

Episode 44: AI and Absences: Ethics and Boundaries in Leaves and Accommodations

(This transcript was generated through AI technology.)

Josh Seidman

Hi everyone, and welcome back for the 44th episode of Take It Or Leave It, where we discuss the hottest topics in the world of workplace leaves, absence management and accommodations. I'm your host. Josh Seidman. Following up on episode 43 where we started our ongoing discussion of the importance of thinking about AI and its impact in our leaves and accommodations world, I am so thrilled to be welcoming back for our second part of this episode and discussion, Bryon Bass from the Disability Management Employer Coalition. Bryon is the CEO of the DMEC, and he is willing to join us for another round to continue our discussion on all things AI and where the landscape is today, impacting leaves and accommodations. Bryon, welcome back to Take It Or Leave It.

Bryon Bass

Thanks. I'm glad to be back again. We've got a lot more to talk about.

Josh Seidman

So the question I have for you is, in any AI conversation, it is hugely significant, certainly from my point of view, and I think from yours as well, but you let me know, right, to think about guardrails, ethics and the like, making sure that AI is being used in a way that provides value and enhancement, certainly, but also that has proper boundaries in place. So what are your thoughts on these topics in the leaves of absence space? Does it make sense to establish guardrails around AI use and determine what ethical use is in our field and why? And then what are some concerns that could arise from automated systems that are using AI in the leave space, say, to process leave requests when you're thinking about ethics?

Bryon Bass

Yeah, absolutely. You know, without a question, we have to have guardrails, and we need to take an ethical approach to the use of AI in our field. And you know, it's really one of the key focus areas of the think tank, and we can talk a little bit more about that momentarily. But, you know, from my perspective, and I think from the perspective of many, this is where stuff really gets serious. You know, we're talking about decisions that impact someone's income, their health, their job security. AI, isn't neutral. It reflects the data that it's trained on. And what worries me is, what data is it being trained on, and where is that data coming from? And unfortunately, a lot of times data, and what we're seeing, in some instances, data that's being fed into AI has some inherent bias that is built into it, and so therefore that's one of the big concerns. You know, flawed data leads to flawed decisions.

So there's three big areas of concern that I see, and I like to kind of rally my brain around, if you will. And that is one is focused on bias. And so AI that's trained on flawed data can amplify inequalities, right? So if it's trained on historical data that shows higher denials for certain groups that might replicate that bias, that's an example. Like I saw this, this is what happened. Okay? Well, it may have happened

because of some variable that is not even being considered or being taken into account. So you need to ensure that you understand what's happening underneath and what's being evaluated and how the algorithm is actually doing its measuring and determination to ensure that significant bias is not brought into the decision making process.

The other is around transparency, and this is the one where employers in particular, and I even think you know, our TPAs and insurance carriers are concerned, as well as employees and employers both deserve to know how decisions are being made. So for example, if you're denied a leave, can you see why? It should be simple enough that you didn't pass an eligibility check. And you know, and we know under FMLA, you have to work 12 months and 1250 actual hours worked in the last 12 months. You know, all the great aspects of that. The question is, it's going through that process. It's making a denial determination. Does it tell you which of those rules the employee didn't pass? And if so, does it tell you, then what data you relied on? I've been in this field for a very long time, and I've worked with third party administrators for a very long time, and I will tell you that even with the human involved in the process, we had to build in checkpoints so that if it was within, let's say, 80 hours of someone being on either side of 1250 we would reach back out to the employer, because, you know why? We don't have the last payroll cycle of information in our data, necessarily. And so therefore there is a timing aspect of that individual may have worked that additional 80 hours within the last pay periods time frame. If it's two weeks long, therefore they could be just barely eligible for leave. You don't want to make an inappropriate denial decision. So again, this is another example of the data that's coming in Is it accurate? Is it timely? And how is it then being used to make the decision? So that's transparency.

