



General Assembly

February Session, 2022

***Raised Bill No. 163***

LCO No. 1456



Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY

Introduced by:  
(JUD)

***AN ACT PROTECTING EMPLOYEE FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND CONSCIENCE.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 31-51q of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2022*):

3 [Any] (a) As used in this section:

4 (1) "Political matters" means matters relating to elections for political  
5 office, political parties, legislation, regulation and the decision to join or  
6 support any political party or political, civic, community, fraternal or  
7 labor organization;

8 (2) "Religious matters" means matters relating to religious affiliation  
9 and practice and the decision to join or support any religious  
10 organization or association; and

11 (3) "Rights guaranteed by the first amendment to the United States  
12 Constitution or section 3, 4 or 14 of article first of the Constitution of the  
13 state" includes, but is not limited to, the right of freedom of speech,

14 freedom of religion and freedom of association, and shall include the  
15 right not to be required to listen to speech.

16 (b) Except as provided in subsections (c) and (d) of this section, any  
17 employer, including the state and any instrumentality or political  
18 subdivision thereof, who subjects or threatens to subject any employee  
19 to discipline or discharge on account of (1) the exercise by such  
20 employee of rights guaranteed by the first amendment to the United  
21 States Constitution or section 3, 4 or 14 of article first of the Constitution  
22 of the state, provided such activity does not substantially or materially  
23 interfere with the employee's bona fide job performance or the working  
24 relationship between the employee and the employer, or (2) such  
25 employee's refusal to (A) attend an employer-sponsored meeting with  
26 the employer or its agent, representative or designee, the primary  
27 purpose of which is to communicate the employer's opinion concerning  
28 religious or political matters, or (B) listen to speech or view  
29 communications, the primary purpose of which is to communicate the  
30 employer's opinion concerning religious or political matters, shall be  
31 liable to such employee for damages caused by such discipline or  
32 discharge, including punitive damages, and for reasonable attorney's  
33 fees as part of the costs of any [such] action for damages. If the court  
34 determines that such action for damages was brought without  
35 substantial justification, the court may award costs and reasonable  
36 attorney's fees to the employer.

37 (c) Nothing in this section shall prohibit: (1) An employer or its agent,  
38 representative or designee from communicating to its employees any  
39 information that the employer is required by law to communicate, but  
40 only to the extent of such legal requirement; (2) an employer or its agent,  
41 representative or designee from communicating to its employees any  
42 information that is necessary for such employees to perform their job  
43 duties; (3) an institution of higher education, or any agent,  
44 representative or designee of such institution, from meeting with or  
45 participating in any communications with its employees that are part of  
46 coursework, any symposia or an academic program at such institution;  
47 (4) casual conversations between employees or between an employee

48 and an agent, representative or designee of an employer, provided  
49 participation in such conversations is not required; or (5) a requirement  
50 limited to the employer's managerial and supervisory employees.

51 (d) The provisions of this section shall not apply to a religious  
52 corporation, entity, association, educational institution or society that is  
53 exempt from the requirements of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964  
54 pursuant to 42 USC 2000e-1(a) or is exempt from sections 4a-60a, 46a-  
55 81a and 46a-81o pursuant to section 46a-81p, with respect to speech on  
56 religious matters to employees who perform work connected with the  
57 activities undertaken by such religious corporation, entity, association,  
58 educational institution or society.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2022	31-51q

**Statement of Purpose:**

To prohibit an employer from coercing any employee into attending or participating in a meeting sponsored by the employer concerning the employer's views on political or religious matters.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*