



Episode 31: “All Your EEOC Questions Answered, Part 1, With Maureen Kielt”

Speakers: Ari Kwiatowski, Barclay Damon, and Maureen Kielt,
Director of EEOC’s Local Buffalo Office

[Ari Kwiatowski]: Hi, everyone, this is a Barclay Damon live broadcast where we discuss all things L&E, labor and employment. I’m Ari. Let’s dig in.

[Ari]: Hi, everyone. Welcome to “All Your EEOC Questions Answered,” a one-on-one conversation with the director of the EEOC Buffalo Local Office. I am so excited for the next couple of episodes because as I just mentioned, we are going to have a candid, in-depth conversation with Maureen Kielt, who is the director of the EEOC’s Buffalo Local Office. Maureen, thank you so much for joining. I know you’re really busy and I know how busy your agency is, so thank you. Welcome.

[Maureen Kielt]: I’m super-excited to be here. Thank you for asking me.

[Ari]: Of course. To our listeners, for the next couple episodes, Maureen is going to talk with us about a variety of topics. The EEOC’s investigatory process. What happens when a charge is received, how employers can respond to the charge, mediation...kind of the whole gamut. But Maureen, before we dig in, I did want to ask you, I ask all of our guests to share a fun fact about themselves, their personal, professional lives. So I wanted to put you on the spot. So apologies for that in advance, but I know you have something good to tell us, so if you don’t mind sharing.

[Maureen]: I have a couple of things I’ll share. First of all, before I came to the EEOC, I actually was a small business owner. So in my previous life, I had a business on Elmwood Avenue, I had two businesses on Elmwood Avenue. I had a dressmaking shop and I had a children’s clothing store called ABC Kids. ABC is the initials of my first three born children, and I was in business from ‘77 until ‘93 when I went back to school. With that being said, yeah.

[Ari]: That’s really cool, can I ask, so did you design. I know you said you had a dress shop. Did you design and or make the clothes or...

[Maureen]: Yes. Yeah. Our specialty was wedding restoration, actually. I had actually just made a wedding gown for my daughter who was married over Memorial Day weekend.

[Ari]: Congratulations!

[Maureen]: So still dabble. Still dabble.

[Ari]: I love that.

[Maureen]: Yeah. So how I got here in a roundabout way was I had a customer and I was having some issues because my oldest child has Tourette syndrome and I was having some issues with accommodation. And at the time the ADA was right on the cusp of being passed as a law. And I was telling her the issues that I was having and she said, you need to go talk to my friend and see what he can do to help you. And I talked to Bruce Goldstein at Bouvier and O’Connor, and

we ended up being part of a class action lawsuit because the Buffalo board or the Buffalo School Board did not have a 504 coordinator, which was a requirement under the ADA. So I was very excited to be part of that because it changed the landscape for children with disabilities in the Buffalo public school systems, and that was about 31 years ago. And from there, my interest in being a...an advocate really increased. I used to advocate for kids in school and then I got a job with the federal government. And in a weird way, ended up in the at the EEOC because I started in Treasury and doing what I love the most. So that's a little bit of some information that a lot of people don't know that I deal with in the legal field.

[Ari]: Yes. Well, thanks, Maureen. That's so interesting. And I love that your fun fact was also so meaningful. So, Maureen, thanks for sharing. I really appreciate it. Let's dig in. To our listeners, we're kind of going to start with the basics and talk a little bit about the EEOC as an agency, what it is and what it does. Maureen, what is the EEOC? Can you tell our listeners and what is the EEOC's mission?

[Maureen]: The EEOC stands for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and we are the federal agency that investigates discrimination in the workplace. We were formed in 1965 as a result of the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. So we investigate when people come to us to see whether or not there's been a violation in the law with regards to discrimination.

[Ari]: Yes. And I think a lot of our listeners, Maureen, are familiar with the agency. Can you tell us specifically just a general rundown, because I know there are a few, but what laws does the EEOC enforce?

[Maureen]: Okay. Lots. We enforce Title VII of the Civil Rights Act that covers age, race, sex, national origin, religion. And we also enforce the Americans with Disabilities Act, which obviously covers disabilities. Under Title VII we also enforce the Equal Pay Act. That's a little act that a lot of people don't realize is actually out there. So that's equal pay according to race and sex, another fact that a lot of people don't understand or realize that it's out there. We also enforce the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, which protects people's medical information from disclosure. It's kind of like HIPAA, but not really, because we don't enforce HIPAA. But employers can't ask for a long history of information that may reveal something that could be genetic in nature. Because back in the day that was used as a screening tool for a lot of employers. We also enforced the Age Discrimination in Employment Act [ADEA] that protects individuals over the age of 40 and the little difference between Title VII and the other laws, and the Age Discrimination Act is you have to have 15 employees to get coverage under the EEOC and you have to have 20 employees in order to have coverage under the ADEA.