And then I think there also needs to be a bit of due process. And we use due process a lot from a legal perspective, but automated decisions must always allow for human review and correction, like there needs to be some way for you to catch something before something significant happens. So there needs to be a way and a mechanism to - maybe a decision is made, and it requires, I say, from a denial perspective, I don't think that should ever be automatically made without a human looking at it and making sure all of the appropriate decisions and data relied upon was accurate in the process. That's my opinion. I think that's the opinion of a lot of folks that are in the field here. And at the end of the day, really, I think we're hearing a lot about AI is going to be replacing a lot of white collar jobs. It's going to replace people's jobs. I don't think that's necessarily true. It's supposed to be supporting human decision maker, not replace them. I mean, when we think about things, we talked about accommodations, medical facts, legal compliance, all those things are involved. That's almost like saying that AI is going to replace the lawyer. So, you know, Josh, you might be out of a job soon. I don't think so, right?

Josh Seidman

I'm starting to sweat, Bryon.

Bryon Bass

No, I don't think so. I think we have to take a step back and understand that we should be looking at AI and the ways that it can actually support us in the decision making process to build efficiency in where maybe you have routine tasks that are happening over and over and over and over again, and you can use some sort of form of AI or automation to improve that. Now I do want to give some more cautionary

tales around this, because, you know, I just have to give cautionary tales. I like to give cautionary tales. We've heard, we've got a few examples from DMEC members that have shared with us as we've gone through the process of discovery and understanding what's happening. So we had one national employer that discovered that their AI tool had auto denied an accommodation extension beyond a 12 week leave cap, even in an ADA eligible scenario. And of course, as you might imagine, that resulted in a legal challenge and a forced policy rewrite. We've been hearing over and over and over again from the EEOC that you should not have these '12 weeks and you're terminated' policies if you're not back within this period of time, you've lost your job. You got to move on. You need to go through the interactive process and determine if they might qualify under the ADA or the state equivalent. We have another DMEC partner who shared that their chat bot accidentally sent a termination notice to an employee on an approved intermittent leave because the bot flagged excessive absence from bad swipes. So that's good example. And then a third case was an automated system that flagged an employee for fraudulent behavior after using approved leave to attend medical appointments during work hours. Basically it triggered an internal investigation that should have never occurred. So it's just an example of it's being built to catch these, these situations, in these scenarios that perhaps it didn't take into account that, oh, the probably the person is taking a lot of time away because they are getting chemotherapy, or they've got a number of medical appointments because they're pregnant, and they have prenatal visits they need to go and attend. And if the AI isn't looking at those things before it triggers something, then you're going to get some false positives in the process. And I think it's important to recognize that, you know, these aren't bad actors. They're just they're well meaning organizations that are trying to use powerful tools, but without proper guardrails in place.

Josh Seidman

Yeah, Bryon, there were so many good nuggets in that whole response. Now that I'm done, I've calmed down. I'm no longer sweating about AI taking over my job in the immediate term. I am, you know, I want to come back the point that you made very early on in that response was, the flawed data leads to flawed decisions, right? And we're talking about decisions that impact people's livelihoods, and these are major life events, right? That is, we're talking about these big leaves of absence and these accommodations, these are, these are real situations that impact families and their livelihoods and their homes, and it needs to be well thought out, and it's exactly why, even something as simple putting AI aside to sort of thinking about leave decision making. Generally speaking, it is always very important to not just rush into a final decision, right? So you just mentioned a comment about denials, right? And having a human component double check those denials, right? Anything that is recommended by whatever AI tool might be operating behind the scenes. I think that is a wonderful part of the transparency and the due process that you spoke about, because that, again, that should be, in my opinion, one of the fundamental components of how organizations run, especially when things are looking thorny, right with a decision that can impact an employee and whether to cut them off from leave or separate them and return to work and whatnot. So to think that that same consideration should be in place when we're relying more heavily on AI tools, that makes total sense to me. So I think that was a really important focus of that last response. It was a great call out.

