

NEW YORK

New York Prohibits Coerced Employee Participation in Political or Religious Meetings

On Sept. 6, 2023, New York amended its Labor Code to prohibit employers from coercing employees into attending or participating in meetings that are sponsored by their employer and concern the employer's views on political or religious matters. The new law, also known as [Senate Bill \(SB\) 4982](#), became effective on the date it was signed into law.

Prohibited Discrimination

As of Sept. 6, 2023, state law prohibits employers and employment agencies from discriminating against individuals who refuse to participate in the following activities if the primary purpose for these activities is to communicate the employer's opinion concerning religious or political matters:

- Attend an employer-sponsored meeting with the employer (or its agents, representatives or designees); or
- Listen to speech or view communications.

In this context, discrimination includes refusing to hire, employ or license; discharging from employment; or other adverse actions that affect compensation, promotion or other terms, conditions or privileges of employment.

SB 4982 also requires employers to post a sign in every workplace to inform employees of their rights under these amendments.

Exclusions

The amendments do not apply to communications that are required by law, information employees need to perform their duties, casual conversations (cannot be required), meetings required only for managerial or supervisory employees, or religious organizations that are exempt from the requirements of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (additional conditions may apply).

Important Definitions

"Political matters" means matters relating to elections for political office, political parties, legislation, regulation and the decision to join or support any political party or political, civic, community, fraternal or labor organization.

"Religious matters" means matters relating to religious affiliation and practice and the decision to join or support any religious organization or association.

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