



Dear Chief

By Jeff “Chief” Urbaniak
COLUMNIST

DEAR CHIEF: Things in my workplace are tense over the presidential race. There are extreme supporters of both candidates who make me and many others feel very uncomfortable if we don't agree with their points of view or agree to vote for the candidate of their choice. How do I get these people to mellow out on politics? It's like they're part of some cult or something.

POLITICAL PRISONER



DEAR POLITICAL PRISONER: Unfortunately, you're not going to be able to get the self-proclaimed political pundits to mellow out. Those who are far left or far right often become extreme in their behavior and opinions about politics, as well as other controversial or emotional topics. They'll claim if you're not with them, you're against them. If you don't agree with them, you hate them. No middle ground exists and they'll quickly tell you how wrong or stupid you are if you're on the wrong side of the fence. And you're right, it can sometimes feel like they're part of a cult. Heck, I've seen posts on social media of people telling anyone and everyone to unfriend them if they're voting for the other guy! Seriously?

Don't let any of these political bullies

“Unfriend me!” Seriously?

offend or coerce you. You don't have to submit to their will. If they ask who you're voting for, just tell them decisions of that nature are private. DO NOT say you haven't made up your mind yet because they'll bother you every single day until you pledge allegiance to their candidate.

You do, believe it or not, have some degree of power in your interactions with these political fanatics in the workplace. For instance, if they listen to political talk shows on the radio and turn up the volume so everyone can hear, well, simply tell them to either turn the volume down or put on ear phones. If their emails contain a litany of political jabber, only read what you need to and ignore the rest. If you don't like their social media insults, remove them from your friends list so their posts aren't visible on your news feed. If there's anything else they do that is harassing in nature, ask them nicely to stop. If they don't, then report this harassment to your supervisory chain. (Bosses can legally tell subordinates to not push political and religious views onto others in the workplace.)

In the midst of all this, if you actually do have strong political views or opinions and feel the urge to convince one of these pundits that they have it all wrong, I recommend you don't engage. You'll just be wasting your time. It would be like

trying to convince a life-long Red Sox fan to change hats and become a Yankees fan. It's not going to happen. Ever!

When it comes to voting, you have the right to vote in any logical or illogical manner you want. You never have to explain to anyone how or why you voted the way you did. You can simply keep it to yourself or you can brazenly tell everyone if that's what you really want to do. Be careful, though, because some of your family and friends may take your political choice as a personal attack on them. If you don't want to deal with this petty drama, then stay silent about the matter in their presence. If you don't care about the drama, then by all means wear the t-shirt, hat, and buttons, and post away on social media.

Throughout this election year, stay calm and try not to let political activities rev up your engine--most activists are only trying to convert the uninformed voter or those who'll go along with “whatever” to their side of the political spectrum. This happens every four years like clockwork.



For an opportunity to have your question, issue or concern addressed in the Dear Chief column, go to www.DearChiefAdvice.com and submit your comments or email them to Jeff@DearChiefAdvice.com.