I want to stay with this topic for a minute, because there's a lot of good, good content here, a lot of good more meat on the bone to eat through. What would some possible AI guardrails in leave management look like? I mean, we spoke about that a bit in the last response, but I'm curious. We spoke about it

from the context of, say, maybe the employer, right? You know? And I'm, I'm curious, right? Where do you think these guardrails should come from? Or would they, where would they come from? Would they, should they come from? Would it be the federal government, state governments, industry leaders, like the TPAs and carriers, specific employers and the like? What are your kind of thoughts on all of that?

Bryon Bass

Well, I really see that it needs to be a multi tiered approach. And so when I say multi tiered, you know, really, we see some federal movement, and then we see some federal movement not coming back, right? So there was a lot of stuff that was introduced in 2022 to really, from the White House perspective, to have a framework for AI, and that's something I can talk about if we get to that a little bit later. But there needs to be some set of minimum standards for transparency, bias, audits and human oversight, that's the minimum. That's what I say. It's kind of like that's the floor, not the ceiling. We probably should be able to do more. But the question is, what does that more look like? And I don't think federal or state policy frameworks can account for every single situation and every single industry. So therefore you need industry consortia like DMEC that can help define what ethical looks like, specifically for us and leave and accommodations. So we can help policymakers, perhaps understand like these are the things that we do from an HR perspective, but not just in HR but specifically as it relates to leave and accommodation work. So that's what organizations like DMEC are around for us to kind of help understand and get through the minutia to understand what are the critical components. And this is an area where we think we can help make a big difference for employers and, you know, frameworks for policies going into the future. And then, of course, you know, employers and vendors have to also agree. There needs to be a partnership between any vendor relationship that you have as an employer, and you need to be able to specifically understand how AI is being used in the process. How is human review being done for denials or accommodations? How are you regularly testing for unintended bias? How do you create opt out or appeal pathways? It's really not just about compliance here. It's really, it's about trust, and employees need to believe in a system that's fair, not faceless.

Josh Seidman

That's great, Bryon. So, again, having an understanding as the employer as to what the third party that they are working with, whether that's an insurance carrier, TPA, some other third party vendor, and what their process is in terms of how they're using AI and how they're testing for some of these concerns that we've spoken about. I think those are all really important call outs. I want to pivot back to something that we spoke a little bit about earlier, which was the upcoming DMEC 2025 Annual Conference. Now I don't want to play any spoilers in advance of the conference. I know there's a whole segment devoted to this, and we're going to have lots of butts in the seats to hear that segment, mine included. I'm excited for it, but I do want to ask, I'd be frustrated with myself if I didn't, so - one of the sessions right is aimed at outcomes from this DMEC, AI think tank that we've mentioned a couple of times on the podcast today. So anything you can tell us about the AI think tank, what groups or types of groups are involved? How often did the think tank meet? What are some of its goals, and if possible, can you share some of the high level outcomes, takeaways from this initial round of research?

Bryon Bass

Yeah, I'd be happy to. So we launched the AI think tank, really to help bring structure to the chaos, we brought together employers, third party administrators, insurance carriers, tech vendors and legal experts. We met regularly, at least once a month, and in some instances, more than once a month. We also had round tables and discussions at our compliance conference early in the spring, where we got together and dug into some very specific topics around this particular space, and were supported by partners who helped sponsor the AI think tank for this go round. And our goal really started out to define ethical, practical and scalable uses of AI and leave management. More simply, how do you develop this ethical employer ready? AI guidance specific to our space? We conducted a pulse survey, we held breakout sessions, we developed framework that's, you know, going to be unveiled at the conference on August the sixth, and two big outcomes of that.

So in terms of the framework, are an AI vendor, RFP Toolkit, which will include some scoring, scoring rubrics, due diligence checklist and transparency questions. So a little bit of what I was talking about earlier, and then some of the examples I gave. And then we've been asked for case studies. People love case studies, and they want to have examples where AI has improved processes and where it's failed. So, you know, my cautionary tales are probably going to be some of those cautionary tales that we included in the case study library, but I think it's important, again, I talked a little bit about the survey early on in our conversation today, and when we conducted the survey, we felt that the results were relatively eye opening in so much that, you know, 60% of the people said they had this basic understanding of AI, but less than 30% had any type of formal policy in place regarding AI and employee benefit decisions, and that's a huge gap.