[Ari]: I'm glad you point that out, Maureen, because you must have been reading my mind because I was going to ask, because we have those things. You know, those things are important. Those thresholds.

[Maureen]: Yes.

[Ari]: Requirements issues that do come up in practice a lot. So.

[Maureen]: Yes.

[Ari]: So Maureen, you talked a little bit about the laws that the EEOC enforces. Can you tell us a little bit about how the EEOC enforces those laws?

[Maureen]: Well, we do that through taking charges of discrimination, and that's a whole process in itself. And we determine whether or not there's been a violation of law. We can do that in many ways. We can do we can offer mediation for the parties to see if they can come to some sort of a resolution before it gets to enforcement. And that allows the parties to talk about what happened—this is not where you put your evidence in and you point the finger. This is a venue for everybody to

reach a mutual agreement without having to go through all of the other rigamarole. And I always tell everybody and encourage everybody to go to mediation; and say mediation is like Vegas. What happens in mediation stays in mediation. Okay. So whatever is revealed there can't be used against you, either the charging party or the respondent once you get to investigation. Because there's a firewall between mediation and investigation, once we once that has occurred and let's say it's not successful, we then go into an investigation and that could be, as I think everybody is pretty aware of, we can ask for information. We may just ask for a position statement. We'll ask for a request for information that is more itemized, detailed information that we're looking for. We can do on-sites. We haven't done that in a couple of years because of pandemic, but I'm sure that will be returning sooner rather than later. We've been doing visual, virtual on-sites over the last year and that's been interesting. We can also do what we call a fact-finding conference, which is, my... well, I really like to do both a fact-finding conference and/or an on-site, because there...you find out a lot of information about a respondent and a charging party when you engage in those two particular tools. So those are some of the ways that we can move forward to investigate.

[Ari]: Great. Thanks for that overview, Maureen. And we'll definitely talk about those topics in a little more detail as the episodes progress this week and next week. But before we dive into a little bit more substance, Maureen, just briefly, could you tell us just a little bit about how the EEOC is organized? I know you and I talked about that a little bit offline before we jumped on today, but I think employers, business owners, attorneys are always very curious, you know, the organizational structure of the organization.

[Maureen]: Well, when the EEOC Buffalo Office first opened (over 50 years ago), we were actually a district office. And that changed once we started dealing with jurisdictional issues. And we are what we call a local office. So the local office, we cover all of New York State, except for the lower counties, Orange County, right? All around in there. And we also do not cover Long Island and Manhattan. That's covered by our New York district office. So our district is composed of four offices, the Manhattan office in New York, which is the district, the Boston office, which is an area office because they cover not just Massachusetts, but Connecticut, Vermont, Maine, all of those...New Hampshire, they cover all of those states as well. And then we have an office in Newark, and New Jersey is divided up into two different offices. The Newark office is part of our district. It's a high-population state. So that's why...

[Ari]: That's right.

[Maureen]: That's set up that way. So we're a local office and that means that our office is set up a little different from like an area or a district office. So in a local office, the director wears a lot of hats, where there's a lot more employees in an area office or a district office because it's set up that way. So, for example there are no individual who we deem as a "supervisory investigator" who watches and in and kind of as a liaison between the director and the investigators. I play that role. And then we have a supervisor who is a liaison with headquarters to get updates. I play that role. And they also have an IT person assigned to them. I play that role. So I wear a lot of hats as a local director. And it's interesting.

[Ari]: Yeah, the IT piece in particular. Yeah.

[Maureen]: It's interesting. It's a challenge. I'm learning a lot. So that's how the offices are set up across the country. I mean, there are some offices that...Phoenix, for example, that covers Denver, and states that are less populated like Montana, Wyoming. So they all report to like one office, some of them report to Seattle because there the populations are so small that they don't you know, they don't even have any EEOC or a state and local to complain to.

