Introduction to “The Vampire in the Next Cubicle: The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Undead”

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The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), first passed by the US Congress in 1990, signed into law by President George H.W. Bush on July 26, 1990 and later amended with the changes having taken effect on January 1, 2009, prevents, in certain situations, employers from discriminating against individuals who possess disabilities. While the ADA's coverage in dealing with employment obstacles for individuals with disabilities is extremely broad, the civil rights protections guaranteed under the Act are similar to those that were established by the federal government to protect women and individuals who were members of racial, ethnic and religious minority groups from employment discrimination. Although disabled individuals have greatly benefited from the implementation of the ADA over the last two decades, the unemployment rate of disabled persons still remains significantly higher than the unemployment rate for nondisabled individuals. Additionally, one should also be cognizant of the fact that the vast majority of working-age disabled persons are not currently in the labor force so the “true” unemployment rate for such individuals is undoubtedly much greater than the official rate reported by the government.

In this well-written, informative and provocative essay, Dr. David J. Prottas, Associate Professor in the Department of Management, Marketing, and Decision Sciences at Adelphi University, provides an excellent discussion of the ADA through analyzing the Act's applications with regards to vampires, a group that many Americans appear to be extremely interested in as indicated by the recent spate of books, television shows, and movies that depict vampires and human beings interacting with each other. The author's exploration of whether vampirism can be considered a disability under the ADA is written in the same spirit as that of “The Theory of Interstellar Trade” authored by Dr. Paul Krugman, the Nobel Prize winning economist. As is true of Dr. Krugman's paper, Dr. Prottas' treatise on the ADA displays a thoughtful analysis, combined with numerous insights, of an otherwise farcical topic.

I welcome employment relations scholars from around the globe to contribute future essays analyzing any employment-related topic from a wide variety of theoretical perspectives. Moreover, if any of the journal's readers would like to respond to particular essays published in the “Perspectives” Section, please do not hesitate to contact me with your proposal. I welcome both practitioner-based and scholarly-based articles. I hope that you enjoy this essay and find it most illuminating.

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