

Politics Aside, Lessons On Sex, Power & The Workplace

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When you look beyond the politics, the personalities, and the brouhaha surrounding the nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court, there are valuable lessons for employers in their ongoing efforts to quell sexual harassment. Even today, against the backdrop of #MeToo, harassment often goes unreported. Why? Even though businesses reinforce anti-harassment policies, conduct training, and regularly investigate misconduct, employees hesitate to report bad behavior. Why? The events of the last couple weeks offer some explanation. The first woman to make an accusation received death threats and suffered attacks on social media. She was compelled to move her family. For employers, this is the **first lesson**: understanding the [underlying psychology of sexual misconduct](#). The silence of potential victims stems from shame, embarrassment, fear, and the expectation that nothing will be done. Forward-thinking employers with this understanding have the edge by developing internal processes without judgment and with confidence. The **second lesson**: a good process for investigating harassment is essential. That process *respects* and *protects* those who accuse and those who are accused. Here are key principles in a good anti-harassment investigation: 1. Respect

- Treat claims seriously; don't jump to conclusions
- Respect the accuser and accused
- Respect the process

2. Confidentiality

- Protect reputations
- Protect the culture of organization

3. Proportionality

- Gather key information privately
- Be measured, but thorough

Employers and employees benefit from an environment in which complaints are taken seriously, and in which credibility and reputations are not destroyed before a proper investigation is complete. In today's never-ending news cycle, it appears politics have swamped principles. Our final lesson is that

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employers can and should do it better. Developing and maintaining a good internal process not only reflects an organization's values, but also respects and protects the people who work there.