



WORDS ON WISE MANAGEMENT

What the Trump administration means for the labor and HR world

by Jerry Glass
F&H Solutions Group

As HR and employee relations professionals, we all want a better understanding of how President Donald Trump views American workers. When it comes to worker issues, we have seen two sides of the new president.

Stance on employment issues

Prolabor. The public perception is that Trump is prolabor, largely as a result of the highly publicized announcement in 2016 that he helped save 800 jobs at Carrier Corporation in Indianapolis. In addition, he has staked out antitrade positions on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), again favoring more jobs in the United States, which is decidedly prolabor. However, the repeal of NAFTA and termination of the TPP could also create a backlash if foreign countries decide not to buy American products and services. That would be bad for U.S. jobs.

Probusiness. On the flip side, Trump is unabashedly probusiness and antiregulation. He has said that he wants to loosen federal regulations and laws that are designed to protect workers in the United States. So are his proemployee and antiemployee positions mutually exclusive, or can the president's seemingly contradictory positions coexist?

Minimum wage. The president's views on minimum wage are contradictory. He has said he wants to increase the national minimum wage to \$10 per hour, but he has also said that wages are too high.

Effect on employers

So how does all of that affect you, as an employer?

- **Keep up with the increased demand for workers.** In our increasingly technologically savvy work environment, workers must be better trained to fill new and existing jobs.
- **Protect employees no matter what happens in Congress.** While many employers feel that government regulations are hurting business, you shouldn't throw out the baby with the bathwater. Basic protections for workers should remain in place even if Congress votes to repeal some regulations. Worker safety must remain paramount

because absences due to on-the-job injuries are costly to any organization.

- **Don't rely on the federal minimum wage to guide you on starting wages.** In Arizona, you have no choice. There are certainly areas throughout the country where the cost of living is lower than in large metropolitan areas. But how realistic is it in a tightening job market to pay someone \$7.25 per hour in places where federal law governs?
- **Continue planning for the future.** Focus on the big HR issues. Make sure your workers are trained, pay your employees a competitive living wage, and ensure that your organization has a sustainable plan for employees to grow and prosper.
- **Maintain diversity and inclusion in the workplace.** Our workforce should reflect our society at large. Our population is becoming more diverse each year, and employers should embrace that change instead of being afraid of it.

Managers should pay close attention to policy decisions coming from the Trump administration on the following key issues:

- **Immigration.** Expect the new administration to be tough on work visas and enforcement of I-9s.
- **Labor relations.** Look for a scaling back of the aggressive stance the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has taken on union issues.
- **Workplace safety.** Given all that has been said about the overregulation of business, expect a cut-back in OSHA initiatives.
- **Minimum wage.** This may be the hardest issue to predict. You should expect a continued increase in the minimum wage, if not at the federal level, then at least at the state and local levels. That certainly has been the case in Arizona since 2007.
- **Cybersecurity.** Look for more attention to be focused on protecting sensitive employee information from data breaches.



The next four years will be very different. HR and employee relations professionals need to pay close attention to what is ahead.

Jerry Glass is the president of F&H Solutions Group. He can be reached at jglass@fhsolutionsgroup.com or 202-719-2060. ❖