But on the flip side of that, there's a whole lot of optimism, optimism around this, because the top benefit cited from the use of AI a little bit of what I talked about as well during our conversation today, and that's efficiency. So 85% of respondents really feel that AI can help to streamline processes, but then they also flag the big, major hurdles that are systems integration and compliance, ambiguity and the lack of transparency and how AI is making decisions. And again, while it's encouraging, what's encouraging is this whole appetite for learning. But people do want these case studies, they want ethical guidelines, and they want practical tools, and that's exactly what we're building into our white paper and we'll be sharing in our upcoming Think Tank sessions. So if you all are out there wondering where your organization stands on AI readiness, you're not alone. There's a growing community that's ready and here to help.

One big takeaway that I like to share here is that talked about this a little bit as well. The fields moving faster than most employers can keep track, and there's no current consensus on what responsible AI looks like in the leave of absence space, and DMEC really feels that we need to step in and help to fill that gap and provide our employers with at least that framework upon which they can keep apprised of what's happening in this space, because we're going to continue to see legislation coming out that's impacting or restricting AI in one form, fashion or another.

Josh Seidman

Yeah, Bryon, that was great. I love a good preview, I'm really ready for more. You know, there's a common theme, not with every company, obviously, that I speak with and work within this space, but it is fairly common to hear references to feeling back footed, feeling like I'm playing a game of Whack a

Mole. You know, it's so hard to keep up with the pace of change in the space and I can, and that's just how these how the laws are coming out, and then keeping your policies and your systems and your teams up to speed, let alone when we're talking about the growth of this inherent game changer, right? This, this AI focused underpinning undertone of the entire industry. So what you all at the DMEC are doing here, and this was the biggest reason I was so excited to chat today, was to really get this message out to our listeners, right? That there are folks, as you said that are helping with AI readiness, the DMEC, really hunkering down on this topic, thinking about, I think the RFP toolkit is a great idea. The vendor RFP toolkit that you mentioned as are putting out case studies, right for folks to really just get a sense of how are other organizations and employers working with AI in this space? What is working? What isn't working? Oh, okay, right, that that that double check is an important back backstop. So I think these are, is wonderful to hear those updates. I'm also, I mean, we've had several episodes on this podcast where we've done some good benchmarking and some surveying, statistics, deep dives. So I love that that's part of the reporting out as well from what the think tank has done. You started to talk about this a bit on the tail end of that last response, so I just want to bring it home. What's next for the think tank? Right? The DMEC AI Think Tank. Is there another round or multiple rounds of surveying, investigating that DMEC is planning on the horizon? And can you talk a bit about the importance of DMEC and I suppose all leaves and accommodation specialists, for that matter, continuing to track and stay up to speed on advances in AI in our space?

Bryon Bass

Yeah, well, it's a great question, you know, I'll just be completely blunt. We're certainly not done. There is so much to be done in this space. We're just, we're just biting off a small chunk of what's out there and what we need to focus on. We know that we've talked about this as a collective in the current Think Tank. I have this conversation with DMEC's Board of Directors all the time. This is an area that we believe is going to be a topic that we're going to be focusing on year after year for at least the foreseeable future, probably the next five years or so, depending on what's happening and what's going on. But expansion of the initiative, I want to make sure that individuals also understand that it isn't just what DMEC wants. It's really we are reflecting what our employers need. And so part of what we're seeing is that there is this need. And I talked about that whole AI, specific use of AI from an accommodation perspective, that's like, everybody's like, that's their big wish list.

