

Conform or Rebel? Consider This Before Joining a Company Protest, *Dice Insights*, ft. Ellen Storch

Ellen Storch, partner in the Kaufman Dolowich & Voluck LLP Long Island office, was quoted in a *Dice Insights* article, written by Leslie Stevens-Huffman, published on September 4, 2018.

A recent wave of dissent has rocked the formerly quiet offices of some Silicon Valley tech companies. Specifically, employees from Microsoft, Amazon and Salesforce have circulated petitions urging their CEOs to cancel or rethink lucrative government contracts. A group of engineers at Google even refused to build a security tool for "Project Maven," a Pentagon contract.

But is rebelling really the way to go? Could you be disciplined or fired for refusing to work on a project you object to on moral grounds? What will your peers think? Here's a look at what you should know and consider before joining an office uprising.

The Downside of 'Taking it Outside'

You should certainly think twice before sharing your opinion in the news or on social media, even if you do so on your own time. Many employers have policies that limit what employees can say or do in public, and any violation is grounds for immediate termination. Even if your company doesn't have a written policy, you could still be in hot water for going public with a controversial view.

"In certain states, employers can take action against employees whose off-duty conduct or speech impacts the employer's relationships with customers," advised Ellen Storch, partner and employment law attorney with Kaufman Dolowich Voluck LLP.

If these companies can show that they are losing business because of the negative press, they may be able to terminate employees who participate in the protests, depending upon where those employees live, she added.