[Ari]: Right. Thanks. That's so helpful. Maureen, I'm really glad you gave us that explanation, because I

think it's a little confusing that it's a local you know, there are local offices, but obviously the EEOC is a national agency. So I think that that lends a lot of helpful context. So thank you. So, Maureen, let's dig into it. Let's start with charges of discrimination. The first question I know that employers have, business owners have is how does the EEOC decide which charges or complaints it will investigate or is there any sort of screening process? Or do you accept every charge or complaint and investigate every charge? What's that initial process look like?

[Maureen]: It's big. So people go online now and they file a charge through our portal system, which I'm sure everybody's familiar and frustrated with, including us. So you're not alone. It's a work in progress. So people file inquiries online and they attempt to make an appointment. Once they have an appointment, it's assigned to an investigator and the investigator does an interview and we check for things. They get screened. So everybody gets screened. We do jurisdiction. Is there enough employees? Is it a timely allegation? Are there witnesses? Is the individual credible? You know, we do have people who are frequent filers, you know, some 60, 70 inquiries a year. And after a while, you know, we know who they are. And we have local judges that have said, you can't file with us. So we're aware. And so we do kind of screen out with regards to those kinds of issues.

[Ari]: That's interesting Maureen.

[Maureen]: But if somebody isn't, yeah, if somebody is insistent on a charge, they can have a charge. They're entitled to two things under the law. One is a charge and one is a notice of right to sue. That doesn't mean you always get a full investigation because again, as I said earlier, if the criteria, the jurisdictional issues aren't met, we would close that charge on intake because it we just don't have enough to move forward. Once we do take a charge, I review every single charge that comes through this office myself. So I take a look at that and I determine what the next steps are going to be. Sometimes those cases go to mediation. If I think that the parties are willing and open to that and that they want to, I think that that might be a good resolution for everybody. But some are not good for mediation. Usually cases that may be class cases, things along those natures, yeah, you don't want to send in mediation because mediation is usually between the two parties. If we think that there are more harmed parties, we can't negotiate on behalf of other individuals who we think may be identified as harmed.

[Ari]: Yes, that makes sense, Maureen. And I'm glad you brought up mediation because we'll definitely talk about that. And that's really interesting what you said about the screening process, because I think a lot of our listeners, employers, business owners aren't necessarily aware that that process exists. And, you know, I think that's obviously, I know that the agency is just trying to be efficient because, you know, if you don't have the threshold number of employees as a business, then you're not going to be subject to whatever the particular law is. Yeah, it's interesting, Maureen, because we have talked about that on the podcast before and I think it would be comforting for our listeners to know that obviously the EEOC exists for a specific purpose, has a specific mission, but, you know, has also procedures in place to screen out charges or complaints that may not be legitimate.

[Maureen]: Exactly. Because also what everybody seems to forget is we advocate in the way that we help somebody file a charge. But that's where our advocacy stops, we're neutral fact-finders and I have to remind charging parties about that all the time, because they do come to us and they say, you need to help us and you know, we can only help them so much. Like I said, we will go through their allegations. We'll see if there's something that we can draft a charge on. And that's where our advocacy stops and that's when we become neutral. So we are neutral fact-finders. We look at what an employer has to say and what a charging party has to say. And then we determine whether or not there's been a violation of the law. And again, I think on both sides, they have a tendency to forget that's what our role is.

[Ari]: Yes, I definitely agree with you. And I'm glad you brought that up, Maureen, because, you know, we

are often advising our clients—because it can be confusing to navigate if you’re a business owner, it’s the first time you’ve been named in a charge. You know, what is the EEOC? What’s its role? And that’s something we always try to stress. You know, the EEOC is a governmental agency that’s really just investigating whether or not these allegations have any merit. And, you know, they’re not employee side, they’re not employer side. They are a neutral body. So I’m glad you brought that up for our listeners because that’s something we always like to stress because, you know, I think on both sides, sometimes it could be frustrating. You know, both sides are advocating for a particular position and you guys are really just the go-between.

[Maureen]: Correct. Correct.

[Ari]: So, Maureen, one thing I wanted to bring up and I want to get this straight because this has come up a lot. And I remember back when I was a baby lawyer, seeing a charge like that looked like this and being like, I don’t understand what this means. I remember, you know, I probably went to Rosemary Enright, who you have worked with, who probably explained it to me and who our listeners know because she’s been on the podcast before and filled in for me when I was on PTO, but an employer gets a charge of discrimination and the charge states that there is a complaint filed with the New York State Division of Human Rights as well, which our listeners, by and large probably know is kind of like the EEOC state equivalent, a similar agency organized under the New York State Human Rights Law that investigates complaints filed with the Division of Human Rights. But if you can explain: what is the relationship between the two agencies? Because I think this is this is confusing for employers and employees to kind of wrap their heads around.

