

A photograph of a modern conference room. In the foreground, a large, thick wooden conference table is visible, with several black leather chairs arranged around it. The room has large windows in the background, letting in natural light. The ceiling is white with recessed lighting. A dark gray semi-transparent banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title and author information.

Should Your Business Have a Political Expression Policy?

Prepared by:
Grayson Kemper
Clutch

INTRODUCING

Lorman's New Approach to Continuing Education

ALL-ACCESS PASS

The All-Access Pass grants you **UNLIMITED** access to Lorman's ever-growing library of training resources:

- ✓ **Unlimited Live Webinars** - 110+ live webinars added every month
- ✓ **Unlimited OnDemand and MP3 Downloads** - Over 3,500 courses available
- ✓ **Videos** - More than 1,800 available
- ✓ **Slide Decks** - More than 2,800 available
- ✓ **White Papers** - More than 1,800 available
- ✓ **Reports**
- ✓ **Articles**
- ✓ **... and much more!**

Join the thousands of other pass-holders that have already trusted us for their professional development by choosing the All-Access Pass.



Get Your All-Access Pass Today!

SAVE 20%

Learn more: www.lorman.com/pass/?s=special20

Use Discount Code Q7014393 and Priority Code 18536 to receive the 20% AAP discount.

*Discount cannot be combined with any other discounts.

Should Your Business Have a Political Expression Policy?

Divisive politics are increasingly felt in the modern workplace.

To create boundaries about the topics of conversation that are acceptable in the workplace, companies should consider a political expression policy.

Political expression policies help to protect employers from legal action and cultivate a productive work environment. These policies also create a framework for training and disciplinary action, if needed.

Though these policies help support a company's HR and legal operations, [more than a third of employees disagree](#) that their company should have a policy, according to Clutch.

The contrast between employee preferences and company benefit creates a challenging position for businesses to be in: If employees become upset or distracted by a political conversation, it can erode company culture and damage the bottom line.

This article explores how to approach a political expression policy at your company and the factors that influence how employees react to these guidelines.

Most Employees Don't Feel Political Discomfort at Work

Political discussion can create tension, hostility, and distraction in the workplace.

Surprisingly, though, 54% of employees say they've not felt uncomfortable due to political expressions in the workplace in the past week.

In fact, less than 1 in 10 employees report feeling uncomfortable due to a political conversation at work in the last week, according to Clutch's survey.

This suggests that political conversation may not contribute to a hostile or disruptive workplace.

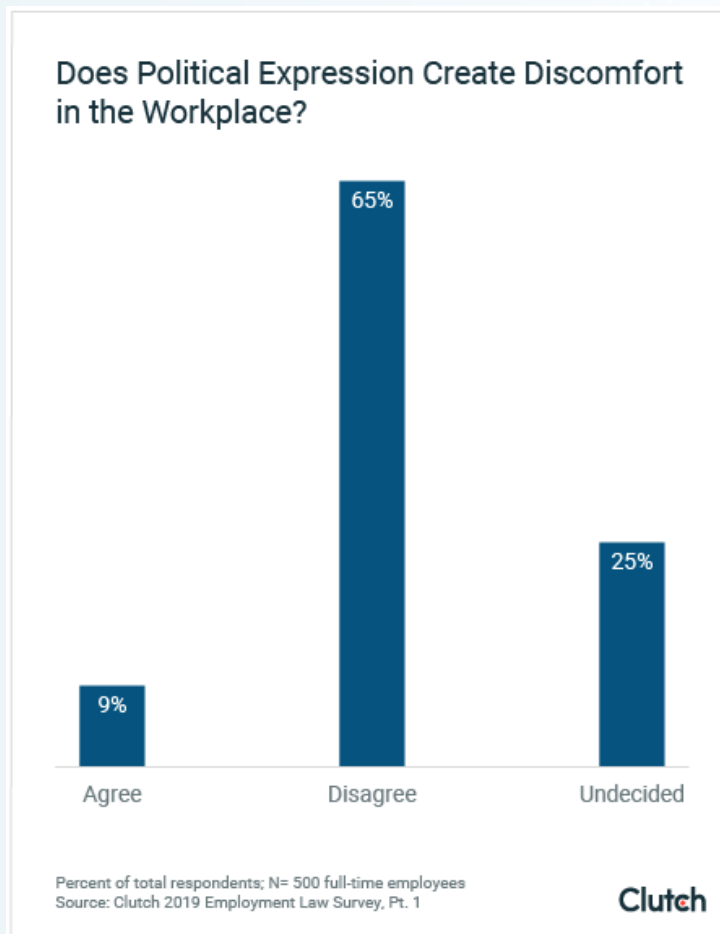
Regardless, HR experts recommend creating political expression guidelines for employees to follow.

Whether your approach is conversational or formalized in the employee handbook, addressing these issues shows employees that leadership cares about their wellbeing.

Policies Must Respect Freedom of Expression

Employees are divided on whether to regulate speech in the workplace. This means that implementing a political expression policy can be a contentious move.

The lack of consensus among employees may explain why only 41% of companies have a political expression policy in place.



Ideally, a policy should outline how to discuss politics in a way that protects employees without offending those who value freedom of expression..

In some cases, though, HR professionals should consider more stringent policies for their company. These include:

- If employees have previously expressed concern about political conversations
- If your company is large and cannot effectively or efficiently manage its HR requirements without a formalized policy
- Times of political intensity such as an election

As politics in the U.S. polarize, it may be in a company's best interest to have a formal policy in place.

Political Expression Policies Serve as a Legal Protection

Political expression policies help to protect companies from legal recourse in 2 ways:

1. Outline how your company complies with relevant labor and employment laws. These laws, for example, dictate conversations that employers must allow at work, such as discussions about labor conditions.
2. Provide reference to handle complaints about political discomfort or discrimination.

The second point is particularly important since only 4% of employees say that they've considered approaching management about political discussion at work in the last year. This suggests that employees don't trust leadership to resolve their political concerns, and may use legal action instead.

While a political expression policy helps to mitigate legal risk, it can be impractical to enforce, especially for larger companies. For example, your policy can state that you may monitor employees' social media accounts, but doing so is rarely timely or effective.

It's also critical to check that a political expression policy is legal before it's implemented.

For example, public sector employees are afforded clear protections for free speech, but these regulations aren't so well defined for private sector employees.

To avoid issues with compliance and discrimination, [consult with legal counsel](#) as you develop your political expression policy.

Your Business Should Create a Political Expression Policy

Unregulated political expression in the workplace can lead to discord and discomfort among employees.

A political expression policy helps to create guidelines for correct behavior that minimize hostilities and ensures that employees feel safe at work.

It's incumbent upon companies to ensure that their policies are compliant with labor and employment laws, as well as attuned to their work culture.

Grayson Kemper is a Senior Content Developer at Clutch and [The Manifest](#), the leading resources for B2B research and reviews.

The material appearing in this website is for informational purposes only and is not legal advice. Transmission of this information is not intended to create, and receipt does not constitute, an attorney-client relationship. The information provided herein is intended only as general information which may or may not reflect the most current developments. Although these materials may be prepared by professionals, they should not be used as a substitute for professional services. If legal or other professional advice is required, the services of a professional should be sought.

The opinions or viewpoints expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of Lorman Education Services. All materials and content were prepared by persons and/or entities other than Lorman Education Services, and said other persons and/or entities are solely responsible for their content.

Any links to other websites are not intended to be referrals or endorsements of these sites. The links provided are maintained by the respective organizations, and they are solely responsible for the content of their own sites.