



Virginia Workplace Law

Your Employees Are Mad as Heck and They Are Walking. . .to the EEOC

By: Karen Elliott. *Tuesday, November 8th, 2011*

Heading to the office today, I heard a young man behind me say, "Well, I'd been there six- and-a-half years, so it was time to move on." A few steps later, I heard him add, "Well, it was time for me to get health insurance."

This random comment fell right in line with the just reported findings by Mercer's October 2011, **What's Working survey**. The survey finds that employees leave for a host of nonfinancial reasons as well, with a key factor being "how you are treated...."

When I'm leading training sessions for human resources professionals, I remind participants that in spite of the many laws they must know, if they will remember but one rule, they will usually get the law right, **quoting Maya Angelou**: "People will forget what you said, People will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." When workers believe that they have not been treated fairly they seek to strike back. Sometimes they vote quietly with their feet because of **how they feel** about their "work, co-workers, bosses and the general work environment," according to Colleen O'Neill at Mercer.

Perhaps fueled by the **Occupy Wall Street** movement, it is clear that more terminated employees are not voting so quietly. The **EEOC's charge statistics** certainly show a steady increase. And, although the year-to-date numbers are not posted, it is clear from speaking with fellow defense oriented employment lawyers, charges are up across the board. To paraphrase the famous line from the movie *Network*, workers are "**Mad as H__ _ and Not Going to Take it Anymore.**"

The tide has clearly turned since the end of the official recession. Making sure that employees understand their workplace situation is key to your company's economic health. Virginia may be an "at-will" employment state, but if employees don't feel that they have been treated fairly, your company may become part of the EEOC's new statistics.

If you need assistance with workplace decisions, **The Virginia Workplace Lawyers at Sands Anderson** would be pleased to assist you.

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