[Maureen]: It’s very confusing. And I totally understand this question and why you would ask it. So the EEOC and New York State Division of Human Rights, we have a reciprocal agreement. That means they have a contract with the federal government in order to investigate on our behalf. So when people go to the EEOC and/or New York State Division of Human Rights, we have to determine who’s going to do that investigation. Because there’s only one investigation. And usually what we look at is who got it first. And whoever got it first is going to follow through on that investigation. Or if somebody is further ahead of it in an investigation, obviously we want them to take the lead and move forward on that because it’s just more efficient.

[Ari]: Right.

[Maureen]: So that’s because, you know, you have individuals...and how we explain to them is you can have two bites of the same apple. So it’s either or it’s considered a joint filing. So when you get that EEOC charge that lists New York State Division of Human Rights on the top, that just means it’s a joint filing. They’re on notice. Hey, we have a charge we’re investigating and vice versa. And when the EEOC completes its investigation, we move forward on that. When New York State completes their investigation, they submit their information to our district office in Manhattan for review. And they have to have...they they’re going to get paid for doing that investigation because of that contract. So that’s where that comes into play. And if individuals are unhappy about the result of their investigation with Division of Human Rights, they can do a...like an appeal with the district office and ask for a substantial weight review, which means our...Holly, who is our state and local coordinator, will take a look at those documents and determine whether or not we agree or disagree with their findings. But it’s a joint relationship.

[Ari]: Okay. And I love that you said you can only have one bite of the apple. So basically important for charging parties or complainants, employees and employers to keep in mind that if you get a charge that says that, chances are you’re going to be...it’s there’s going to be one investigation.

[Maureen]: Exactly.

[Ari]: The...I don't want to say that you don't necessarily need to worry about the New York State Division of Human Rights complaint, but you will not be independently contacted by somebody from the division as well as somebody from the EEOC.

[Maureen]: Well, you might, but if you are, then you need to let us know. So you need to contact your investigator, or you can contact me and say, Maureen, I've already answered this charge with New York State Division of Human Rights. And usually attorneys will send me a copy of the answer to the state or and you know, at that point we'll delete that as a duplicate.

[Ari]: Right.

[Maureen]: So, yes, no, if you do let us know, we'll also determine who had it first depending on, again, how far we are in into an investigation, how far they are in an investigation as well.

[Ari]: Understood. So, Maureen, why would an individual file a charge with one agency versus the other? I think some of our listeners are probably wondering, why does this matter? Why would I put the IRS over the Division of Human Rights? If you're in New York or if you're in Massachusetts or Connecticut, that's the equivalent because we do have offices there. But I guess the question you, Maureen, is why does it why does it matter?

[Maureen]: Well, I'm going to say, first of all, it's a matter of what somebody knows. So they may not be aware that there's a state agency or they may not be aware that there's a federal agency. So they go to where they're...where they're familiar or where someone has directed them. Hey, my friend told me to go here. We get a lot of that. The second thing is, a lot of times they will try and file with both state and the fed and that's also the things that we look for when we do our screening process that we talked about earlier. There are some advantages in going to the state sometimes because they cover a broader range of things than we do. For example, domestic violence is specifically addressed in state law, where it is not addressed in federal law. When we're talking about ADA issues, the state law is much broader than the EEOC law. So for example, yes, seriously, you can have the flu and you can file a charge with the state and get coverage under their disability laws where that wouldn't fly here. So that things like that, criminal background investigations, we do look at that but the state's law is so concrete and good that a lot of times we will refer people to the state, if there is there's a criminal background check issue. Things along that nature. They also cover housing. They have a lot of other areas that can be explored. So you have a lot of things that you're juggling. Sometimes the state is a better a better answer because they can cover more things.

[Ari]: Yes. So basically, New York, you know, for those listeners who are in New York state, the New York State Human Rights Law does track federal anti-discrimination statutes for the most part, but definitely some broader protections. So I think that's...I'm really glad you pointed that out, Maureen, because I think if you're thinking of filing a charge or if you're, you know, responding to one, definitely want to be aware of all of these considerations. And like I said, this is a question we get so often representing employers because it's just confusing and they think, oh, do I need to contact the Division of Human Rights? What do I, what do I do? So I think this is such good information from the you know, from the horse's mouth, for lack of a better phrase, which isn't the most eloquent. So maybe I should have rephrased that.

