

# Newsletter

## ***Letter from the President***

### **When HR Goes Wrong**

By: Melissa Lockhart, SHRM-CP, SPHR  
TAHRA 2022 President



I am a huge podcast fan and listen to them constantly while working or driving. I tend to lean towards a specific genre of podcasts (true crime), but also like to listen to any type of true story format podcast. I recently listened to one that on its surface was about an organization that willingly opened up their organization to an external audit of how they handled a sexual harassment allegation from several years back. This was a journalist organization and the risk for them was huge. Their journalistic integrity (which is everything in journalism) was at stake. The reputation of their organization was at stake. And yet, they opted to open up their entire organization's processes, employees, and decisions to an outside agency to review and critique how they handled the investigation of the allegation that they failed to act on more than a decade's worth of sexual harassment allegations against two of their leaders.

Then, not only did they investigate it, they reported on their own failings themselves in an article titled, "Sexual Harassment Went Unchecked at Christianity Today". You can check out more about this story [here](#).

So why open up their organization to that type of scrutiny? The current CEO of the organization, Timothy Dalrymple, decided that it was important to investigate and report the handling of these cases as if it were any other organization. What he soon discovered was that it wasn't just a story about "managers or department leaders who misbehaved. It was about an organization that didn't hold them accountable."

The investigation found that "two department heads sexually harassed women at the organization over a period of about 12 years. The sexual harassment ranged from unwanted touching to inappropriate comments, to men with power over women's careers saying how sexually desirable or attractive they found them, to men indicating they were hoping for an affair with someone who had less power than them in the organization.

And the organization didn't do anything to check them or discipline them. They let it happen. Things were reported to human resources, and it seems that HR wrote up reports and then sent them to the executives. At the executive level, there was essentially no policy on how to deal with this kind of sexual harassment. There were, maybe, verbal warnings. But there were no actual consequences. And there was no record of warnings, which meant that incident after incident was treated as isolated, or as an aberration. Rather than the fourth time, the fifth time, the 10th time."

All of this led me to wonder if this is what happens when HR goes wrong?

As Human Resources professionals we have a tremendous amount of responsibility on our shoulders. We have to be the policy makers and enforcers, the company recruiters and culture creators, the pseudo company lawyers and counselors, and we have to do it all with a smile. But what happens when we look at all of our responsibilities and we prioritize wrong or don't have a process in place to deal with the big stuff? We all have a set amount of time in our days and prioritization of duties is a must. So, what happens if we are too busy with the wrong priority, and we miss something big like 12 years of ongoing harassment at our organization? What is the damage that comes along with that?

I would assume many of the women who were harassed in this story probably left their jobs. Maybe they landed better, maybe they didn't. Maybe they required counseling and had a harder time trusting others (including HR) in the future. Maybe the two leaders in this story were promoted and given performance raises, because they had no record of any wrong doings. Imagine the message that sent to the women they perpetrated against.

One of the outcomes from this investigation was that this organization learned the value of being self-critical. There is a value of self-examination with the purpose of wanting to do better moving forward. I don't think this valuable lesson can be overstated. They learned to say, "How can we do better?"

So, I ask you...what are you doing to be self-critical of the work you, your HR team, and your organization is doing? How are you handling the difficult cases and big decisions? Is there room for improvement in your process? If the answer to these questions is yes, then you are not alone. We probably all have room for some type of improvement, but the key is to be looking for those areas.

I believe in order to be your best you have to be willing to admit when you have failed to provide your best work. The key is to be willing to use those times as a learning tool. Human Resources encompasses so many different areas of knowledge that we should all be seeking to continuously learn. This is the sole reason that TAHRA exists. We want to provide a resource for HR professionals to continue to learn and grow, in order to provide the best HR services in the Tulsa and surrounding areas as possible for the companies and employees we work with. We owe the people that we work with at least that. If that is no longer our end goal, maybe we are in the wrong profession. Because when HR goes wrong, it's the people that suffer. And if we aren't in it for the people, then what's the point?

