

Crookes Quoted in SHRM HR News Story Titled “Political Debates in the Workplace: Where to Draw the Line”

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Tom Crookes, a partner in the Vorys Akron office and a member of the labor and employment group, was quoted in a SHRM *HR News* story titled “Political Debates in the Workplace: Where to Draw the Line.” The story was about the move by some employers to ban political discussions in the workplace.

The story states:

“Most people have an opinion when it comes to politics. So should employers and HR managers keep such talk out of the workplace?”

They can’t, experts say, since attempting to ban political discussions is not only illegal, but also impossible to enforce from a practical perspective. But employers still have a responsibility to make sure workers feel comfortable at work. And it’s a delicate balance, employment lawyers say, because one person’s free speech is another person’s loud-mouthed bullying.

‘Just like Congress, we’re pretty divided in the workplace on political issues,’ said Tom Crookes, a labor and employment attorney with the Ohio-based firm Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP. ‘Where employers have to be cautious is that they’re not going to be able to squash political speech just because somebody might find it objectionable. We have to be cautious, as employers, not to do things that restrict free speech, which the [National Labor Relations Board] says is protected activity.’

The 2016 presidential campaign is likely to stimulate political chatter at work, experts say, but it doesn’t take an election to get people wound up about politics.”

To read the entire article, visit the SHRM [website](#).