[Maureen]: But, you know, I have no offense to that. Love horses. Had them.

[Ari]: Perfect. Love it. Okay. Maureen So before we break for the episode, I just wanted to talk briefly about what happens when the EEOC agrees to investigate a charge. And I know you talked...you touched on this briefly, but basically what I'm getting at is what does the EEOC do or how does the EEOC determine whether a charge is appropriate for mediation, which, as most of our listeners know and we know, basically means you wouldn't be responding to the charge via position statement if you're the employer,

but you would engage in this mediation process. So can you tell us a little bit how the EEOC would make that determination?

[Maureen]: Sure. And again, as I touched on a little bit earlier, I review every single charge. So I'm the decision-maker as to what goes to mediation, what does not go to mediation. Some allegations are so outrageously bad that I may determine that this would not be good for mediation. I mean, it doesn't happen a lot, but it does happen. So that might be a criteria as to why I would not send it to mediation. If we think that it's going to be a class, if we have already that the charging party has provided us information—it's not just me. It's this person, this person and this person. Then that is not a case that we would send to mediation necessarily. Because, again, we don't want to resolve something or issues with regards to one charging party and not be able to resolve that for others. And we don't know whether or not those individuals are harmed until we actually do an investigation. And at any point, even though you're not in mediation, if there's a way to settle in investigation, that's also an option that's open to you. So if it's something that I'm not comfortable sending in to mediation because we just don't have enough and I have a feeling that there may be other individuals that are harmed, I will keep it in investigation and we can revisit that down the road. And we have sent some cases to mediation once we'd gotten into that investigation. So that might be a reason why I would not send to mediation. And we're sending a lot of cases to mediation at this point. The problem is trying to get the parties to agree. That's the biggest thing, is trying to get the parties to agree. And what I would say to both charging parties and respondents and have is: there's nothing to lose by going to mediation. If you can resolve it before you have to dump all of this documents, resources, money into a full-fledged investigation, and you can resolve it quickly through mediation, I think it's a it's a win-win situation for both sides.

[Ari]: Yeah. Maureen And that's I'm glad you brought that up because, you know, obviously representing employers in terms of responding to charges of discrimination, a lot of times we're asked, well, you know, I don't think I did anything wrong. Why would I participate? I don't think that we're going to be close. I don't you know, I don't...there's no way we could possibly reach an agreement. And our response is always, well, as you pointed out, number one, you really have nothing to lose. Number two, obviously, we're going to spend a lot of time and resources responding in a position statement, which we'll talk about later or in requests for information, which we'll talk about later. It's you know, it's time, it's resources, compiling the information, putting everything together. So I think, you know, we absolutely agree. I mean, there's what is there to lose, you know, and as you know, there massaging, I think, on both sides.

[Maureen]: But yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

[Ari]: And what I wanted to ask Maureen, and I know the answer to this just because I have worked, of course, with some of your...the people who are in the mediation unit and your investigators and things like that. But I know you touched briefly earlier, the EEOC is a neutral party. What is the EEOC's role in mediation and who within the EEOC conducts the mediation?

[Maureen]: Okay. As I said earlier, there's a firewall between investigation and EM, otherwise known as enforcement and mediation. Okay. So your investigators have no idea what happens in that mediation process. We have a mediator, our new mediator, who's been on the job since September, I believe, is Jeremy Boyd. He's a former investigator of mine. He's very good. He's very thorough. And he's the new mediator and he gets the parties together and sees whether or not they can reach some sort of agreement that they can both be happy and live with. It is... it could be financial agreement. It could be an apology. It could be I mean, mediation, you can really negotiate all kinds of really inventive and different things. Returning somebody to work. You know, it's a great medium because it...you can be very inventive to get everybody to the table, and to agree on something. So there's no there's nothing set in stone, I guess is what I'm trying to say and if an apology and returning somebody to work is what you need to move forward, then you can

negotiate that in mediation, and that's great. And the mediator is definitely neutral. And he just tries to make sure that he can get the parties to agree on something.

[Ari]: Yeah, and we've worked and I've worked with Jeremy before. I agree. He's great. And, you know, I think it's interesting because you're so right, sometimes an employer and a even a, you know, an employer respondent, a charging party will come to mediation and, you know, an employer will just want like a good reference or, an employee will just want a good recommendation.

[Maureen]: Exactly.

