



Re: Requested Changes to Police Hiring Methods (Sara Fine-Walsh email)

Petersburg Borough Assembly & Petersburg Community,

After the recent discussion of the Petersburg Police Departments hiring practices, it appears there may still be some concerns.

You received an email requesting changes to police hiring methods. These changes request the following questions being asked in the polygraph and/or the psychological exam.

1. Do you believe in white supremacy?
2. Do you believe that white people are inherently better than other people?
3. Do you believe that Alaska is the New White Homeland?
4. Do you believe that the Nazi Third Reich was the right way to run a government?

The in-depth background investigation method currently in use by the Petersburg Police Department has been successful in identifying the above listed concerns in previous applicants. If the applicant, makes it past the background investigation. They move on to the Pre-Employment Polygraph.

I contacted different agencies and private firms to make sure Petersburg Police Department is using up to date industry standards in polygraphs. I even contacted the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and spoke with one of their Polygraph Examiners. All information received re-enforces the Petersburg Police Department's hiring process meets or exceeds the industry standards.

Pre-Employment polygraphs consist of a lengthy pre-test interview where polygraph examiners cover multiple aspects of the applicant's entire life, then general screening test questions are formulated to confirm the applicant has not withheld information concerning different aspects of criminal activities.

Polygraph test questions cannot be formulated to address whether or not a person "believes" anything, to include other subjective opinions such as love, hate, ect. Relevant test questions should instead focus on behaviors; not believes, such as "Have you participated in..." or "Have you been a member or associate of any gang, subversive organization or supremacist group?" The polygraph examiner would then explain to the applicant what the definition of that question means for testing purpose, which can include behaviors associated to these topics.

Current pre-employment polygraphs used by the Petersburg Police Department cover the requested topics. Current questions are not exact wording as requested but elicit the desired responses and encourage conversation between applicant and polygraph examiner.

**Petersburg Borough Police Department**

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Once the polygraph examination is completed the applicant moves on the psychological evaluation. I reached out to Public Safety Psychological Services who provide the psychological evaluations for the Petersburg Police Department. I inquired about Bias's in pre-employment psychological evaluations, and I was reassured by Public Safety Psychological Services that biases are covered in the evaluations of police officers.

Public Safety Psychological Services provided me with a PowerPoint on Bias. I was also provided Bias Assessment Practices which covers Assessing Bias and Intolerance in the Preemployment Psychological Screening Process.

When you combine all the current hiring practices of the Petersburg Police Department, the Petersburg Police Department is providing the best possible police officer for the community.

As Chief of Police, I want to reassure the Petersburg Community the Petersburg Police Department takes great pride in the quality of service it provides to this community. Petersburg Police Department not only serves the community but views the Petersburg Community as its partner. Working together we can provide a better future for generations to come.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James Kerr", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

James Kerr  
Chief of Police  
Petersburg Police Department

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