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Minnesota Legislators Introduce Anti-Workplace Bullying Law

As Megan Anderson wrote in her post [“Does Your Company Have a “Workyard” Bully?”](#), proposed anti-workplace bullying legislation is on the rise across the country. Earlier this month, the trend made its way to the Land of 10,000 Lakes, as [Minnesota became the 21st state to introduce workplace bullying legislation](#).

The legislation, introduced as [S.F. No. 1352](#), has been referred to the Minnesota Senate’s Jobs and Economic Growth Committee. A companion version, [H.F. 1701](#), was introduced in the Minnesota House of Representatives and referred to the House Commerce and Regulatory Reform Committee. [The proposed law](#) forbids both employers and employees from subjecting employees to an abusive work environment, which the law defines as conduct, including acts or omissions, that a reasonable person would find hostile, based on the severity, nature, and frequency of the conduct. Although the law provides employers with affirmative defenses in certain circumstances, the law could significantly expand employer liability for conduct in the workplace.

With Republican majorities in both the Minnesota House of Representatives and Senate, anti-workplace bullying legislation seems unlikely to pass in Minnesota in the near future. New York came close to passing anti-bullying legislation last year, however, and the passage of a law in that state could create more support for such legislation in Minnesota or other states. We will continue to monitor and provide updates on the status of this important development for Minnesota employers.