President Clinton? A Workplace Law Preview](#)." It provides a point-by-point discussion of each of their stated positions on dozens of topics important to employers across the country.

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