

supervisor's order was wasteful, or argue the order falls outside his position description. And in those cases, it's simple: Work now, grieve later.

Oh wait. We nearly forgot about the *Follow the Rules Act*, which Congress sneaked through and the president signed in June of 2017. Yes loyal readers, that's the bill that FELTG Professor Emeritus and Former President Bill Wiley wrote could create a "[hellscape scenario](#)" for the federal workplace if passed. Well, it did pass without much fanfare.

The *Follow the Rules Act* extends whistleblower protections to federal employees who refuse to obey a direct order that would violate a rule or regulation, whereas previous protections extended only to those refusing an order that would violate a law. Bill wrote about a confused employee who thinks she's being ordered to violate a rule or regulation:

Well, what if it turns out she is wrong? What if her honest belief about what the order meant was simply mistaken? If she is fired for insubordination, if on appeal her argument that the order violated a rule is not affirmed, she has effectively bet her job that her interpretation was correct at the moment she chose to be insubordinate. Why in the world would we want to entice federal employees into this high-risk gamble with their livelihood when there are other ways to protect them from abuse?

It's a clear no-win situation. It's something you want to avoid, just like the anarchy that comes from a workforce that disregards supervisors' orders. That said, if you have a supervisor who has no fear of ordering an employee to something illegal, unsafe, or immoral, then you're going to be watching someone from your agency testify before Congress while millions watch. Gephart@FELTG.com

FELTG Case and Program Consultation Services

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- Preparing negotiators for bargaining with unions
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- Defending against nonmeritorious harassment complaints
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