## May Program Meeting

Wednesday, May 18 | 11:15am - 1pm |

Renaissance Tulsa Hotel and Convention Center

**How to Reenergize Employees in the New World of Work**



*Presented by Paul Slater and Ryan Tubbs, co-founders of BillionMind and leaders in behavioral science and workplace transformation*

The 'new normal' in today's workplace is unpredictable. It's hard to get the best out of your staff, and ourselves with so much instability around us — even when we have the best intentions.

With so much on our plates, it's easier than ever to start feeling burned out, anxious, and uncertain right now. And that certainly doesn't lead to being effective at work - or in life. And while that's bad enough, it ends up hurting productivity and your bottom line.

For work to work, our life has to work. And for life to work, we need to master 4 Elements Of Personal Effectiveness™.

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**The Plan Sponsor University**

Presents:

Tuesday, May 24th, 2022

8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. ET

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conducted by the best C(k)P Professionals in the Country!

5 CE Credits, Learning Modules included, 40+ Oklahoma based Company's in attendance....phenomenal interactive learning.

[Learn more and register here](#)

## May Learning Lab

Thursday, May 26 |2pm - 4pm|

Location - TBA

### Retirement Plan Trends and Legal/Regulatory Developments

*Presented by Mark Forbes, CPFA, C(k)P*

*Managing Director – Strategic Retirement Partners, Oklahoma*

Our May learning lab is designed to help human resource professionals stay up-to-date on recent events, trends and fiduciary issues that could have an impact on retirement plans and plan participants. The presentation will cover the following information:

Updates on plans and plan sponsors making the news, insights regarding plan participant retirement readiness, a look at the legislative and regulatory landscape and a discussion regarding high-profile ERISA cases that could impact future litigation for years to come.

A review of the Department of Labor's (DoL) Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) April 2021, Cyber Security guidance and the fiduciary duties placed upon plan sponsors. We will examine the new SAS-136 Plan Audit rules and how these changes impact plan sponsors and even the selection of a plan auditor. Lastly, why the utilization of Collective Investment Trusts (CIT's) is growing and the potential benefits of using CIT's.

[Register](#)

## HRIS Meetup Group

Wednesday, May 11 |12:00pm - 1:00pm|

Mother Road Market

This month our discussion topic will be mandatory reporting: for EEO-1, VETS-4212, and other purposes. Join us to share tips and tricks, ask questions of the group, or simply listen and learn. We're sure to discuss other HRIS-related topics, but this will get us started.

This is an excellent opportunity to network with and learn from other HRIS professionals! Please share with the Tulsa area HRIS professionals in your network. You do not have to be a TAHRA member to attend.

When you arrive at Mother Road Market, grab some lunch and find us at a table under the Lobeck Taylor sign next to Akira Sushi. There will be a "TAHRA HRIS Group" sign on the table and friendly faces awaiting you.

[Click here to join meetup and RSVP.](#)

There's strength in numbers. That's one of the main reasons to attend SHRM22—the world's largest convening of HR professionals. Together we will be inspired by the leading minds in HR and business. We will learn new methods for addressing the most pressing issues in the workplace. We will build professional connections to call on throughout the years and throughout our careers. And we will be empowered to cause the effect we want to see in the world of work and in our own work.



Join us to experience it all at SHRM22, June 12-15 in New Orleans, LA.

[Learn more here.](#)

## **DOL ISSUES NEW FIELD-ASSISTANCE BULLETIN ADDRESSING RETALIATION**

By: W. Kirk Turner, VP of Legislative Affairs

Retaliation continues to be at the top of the federal government's priority list. On March 10, 2022, the U.S. Department of Labor ("DOL") issued a new field-assistance bulletin entitled "Protecting Workers from Retaliation," which addresses worker protections from retaliation under laws that the Wage & Hour Division enforces. The DOL pledged to "use every tool available" to "uphold the rights of workers to identify violations of the law without fear of termination or

other threats to their reputation, safety or livelihood.” The DOL, EEOC and NLRB announced an initiative to join together to combat retaliation.

