



## Stradley Named "Go-To Law Firm®" in Employment Law

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## Stradley Ronon

2005 Market Street  
Suite 2600  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
215.564.8000 Telephone  
215.564.8120 Facsimile  
[www.stradley.com](http://www.stradley.com)

With other offices in:  
Washington, D.C.  
Harrisburg, Pa.  
Malvern, Pa.  
Cherry Hill, N.J.  
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## Renewed Focus on Employee National Origin

National origin discrimination was the primary focus of a recent public meeting held by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Unlike other protected classifications such as sex and age, employers may have difficulty determining exactly which employees fall within the protected "national origin" category. As recognized during the EEOC meeting, "national origin" not only involves a person's place of birth, but may also involve the origin of the employee's ancestors, cultural practices or language differences.

During the meeting, the EEOC identified a series of lawsuits filed against employers, many of which focused on employer policies restricting the use of various foreign languages and dialects. The EEOC also highlighted its efforts to proactively reach out to employees of diverse national origin. The full transcript of the meeting can be found [here](#).

Employers should consider the following as a result of the EEOC's recent commentary.

- Should we offer anti-harassment and diversity training in multiple languages to combat allegations that a language barrier interfered with training?
- If a particular employee population speaks a different language, should we offer [translated versions](#) of common EEOC postings and for which languages?
- Do we have written (or unwritten) policies that restrict the use of non-English languages at the workplace? Are those policies in compliance with [EEOC Guidelines](#) and/or applicable law?
- Are our employment eligibility verification procedures up to date? Do those procedures follow [federal guidelines](#)?
- Do our managers know how to appropriately respond to employee disputes arising from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds?

## Stradley Ronon's Employment & Labor Practice Group

Jonathan F. Bloom, <i>chair</i> .....	jbloom@stradley.com .....	215.564.8065
Danielle Banks .....	dbanks@stradley.com .....	215.564.8116
Michelle K. Carson .....	mcarson@stradley.com .....	215.564.8137
Christine M. Debevec .....	cdebevec@stradley.com .....	215.564.8156
Nicholas Deenis .....	ndeenis@stradley.com .....	484.323.1351
Sandra A. Girifalco .....	sgirifalco@stradley.com .....	215.564.8064
David J. Karasko .....	dkarasko@stradley.com .....	215.564.8542
Joseph T. Kelleher .....	jkelleher@stradley.com .....	610.651.2274
Andrew S. Levine .....	alevine@stradley.com .....	215.564.8073
Ian M. Long .....	ilong@stradley.com .....	215.564.8558
William E. Mahoney Jr. ....	wmahoney@stradley.com .....	215.564.8059
Francis X. Manning .....	fmanning@stradley.com .....	856.321.2403
John J. Murphy III .....	jmurphy@stradley.com .....	215.564.8019
Michael D. O'Mara .....	momara@stradley.com .....	215.564.8121
Caitlin E. Oberst.....	coberst@stradley.com .....	215.564.8151
James F. Podheiser .....	jpodheiser@stradley.com .....	215.564.8111
Ellen Rosen Rogoff .....	erogoff@stradley.com .....	215.564.8058
Alex L. Rubenstein .....	arubenstein@stradley.com .....	215.564.8053
Amy E. Sparrow.....	asparrow@stradley.com .....	484.323.1353
A. Nicole Stover .....	nstover@stradley.com .....	856.321.2418

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