

Employee Suspended For Tweet: What We Can Learn From This Real World Example

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Earlier this week we reminded employers why it is crucial to monitor what topics of discussion are trending with your employees. Hot topics can bring out a variety of opinions. As we explained, [opinions can be controversial](#), inconsistent with company policy, and sometimes offensive.

Yesterday, we issued a [second reminder](#) after we discovered a trending Twitter hashtag that was being used to tweet inappropriate content. As predicted, we now have a real world example of an employee who broke company policy while discussing a controversial current event.

A CNN global affairs correspondent was just handed a two week suspension for a tweet criticizing a House bill to block Syrian refugees from coming into the United States. Here is the text of the tweet: "House passes bill that could limit Syrian refugees. Statue of Liberty bows head in anguish." Why did CNN find this tweet inappropriate? The news organization apparently prohibits reporters from expressing personal opinions about current events on social media. The reporter later apologized for the tweet: "Everyone, it was wrong of me to editorialize. My tweet was inappropriate and disrespectful. I sincerely apologize."

What is the takeaway?

Here we have a classic example of how controversial current events can cloud an employee's judgment. This reporter presumably was well aware of CNN's policy. Indeed, we would be shocked if the news organization did not make such an important policy abundantly clear to all of its reporters. Nevertheless, the controversial Syrian refugee crisis managed to break down this professional journalist's filter. If it could happen to this individual, you better believe it can happen to your employees.

Yes, this post will be the third reminder for employers this week. But this is an extraordinarily important issue. So we will say it again: Employers need to step up, stay on top of what's trending, and put a stop to any discussion that could reasonably be construed as inconsistent with company policy. An important reminder, though: Tread carefully when deciding whether to discipline an employee in this context. Some discussion could be protected activity. More on that in [this article](#).

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