What I will say is that accommodation is just very, very difficult. Doesn't matter how you slice it, and a lot of times, the reason that accommodation is difficult is because there are some baseline fundamental practices and or documentation and information that's not available at the employer level. You know, a job description is only as up to date as the as the day you wrote that job description. Jobs change. Jobs evolve. And so because jobs changes and jobs evolve, and we don't have a process necessarily in place to go back and ascertain what are the key essential. Functions of this job as it's changed. It's somewhat easier in a manufacturing environment, but it's more the white collar jobs. It becomes a little bit more difficult in terms of making that assessment around what's essential versus what's not. And that's what makes accommodation difficult, because you have to essentially understand what that person's job is every single time you have a conversation, because it really feels that no one does the same job, even if they have the same job title. So that's one area. I think that's an area we want to look at to see where maybe it can help in some form or fashion, especially in those areas where there has traditionally been a lot of challenge and a lot of barriers. We also want to, over time, we want to

continue to survey employers on how they're used, how they're actually using AI versus what they're desiring for using it. So you might see things incorporated into our leave management practices survey that we do every two years, that really starts to ask some more specific granularity level questions around AI, its use, desire and things of that nature, and then really continue to create some type of practical guidance via white papers. I think one of the things that we're going to see, probably relatively soon, is on integrating AI tools ethically. Like AI doesn't just operate by itself. There's all these other pieces and components that come into play. So you've got data in HRIS systems, you've got data and leave systems, you've got data all over the place. The question is, what does AI have access to? And then, how can the AI use that information, then to help you in your decision making processes, or in any process that you have involved in the work that we do in this space. But bottom line, our goal is to ensure that as AI matures, that we in this profession remain in control and not overwhelmed or replaced by this technology. Again, I said earlier that AI really should be empowering and not displacing the critical human judgment that this field requires.

Josh Seidman

That was great, Bryon. The importance of staying on top of this topic, one foot after the other, one year after another. It's really refreshing to hear that the DMEC recognizes that. And I think other organizations in this field, in this space, should as well, right? This is going to be a constant and a learning opportunity for all of us. So it's wonderful to hear. I certainly would love and I will continue to sort of listen in for updates and look for those white papers and those surveys, and attending the conferences and hearing what all of you folks at the DMEC are reporting out on because there's going to be a moving landscape, right? It's going to take the village to keep our arms wrapped around it.

Bryon Bass

There's an opportunity for everybody to get involved, including yourself. So yeah, a seat at the table for you.

Josh Seidman

I'm happy to talk offline with you, my friend. It is, it's going to be a lot of fun. You mentioned this before, just like biting off just a little piece right there in these first you know, six months or so, right? Six to 12 months, it's the tip of the iceberg analogy. There's a lot more lurking under the water. So I'm excited to see where everything goes. I have one final question for you before we wrap up for today. I'm curious, and this was something we spoke about a little bit throughout some of our responses during the conversation, but I want to bring the focus back to it. What if anything has the federal government, such as the Department of Labor, EEOC and the like, potential state governments perhaps, issued by way of laws, guidance, frameworks, et cetera, on AI, use and best practices, ideally in our leave of absence accommodations world, but even more generally, just in terms of workplace best practices that you've come across in your studies?

Bryon Bass

Well, it's still early, but we know that the pace is starting to accelerate quite a bit. I'm seeing more and more introduction of legislation at the state and local level. It's one of those things that it's, it's reminiscent of when paid sick leave at the local level really started to kick off. You know, you saw bits and pieces here and there, but then all of a sudden, it was like everybody was doing it all at the same

time. And then you have everyone everywhere has some type of a paid sick leave, and it has its own little nuance associated with it. So we're seeing a little bit of that already, and I'll get into that.

