

# Keeping the Workplace Cool When Politics Heat Up

Publication

10.04.12

As we draw closer to Election Day, candidates for office – and their supporters – are ready to ratchet up the intensity of their campaigns and messages. Employers can be sure that this fever pitch will find its way into the workplace and need to be prepared to keep simple political discussions from turning into uncivil – or illegal – harassment.

The problem for employers is that discussions of politics frequently deal with more than just job creation, the role of government, or tax policy. Instead, these broader issues usually touch on sensitive undercurrents. For example, discussions about immigration policy may spark debates about national origin while social issues such as abortion or marriage necessarily involve issues related to gender and sexuality. In fact, a simple conversation about the presidential candidates themselves can easily turn into a debate about race and religion.

It is not practical to try and eliminate all political discussions in the workplace. So, in order to keep things from getting too heated around the water cooler during election season employers should consider the following:

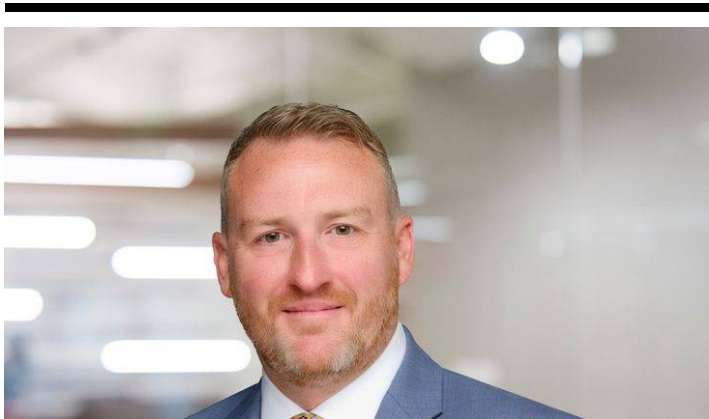
## Comply With Policies and Laws

## Remain Neutral

## Avoid Criticism or Jokes

The article appeared on October 4, 2012 in [Midlandsbiz](#).

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