[Ari]: You know, a recommendation. And in fact, that really resolves it. So it's so important. Such good advice. I just want to close with this, Maureen, do you have any tips other than what we discussed for employers who've agreed to participate in mediation? I'm sure you do. So is there anything that you can say to our listeners who are on the employer's side of things, business owners, with respect to participating in mediation?

[Maureen]: Again, I would remind them this isn't about pointing the finger in who's at fault. It's something that I share with both sides, but especially with employers, because as you said earlier, employers want to say, oh, you know, we didn't do anything, I don't understand. This isn't about finding fault, it's about trying to come to a resolution. It's also, as I have explained many times when I've been out in the field doing outreach with employers, it's also a liability. And so you need to look at the bigger picture. This is a nice way to get both parties on the same page and resolve it before, again, there's this large outlay of time and money to sometimes get the same result that you could have reached in, you know, one or two mediation sessions before...it's short, it's sweet. It's a resolution in both parties, mostly for the most part, can walk away happy and satisfied with the results. And that's like I said, that's a win-win for everybody. So employers really need to go in and say, okay, what is it that I can do to make my employee happy or my former employee happy? Resolve this issue. It's a great take away. Hey, next time I need to make sure that we're better at terminating an employee, at disciplining employee, whatever it is that the employee's alleging. So it's a great learning experience for employers as well because it's an eye-opener. And if they're represented by counsel, counsel can say, okay, after this, let's sit down, let's talk about how we don't get here again. And that's a really good lesson. And I like those kinds of results because I don't want to see repeat allegations against the same employers over and over again. If it's...if you take it as a learning experience and you grow from it, I think that's a positive thing that employers need to look at. And you're going to have happy employees if you do that as well. And you know, I am a big proponent of happy employees. My mother always said you get more flies with honey than you do with vinegar. So if you have a good outlook and you're always striving to make employee morale good, and you can learn from this situation to give better morale to your employees, then you...the chances are you won't be visiting us again. So you need to look at in those terms.

[Ari]: Very, very good points, Maureen. And I think one thing that we always stress, too, is try to have an open mind. You know, I know it's again, for a lot of employers, it's their first time and hopefully only time that they've been named in a charge of discrimination. And there is kind of that, I think a bit of like suspicion or maybe skepticism in terms of what the employee or former employee might be looking for. So we... I'm glad you said, you know, keep an open mind. The EEOC is neutral. Try to find a resolution and just really just...we got to see how it goes.

[Maureen]: That's exactly. Exactly.

[Ari]: Maureen, thank you so much for joining us today. This has been absolutely great, super informative. You know, I'm excited. We'll pick back up next week where we left off. But anything that you'd like to close with that you think we haven't talked about in terms of the agency and the mediation process, or just anything maybe I forgot to mention.

[Maureen]: Just really briefly, don't send mail. Don't send mail, put everything on the portal. If you're having a problem with the portal, reach out. If we can resolve it, we can. If not, we'll figure a way to do that. If you're filing a charge and you're a responding employer or you're an responding attorney, send it to our fax machine. But don't send stuff in the mail. We're going completely virtual. So it's like...I would, I remind some attorneys when we talk and we laugh and I say, you're not going to send your filing to the judge. He wants it in...he wants it electronically. So unless he asks for it. Yeah, exactly. You're filing everything electronically. Think of us like that. Think of us like the IRS. You're filing online. You're not also sending it in the mail. I don't need the duplicate. If you're not sure if we got it, call me. I...people will tell you I always pick up the phone and if I don't, I will return your calling. I'm really famous for that. I will return your call.

[Ari]: Yes, I can attest to that. And also, I'm pretty sure, because I had an issue with the portal, when you get the, if you're a respondent, at least, you get the information. It does give you like an email address to email if you're having issues with the portal.

[Maureen]: Yes, yes. Tech support.

[Ari]: Yes, absolutely.

[Maureen]: And sometimes we even have to go round tech support and figure out what's going on. I did that yesterday. We'll figure it out. Like I said, ARC is...it's new and wonderful and challenging.

[Ari]: Everything's a work in progress these days.

[Maureen]: Exactly.

[Ari]: Exactly. All right. So much, Maureen, I really appreciate it. And to our listeners, tune in next week. Maureen and I will continue our discussion. We'll talk a little bit more about mediation, but mostly about the investigatory process and employer position statements. If you have employees, if you're interested on the topic, you definitely don't want to miss it. Tune in.

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