



Compliance TODAY

A PUBLICATION OF THE HEALTH CARE COMPLIANCE ASSOCIATION

SEPTEMBER 2018

**Strengthening the
relationship between
DOJ attorneys
and compliance
professionals**

an interview with
Michael D. Granston

by Roy Snell, CHC, CCEP-F

“Ethics Drift”: Compliance, politics, regulations, and social issues

Please don't hesitate to call me about anything any time.

612.709.6012 Cell • 952.933.8009 Direct

roy.snell@corporatecompliance.org

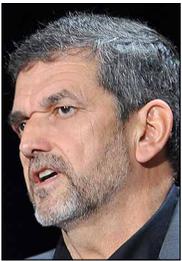
🐦 @RoySnellSCCE 🌐 /in/roysnell

Regulatory commentary, addressing social issues, and political commentary are important, but they are not in the job description of any *effective* compliance and ethics officer in the world. Those who came before compliance officers failed to prevent, find, and fix ethical and regulatory problems. They were distracted by something else. They failed to the degree that society created a new job called the compliance and ethics officer to implement an effective compliance and ethics program to prevent, find, and fix ethical and regulatory problems. Then they hired and paid all of us to prevent, find, and fix ethical and regulatory problems in their company. It would be ironic if, instead of doing what we are paid to do by our own companies, we insisted on doing what those who came before us did, and we fail again.

Some have advocated that our profession should comment on regulations, get involved in politics, and work on social issues. When asked why, they say, “We are the ethics and compliance profession, and it is our duty to speak out against any ethical issue we see

fit.” I call this “ethics drift.” Some people think that if they can wrap a problem of their choosing in an ethical blanket, then it’s the compliance and ethics profession’s job to fix it or comment on it. Our job is *business* ethics. Our job is not social ethics, regulatory ethics, political ethics, or anything that bothers you so much you claim it’s unethical and therefore, it’s business compliance and ethics professionals’ job to spend time on it.

For those who feel social, regulatory, and political issues are important and want that to be their job from 9–5, they should seek a profession that fits their interests rather than hijacking ours. Society desperately needs compliance and ethics professionals to prevent, find, and fix ethical and regulatory problems in their own organizations. Politics and social issues are very important, but our job is important, too. If compliance and ethics professionals fall into the social ethics and political ethics black hole, the Compliance department will become a cost center instead of a cost reduction center that prevents fines, penalties, and costly PR disasters. We will fail. Our profession will fail. These issues that other people are concerned about are all important, and they are great causes, but we are paid from 9–5 to prevent, find, and fix ethical and regulatory problems *for the companies that pay us to do so*. So I say, “Stay focused my friends.” 🗣️



Snell