

Chapter 6- Moral Rights in the Workplace

- Work is one of the most important and highly valued human activities in large part because it is necessary for so many other central human goods.
- **Discussion Case:** Electronic Privacy at Work
 - Employers asking for account login info like facebook
- Employee rights
 - Legal rights; contractual "goods" rights- minimum wage, equal opportunity
 - Right to health care, vacation days, pension funds
 - Other rights: respect owed to employees as human beings
 - General moral entitlements that employees have within workplace (independent of legal and contractual acknowledgement)
 - Justified by moral, rather than legal, considerations.
 - The basic framework for employer-employee relations – prevent employees from being put in the place to have to choose between basic moral goods, and their job.
 - Fit with **liberal model** from ch 5- protect freedom, equality, and autonomy
- The right to work
 - Right to work is a moral right bc work is necessary for so many other goods
 - Ex) In many modern legal contexts, the right to work is without being required to join a local union
 - Wages bargaining can be better determined when employer and employee are both equally free to accept and reject employment conditions
 - A right to a job, and once hired, to hold that job with some degree of security (Catholic social philosophy, U.N. Declaration on Human Rights)
 - Two perspectives:
 1. Work is a primary means to such ends as food, shelter, clothing, health care – a human right to a job
 - Any kind of work
 2. Work is part of the expression of a meaningful human life, so each individual has a right to a job
 - Work that is capable of elevating and humanizing workers
 - Liberals do not agree that meaningful work is the one thing for human fulfillment
 - Criticism – distinction between rights and "desirable states of affairs"
 1. Not everything that is valuable and highly desired can be claimed as a right
 2. Distinction between "rights" and "wants"
 3. Whoever has the responsibility of supplying a job has to have the capability of doing so
 - Who should and could supply jobs to every person?
 - Response: place the responsibility in the hands of the government since they would be more capable than private employers
 - Government
 - Government has the responsibility to provide jobs compatible with qualifications to those who are able to work but unable to find jobs in the private sector – government as a last resort. Ex) after Great Depression
 - Government provided jobs OR "safety net"?

1. Is it better to support ppl via providing jobs (incentives to private companies to hire ppl), or in forms of payments like unemployment insurance, food stamps, health insurance
 2. Encourage (through fiscal & monetary policy, tax incentives) private sector employment for all citizens. As a last resort, government has responsibility to provide jobs for its citizens.
- o Right to due process - right to work as right to hold a job once hired (security)
 - o Employers should provide meaningful work to the employees that are already working for the firm (not necessarily an obligation to provide work in general)
 - workplace provides meaningful work in the sense that it allows workers to exercise autonomy and independence