

# What We Know

## ARTICLES & INSIGHTS

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



[Connie Elder Carrigan](#) is a partner in the firm, with a practice concentration in Business Law. Her focus is assisting clients with issues regarding employment law, business advice and litigation, construction law, equipment leasing and creditor bankruptcy. Connie has lectured on topics ranging from employment law, bankruptcy, and equipment leasing to construction law.

## Federal Employment Agencies Announce Joint Anti-Retaliation Initiative

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As further evidence that the Biden administration is laser-focused on protecting employee rights, the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the United States Department of Labor (DOL), and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) announced on November 10, 2021, the creation of a joint initiative to raise awareness about retaliation issues when workers exercise their protected labor rights. In a press release issued by all three agencies, NLRB General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo explained that:

“[a]ll too often, workers face adverse action for speaking out about their pay, health and safety issues, discrimination, or other working conditions . . . These issues cut across multiple worker protection agencies, which is why it is so important to work collaboratively to prevent and forcefully address retaliatory acts against workers effectively.”

The initiative will include collaboration among these three agencies to protect workers’ rights and provide educational outreach and engagement with employers, business organizations, labor organizations, and civil rights groups. On November 17, 2021, the three agencies will launch the initiative with a virtual dialogue with employers about their shared commitment to vigorous enforcement of labor laws prohibiting retaliatory conduct. Details about how to participate in this virtual dialogue have not yet been published.

The initiative is designed to build upon memoranda of understanding that have previously been entered into among the three agencies for the purpose of cooperating with one another to enforce labor laws and protect workers’ rights. “Retaliation is a persistent and urgent problem in American workplaces,” said EEOC Chair Charlotte Burrows. “Charges alleging retaliation have increased as a percentage of the total number of charges filed with the EEOC every year for the last 20 years. Together, working with our interagency partners and with employers, we must tackle this urgent problem and help ensure that employers have efficient strategies for taking immediate action to stop retaliation.”

Employers should remain vigilant in oversight and enforcement of policies, procedures, and practices that serve to prohibit unlawful retaliation against workers for speaking out about the terms and conditions of their employment.

*If you have questions about this agency initiative or other employment-related issues, please contact [Connie Carrigan](mailto:ccarrigan@smithdebnamlaw.com) at [ccarrigan@smithdebnamlaw.com](mailto:ccarrigan@smithdebnamlaw.com).*

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#### CONTACT US

919.250.2000  
[mail@smithdebnamlaw.com](mailto:mail@smithdebnamlaw.com)

#### RALEIGH OFFICE

The Landmark Center  
4601 Six Forks Road, Suite 400  
Raleigh, NC 27609

Phone: 919.250.2000  
Fax: 919.250.2100

#### CHARLESTON OFFICE

171 Church Street  
Suite 120C  
Charleston, SC 29401

Phone: 843.714.2530  
Fax: 843.714.2541