



The Excuse Factory

Walter Olson

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In "The Litigation Explosion", Walter Olson exposed the irrational incentives within the legal system that have made America the world's most litigious society. Now Olson has trained his considerable investigative talents on another aspect of the legal system: employment law. "The Excuse Factory" goes right to the heart of the increasingly absurd American workplace, showing how Kafkaesque employment laws make it nearly impossible to fire even the most incompetent and unmotivated workers. Employers have become understandably nervous about firing someone lest it open them up to a lawsuit, no matter how frivolous. They would rather tolerate bad employees than remove them-- a choice that has profound implications for the future of business, the American economy, and our collective mental health. From the merely annoying, like the chronically late secretary, to the extremely dangerous, like the alcoholic airline pilot, Olson shows how the legal system coddles those who least deserve it. In the name of protecting victims of discrimination with laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 1991 Civil Rights Act, we have made it tremendously difficult just to get people to do their jobs. Olson gives eloquent voice to this mounting workplace crisis. As the corporate environment degenerates to the lowest common denominator, the frustration and anger among the majority of workers who do pull their own weight is palpable. Enshrining mediocrity in the workplace imposes high costs on society-- costs reflected in lost jobs, lost wages, reduced safety, and rising aggravation. "The Excuse Factory" will spur outrage and spark a national debate about the role of government in the workplace. Olson's expose is certain to shake up the legal industry, rattle government regulators, and cause thousands of workers and managers to nod in vigorous agreement.

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