

Super Bowl Office Pools in Connecticut – What Box Are You In?

By [Daniel Schwartz](#) on January 23rd, 2012

It doesn't get much better than this for Connecticut residents.

Giants vs. Patriots for the Super Bowl.



[In a state where the loyalties are divided](#), a Super Bowl rematch from four years ago is nirvana.

And with such interest and enthusiasm, friendly wagering among friends will no doubt follow. But what happens when those people want to bring such wagering into the workplace in Connecticut?

In Connecticut, gambling and wagering are [prohibited by various state laws](#). There is no clear exception for “workplace” bets, or small bets. According to the statutes, a bet is a bet, regardless of where it is placed. (The obvious exceptions to this general rule are the Indian casinos in the state — Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun.)

However, there is one well-worn exception to the “no gambling” rule. Specifically, [Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 53-278b](#) states that people (not companies) are:

Go Giants!

“exempt from prosecution and punishment under this subsection for any game, wager or transaction which is incidental **to a bona fide social relationship**, is participated in by natural persons only and in which no person is participating, directly or indirectly, in professional gambling.”

And what about the office pool?

(The [traditional office pool](#) is a game where people pay, say \$5, for a “box” on a 10×10 grid. The grid then has the last number for each team’s score ranging from 0-9. If the score is 21 to 14 in favor of Giants, then the person who has the corresponding 1-4 box, in favor of the Giants, would win.)

[No less than Attorney General \(now U.S. Senator\) Richard Blumenthal chimed in](#) on the subject a few years ago and blessed the office pool so long as the person or company running the pool doesn’t take a cut of the money.

“Office pools are generally legal unless they’re done for a profit by the person organizing it,” Blumenthal said at the time. “In other words, if there’s a house, so to speak, or an organizer takes a cut (then it’s illegal).”

So, what’s the takeaway for employers? Even with the attorney general’s blessing, a company should probably not sponsor the pool directly. If a few employees want to organize, so much the better. But if that happens, someone should inform those individuals that any money collected should be distributed and they are not allowed to keep a cut of the money.

Of course, the company can always sponsor a contest (different from an office pool in that participants do not need to submit money to play) for employees to get involved with. For example, the company could give away a free “vacation day” to the winner of the office pool. It’s a fun, low-cost way to build morale within a department or office.

Regardless of your favorite team, this a fun time of year. My loyalties are squarely with the New York Giants. [Go Big Blue!](#)

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