



Virginia Workplace Law

Is Your Workplace Satisfaction Sliding?

By: Karen Elliott. *This was posted Wednesday, August 18th, 2010*

Employers across America should pay attention to the huge wave of support that Jet Blue employee [Steven Slater garnered after his slide](#) down the Jet Blue escape hatch. He quickly became a symbol around which a nation of apparently dissatisfied workers could rally. Recent statistics show that work satisfaction is the worst in two decades. It is down to 45 percent from 61.1 percent 1987.

It is against this background that House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi recently told the Communication Workers of America she hopes "[Card Check](#)" "[will be the law of the land, soon.](#)" Card Check would change the long established private ballot procedure currently in place for voting in favor of unionization. Under Card Check, upon obtaining just over half of the workforce's signatures, the workplace becomes unionized – perhaps before the employer has any idea of what is happening, and before the employer has a chance to present its [argument against such change](#).

In hard times, when the employer is having to make difficult decisions, the natural tendency may be to avoid communication with the workforce. In fact, that is the worst possible strategy – especially if Card Check or something similar is truly coming.

Constant communication with the workforce is the employer's greatest protection. When in communication, the employer will know about the free beer and food afterwork party hosted by the union. The employer will have a chance to communicate possibly before that meeting occurs, and thwart attendance. When effective access to leadership already exists, the employer will be able to persuasively and effectively argue that union representation would decrease access by inserting a union intermediary between management and the workforce.

Money and benefits are seldom the real reason employees seek unions, although this becomes a big issue during the campaign and when a union is certified. When employees seek out unions, it is usually about bad relationships, lack of respect, and perceived unfairness. If the reaction to Steven Slater is any indication, there is a lot of pent-up anger in today's workforce.

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Take a look around your workforce. Do you have employees ready to pull the escape hatch as soon as they can? If you do, you may be vulnerable, especially if Card Check is truly coming.

Our [Virginia workplace lawyers](#) can discuss these and other issues with you. For information about questions you should ask to determine your risk of unionization, please download [this file](#) or visit [our website](#). Or just comment below, if you have a concern or thought about the issues.

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