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Someone Wants Your Employee Fired: What (Not) to Do

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Violence and political discord in the 2020s have led to a marked increase in social media activity, bringing with it a new trend. Let's call it *termination trolling*—where influencers and activists amplify social media posts calling for people to get fired based on their social commentary.

This trend became a movement in 2025, after the assassination of campus crusader Charlie Kirk. One group claimed that it found more than 50,000 related social media posts that, in its opinion, should have been grounds for employment termination. Other notorious “viral” moments also proved consequential for employees—people filmed while having inappropriate or embarrassing interactions in public—on airplanes, in city parks, on jumbotrons; the list goes on.

A number of employers publicly dismissed employees (either on their own or in response to public pressure) after becoming aware of social media comments or posts. And a fair number of those soon found themselves facing lawsuits. This year, [according to some sources](#), employers have paid at least \$2 million to settle claims that arose from terminations made in response to plaintiffs' social media activity.

Given the volume of posts and the amount of pressure to get people fired based on their social media posts or other comments and behavior, employers should be prepared to manage such demands.

What to Do if You Receive a Complaint?

Employers that receive demands to fire someone on the basis of remarks or a social media post should pause and consider the following questions:

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1. Who is complaining?
 - Is the complaint from a co-worker/colleague, a customer, an organization, or an unnamed anonymous source?
 - Is the complaint being made in a public or private forum? If public, consider whether engaging directly with the complainant creates additional risk or value.
2. What is the nature of the complained-of content?
 - If it is offensive, how so?
 - Is it violent, graphic, or profane?
 - Is it counter to your (the employer's) values?
 - Is it political?
3. What is the context of the offending content?
 - Was the commentary made in person, or online?
 - If online, on which platform(s) is (or was) the content visible?
 - Was the content posted during work hours or via a work-related device?
 - Was the content re-posted? If so, by whom?
4. Did the employee tag or refer to the employer in any way? Relatedly, how senior is the employee? Are they sufficiently high up in the company so that it would be reasonable to believe that they are representing/expressing the company's position?
5. What actions have been taken by the employer in similar circumstances, if any (e.g., reprimand, training, termination)?

Also remember these important points:

An employer confronted with demands to fire someone for something they said or posted should proceed thoughtfully. While, in some cases, it may seem easiest to appease a complainant by letting a worker go—especially if the complaint has gained traction and public attention, there are circumstances in which an abruptly terminated worker will have viable claims of discrimination and/or retaliation, exposing the employer to potentially costly liability. In many cases, it would be wise to consult with legal counsel so as not to overlook the important considerations that arise from the prospect of any termination.

Be Prepared

In anticipation of a potential spike in complaints of this sort, now may be a good time to revisit handbooks and update relevant policies, including those around social media, professional conduct, discrimination and harassment, and violence. It could also be prudent to train the personnel that may find themselves in the position of handling such demands, so that they know what to do when that email or social media tag arrives.