According to the DOL, retaliation occurs when an employer, including through a manager, supervisor, administrator or other agent, takes “adverse action” against an employee because they engaged in “protected activity.” The DOL defines an adverse action as “any action that could discourage an employee from making a complaint or expressing concern about a possible violation or engaging in protected activity, such as filing a complaint or cooperating in an investigation.” A finding of retaliation also requires a causal connection between the protected activity and the adverse action. It is important to note that more than half of all EEOC charges filed by employees or former employees in recent years contained allegations of retaliation.

The Wage and Hour Division of the DOL investigates employers to determine compliance with anti-retaliation provisions under several laws, including the Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”), Family and Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”), and other federal equal employment opportunity laws. The Biden Administration, through the DOL, has ramped up its enforcement efforts against employers and “will consider all remedies and sanctions available to protect workers and change behavior,” including injunctive relief, lost wages that resulted from the retaliation.

Practice Pointer: First, make sure your organization’s employment policies are current and regularly reviewed by experienced employment counsel, clearly and frequently communicated, easy to understand, consistently enforced, and, importantly, provide a clear complaint process for anyone to use, which prohibits retaliation. Second, employers should provide regular training to supervisors, managers and employees on their commitment to equal employment opportunity and providing a workplace free from all forms of harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other unlawful conduct. Importantly, leaders must understand the importance of following the employer’s complaint process and reporting procedures for any complaint or concern raised by an employee, customer, independent contractor, vendor, supplier, or other non-employee work contact. Finally, leaders must understand the importance of not taking adverse action against any employee who, in good faith, makes a complaint, raises a concern, or opposes an illegal or unethical practice.

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## Community Connections

By: Denise Reid, Community Relations

**Veteran Employer Champion Survey** – The Oklahoma Veteran Alliance (OKVA) launched their 2022 Veteran Employer Champion survey yesterday.

The purpose of the survey is to identify Veteran Employer Champions in the region and across the state of Oklahoma. Completing the survey helps educate employers on what a veteran-ready employer looks like. Please consider completing the survey by clicking this link [CSC Tulsa Oklahoma Veteran Employer Network - CSC Tulsa](#) or go to [www.csctulsa.org/vec](http://www.csctulsa.org/vec). If you would like to learn more about OKVA or the survey, feel free to reach out to me at [denise@denisereid.com](mailto:denise@denisereid.com).

**Community Service** – We are all busy but sometimes we may have an interest in serving beyond our normal family and work obligations. If you would like to get plugged in to volunteer opportunities, I would be happy to chat about what that looks like or assist with getting connected. Feel free to email me at [denise@denisereid.com](mailto:denise@denisereid.com).

**TAHRA Vendor Directory** – TAHRA's vendor directory is a cost effective way to market your company or organization to HR professionals across the region. Highlight your mission, scope of services, and areas of expertise. To learn more go to [HR Vendors Directory | TAHRA](#).

Let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss anything in more detail. I'm happy to connect and chat.

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## Welcome new members!

Elisha Cummings - Aristocrat Technologies  
Aisha Leach - Self  
Alissa Grace Ryan - Student  
Dina Fox - Dina Fox Consulting, LLC  
Lucy Serrano - Paul Transportation, Inc  
Amber Pryor - Okmulgee County Criminal Justice Authority

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Mark your calendar!

**Wednesday, May 11** - HRIS Meet Up Group

**Wednesday, May 18** - Program Meeting

**Thursday, May 26** - Learning Lab

**June 12-15** - SHRM22 Annual Conference & Expo

**Save the date!**

Thursday, September 15th (6pm-9pm) for our 50th Anniversary Celebration!

Note - We will not have a newsletter in June or July. We will keep you updated on news and events via email.

Calendar



[SHRM Website](#)

[HRCI Website](#)

[OKHR Website](#)

Tulsa Area Human Resources Association | PO Box 140958, Broken Arrow, OK 74014

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