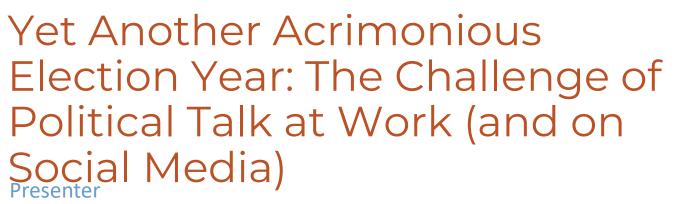


Ogletree Employers and Lawyers, Deakins Working Together



Erika L. Leonard (Ogletree Deakins, Austin)

Why Is This Topic So Important?

- ▶ People don't just talk any more.
 - ▶They friend, post, blog, comment, like, etc.
 - ▶They chat, slack, IM, DM ...
 - Privately, ... and at work.
- ▶ And they have opinions. A lot of opinions.
- All of these communications have practical and legal implications for our workplaces.

Why Is This Topic So Important?

- ➤ Whether "real" or not, we *perceive* our society, communities, and workplaces are more polarized than ever.
 - ▶ Race, color, national origin, and ancestry
 - ▶ Gender, gender identity, and expression
 - ▶ Religion
 - Socioeconomics
 - ▶ Politics and political issues
 - ▶ Personal belief systems

Why Is This Topic So Important?

- ➤ Polarization (real or perceived) has workplace consequences.
 - ► Operational challenges, including safety
 - Results in policy violations and legal exposure
 - Antithesis of respectful, collaborative, and engaged workforce most companies trying to create and support

What's an Employer to Do?

- ► The laws that apply
- ► Employer policies
- ▶ Other, non-legal considerations
 - ► Employee morale
 - ► Corporate culture
 - ▶ Public perception/relations
- ► Special considerations of lawyers' speech

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"Free speech"

- ▶ U.S. Constitution, First Amendment:
 - ► Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.





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Title search: Yet Another Acrimonious Election Year: The Challenge of Political Talk at Work (and On Social Media)

Also available as part of the eCourse Hooked on CLE: October 2024

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