But let me start with the federal agencies, because you asked me specifically around the EEOC and the DOL, and they're the two that I would say that have given probably some of the most concrete, if you will, guidance around things to watch out for right? So the EEOC, for those of you that don't know, the EEOC and the DOL are frequently at our conferences. So they have sessions where they talk about the things that are on their minds, the things that they're seeing, the things that their strategic enforcement efforts are focused on, and more importantly, to recognize that, you know, their role is to provide outreach to help employers remain compliant. They're not out there to try to catch you and, you know, get you in trouble. They're actually there to try to help you. So remember that, but the EEOC has explicitly stated that the use of AI in employment decisions like hiring, promotion and disability accommodation has to comply with existing anti discrimination laws. So we've got Title VII, which prohibits discrimination on race, color, religion, sex and national origin. We have the ADA the Americans with Disabilities Act, so ensure that however AI is being used, that it's being taken into consideration and you're not adding discrimination into your practices inadvertently. And also to recognize the EEOC also made it clear at one of our conferences that just because you're outsourcing some of your work to a vendor and they're using AI, it doesn't absolve you from your compliance responsibilities. As the employer, you still have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the practices that are employed as it relates to your employee are compliant. So that's why it's important to understand what your vendors are doing.

So in that regard, in 2023 the EEOC did publish some guidance on how AI systems might violate those laws, especially with respect to tools that inadvertently screen out individuals with disabilities. There's no human review of the algorithmic decisions employers using vendor tools without validating their compliance, which is what I just spoke about. It's out on their website. You can go to [eeoc.gov](https://www.eeoc.gov) and do a little search on AI, and you'll find this guidance that they've provided.

The Department of Labor, they haven't really issued any specific AI specific regulations, but they are warning that relying solely on AI or automated systems to manage FMLA could result in some serious compliance violations. And they also have a little guidance document out there where they actually include some very specific areas that employers should be concerned with. One is around eligibility miscalculations. I talked a little bit about that earlier in the whole hours worked aspect of things and making sure your data that you have is accurate and timely and up to date, and you're taking all those what actual hours actually means from an FLSA under into perspective. There's a lot that goes into that eligibility determination, but if you're doing it wrong, you could wrongfully deny someone their rights under the FMLA.

There's also this over frequent eligibility retest, so sometimes systems might inappropriately reevaluate eligibility in less than 12 month cycles. And those of us that are nerds in this area, or geeks, or whatever we want to call ourselves, know that you can't check eligibility except once per FMLA year, depending on how your FMLA here is structured, you know, you're rolling back, rolling forward, all that great stuff. So only do that once for 12 months. So there's this fear that maybe it might reevaluate inappropriately in different cycles. It might request in a proper certification demand. So it might request

more medical information than the FMLA permits, or violate submission timelines. We know you got 15 days. One of the things that people consistently overlook is it's 15 days from the time that the employee receives the certification to actually go for it. So if you're sending it to them in the mail, you probably need to have a little bit of mailing time included in that 15 days. So give them a little bit more time to actually receive that certification form. And then secondarily, if you need clarification or other pieces of information, there's another set of time for this you need to incorporate into that. So there could be, you know, that can happen. And don't forget, I'm talking about FMLA. That's federal.

There are states, like California, is one of them and Connecticut's another, where they very, very much restrict the amount of medical information you can obtain to qualify them under the state equivalent. So you have to be careful, not just at the federal but also at the state. And then unauthorized interruptions. So you might have a leave tracking system that might delay some approvals. It could interfere with leave rights, or it could trigger some negative performance consequences, because it's not moving things along as quickly as it should have. And so you might think, well, that doesn't make sense. Shouldn't - AI is automated. It's a computer, it should do things a little bit quicker. Well, yeah, in theory, it should. But if we're putting in some of these human oversight things into the equation, the question is, how are you incorporating that human oversight into your process as well? Right? So I think we can expect that the DOL is going to be a lot more active in this space, especially surveillance and decision making tools, decision support tools, I should say, become more embedded in the HR systems.

I also talked from a framework perspective. I kind of was talking a little bit about the White House blueprint for AI for an AI Bill of Rights. This was a 2022 document that sets out five non binding principles for AI use, and they're around safe and effective systems, algorithmic discrimination protections, data privacy, notice and explanation, human alternatives, considerations and fallbacks and so while it's not enforceable, this blueprint is really it's being used by a lot of folks in the industry, even some legislative bodies at the state and local level are looking at that blueprint as a way to shape how they might be thinking about fairness and accountability and AI, including in the workplace, because I think it does a really good job of really putting those things together and giving us something to consider and to think about outright.

