

**RCW 49.44.250 Required religious or political meetings—Employee rights—Exceptions—Notice—Definitions.** (1) Except as provided in subsections (2) and (3) of this section, any employer, including the state and any instrumentality or political subdivision thereof, may not subject or threaten to subject any employee to discipline or discharge, or otherwise penalize or take any adverse employment action against an employee:

(a) On account of the employee's refusal to:

(i) Attend or participate in an employer-sponsored meeting with the employer or its agent, representative, or designee, the primary purpose of which is to communicate the employer's opinion concerning religious or political matters; or

(ii) Listen to speech or view communications, including electronic communications, the primary purpose of which is to communicate the employer's opinion concerning religious or political matters; or

(b) As a means of requiring an employee to attend a meeting or participate in communications described in (a) of this subsection; or

(c) Because the employee, or a person acting on behalf of the employee, makes a good faith report, orally or in writing, of a violation or a suspected violation of this section. This subsection (1)(c) does not apply if the employee knows that the report is false.

(2) This section does not:

(a) Prohibit an employer or its agent, representative, or designee from communicating to its employees any information that the employer is required by law to communicate, but only to the extent of the legal requirement;

(b) Limit the rights of an employer to offer meetings, forums, or other communications about religious or political matters for which attendance or participation is strictly voluntary;

(c) Limit the rights of an employer or its agent, representative, or designee from communicating to its employees any information, or requiring employee attendance at a meeting or other event, that is necessary for the employees to perform their lawfully required job duties; or

(d) Prohibit an employer or its agent, representative, or designee from requiring its employees to attend any training intended to reduce and prevent workplace harassment or discrimination.

(3) The provisions of this section do not apply to a religious corporation, entity, association, educational institution, or society that is exempt from the requirements of Title VII of the civil rights act of 1964 pursuant to 42 U.S.C. Sec. 2000e-1(a), with respect to speech on religious matters to employees who perform work connected with the activities undertaken by such religious corporation, entity, association, educational institution, or society.

(4) An aggrieved employee may bring a civil action in superior court to enforce this section no later than 90 days after the date of the alleged violation. The court may award a prevailing employee all appropriate relief, including injunctive relief, reinstatement to the employee's former position or an equivalent position, back pay and reestablishment of any employee benefits, including seniority, to which the employee would otherwise have been eligible if the violation had not occurred, and any other appropriate relief as considered necessary by the court.

(5) An employer subject to this section must post a notice of employee rights under this section in a place normally reserved for

employment-related notices and in a place commonly frequented by employees.

(6) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Political matters" means matters relating to elections for political office, political parties, proposals to change legislation, proposals to change regulations, and the decision to join or support any political party or political, civic, community, fraternal, or labor association or organization.

(b) "Religious matters" means matters relating to religious affiliation and practice, and the decision to join or support any religious organization or association. [2024 c 357 s 2.]

**Intent—2024 c 357:** "(1) The legislature recognizes that freedom of speech is a foundational ideal that is core to this nation's identity.

(2) The legislature intends that workers be protected from retaliation by certain employers when the worker chooses to perform their job duties instead of listening to the employer's speech on political or religious matters." [2024 c 357 s 1.]

**Short title—2024 c 357:** "This act may be known and cited as the employee free choice act." [2024 c 357 s 3.]