And then there's three state and local action level areas that I think are prudent, because I think we're going to see some very similar type of adoption happening at either the state and or the local level coming up. So one is in California, where I live, and there's the California Privacy Rights Act, or CPRA, as we like to call it, CPRA, not CFRA, not the California Family Rights Act. This is the California Privacy Rights Act. This one includes restrictions on automated decision making, and it requires transparency and opt out rights in some employment context. So yes, you heard that right.

The employee has the ability to tell you that they do not want AI to be used in any decision that's being made for them from an employment context. So you have to watch those types of things and what's happening in California, but they're also introducing some things that they're looking at, broader AI legislation that's tied to employment decisions and algorithmic discrimination, some of the blueprint stuff we were talking about a moment ago from the White House. New York City law, law 144, which is where you are, Josh right? Requires employers to using automated decision tools. They're called AEDT. That's, you know, we all like an acronym, don't we, but they're requiring them. If you're using

any type of employment automated employment decision tools, you have to conduct an annual bias audit. You have to provide notice to the candidates or the employees, and again, you have to allow an opt out alternative. And I think it's important to recognize that most jurisdictions consider leave decisions and employment decisions. So you need to incorporate your leave and your accommodation decisions under this framework.

And I think that, you know, while the New York law really applies more to hiring right now, they don't explicitly call out and say what employment decisions they're talking about, I think it can easily be interpreted to include leave an accommodation. I think it's going to set a precedent for future regulation of any workplace leave systems that use any AI for decisioning. And then in Illinois, they passed this AI Video Interview Act, which is kind of interesting. And again, it's focused on hiring, but it's looking again at when you're using certain types of technology, and they really want to look for algorithmic transparency and consent. So this whole video interview act like you have to consent to the video act, and there's things that AI can do, like it's evaluating presence and body language, and there's all these different types of things that it's really setting out to legislate. So there are a few things that are out there that I think are going to become ever present across the states relatively quickly.

Josh Seidman

Wow. Well, I am glad I asked that one at the end here, Bryon, that was lovely. It is a lot, but the whole topic is a lot, and it was wonderful. There is so many pieces, rocks to look under to find more information on this topic at the federal level, with the White House blueprint that you were discussing, California, New York City and Illinois, none of those jurisdictions surprised me to be on this list, but the ways that some of these laws can trickle down into the leaves and accommodation space is fascinating. So thank you for that and by the way, for starting off this final response with references to the paid sick leave uh, world when, when those local laws were popping off and wrapping everyone's head around the swirling mess that is now today's paid sick leave landscape. So thank you for that, that was good, that we got paid sick leave in twice in today's episode.

Bryon Bass

We gotta do what you gotta do. I mean, we've got so much stuff to keep ahead of. It's not just paid sick leave. We've got paid family leave out there. We've got all kinds of things, leave laws now, some things are coming for sure.

Josh Seidman

The paid prenatal leave has been all the rage here in the city for the last several weeks. That one's been a lot of fun. Thank you, Bryon again, for sharing those insights, everything going on at the federal government and the ethical considerations that we've spoken about, as well as all the work that the think tank, the DMEC, is putting together and thinking about - these really important issues for the leaves and accommodations industry and what the industry needs going forward.

Bryon Bass

Thanks, Josh. It's really been a pleasure. This conversation is exactly the kind of proactive dialog we need as we continue to navigate AI's role in our work and at the DMEC, we're very committed to helping employers lead, not just react in this space.

Josh Seidman

Oh no, absolutely, that certainly is the case, and I'm excited to keep this conversation going with you personally, whether it's on another episode, maybe an episode 50 or so of the podcast, as well as at future conferences and all the goings on at the DMEC. So thanks again.

Bryon Bass

Thank you.

Josh Seidman

And thank you to our listeners for tuning in for today's episode. We will see you next time.