

**Dennis Doverspike, Ph.D., ABPP**

**3171 N. Dover Road**

**Silver Lake, OH 44224**

**330-688-6187**

**dd1@uakron.edu**

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Dear Co-Chairs and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

As a professional and academic working in the area of human resources and public sector assessment, I am writing to express some of my concerns and reservations with reference to a Raised Bill No. 1049, *An Act Concerning Collective Bargaining of the Merit System*, which I understand to be currently under consideration by your committee. I became aware of this bill as a result of my work with various public sector organizations. The topic of the interaction of assessment, merit principles, and collective bargaining is of particular interest to me as I have written a number of papers dealing with the topic of the merit principle and public sector selection.

In terms of my professional qualifications, I am currently chair of the Professional and Scientific Affairs Committee of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources Assessment Council (IPMAAC). IPMAAC is the leading organization of applied personnel assessment professionals actively engaged in practice, research and training in personnel assessment to meet the needs of both public and private organizations. I formerly served on the Board of IPMAAC and currently serve on the Board of the Industrial-Organizational section of the American Board of Professional Psychology. In addition to providing consulting to private and public sector organizations, I am a Full Professor of Psychology at the University of Akron. I have authored over 100 articles and two books, many of which have dealt with testing and assessment issues.

As do most states and public sector organizations, The State of Connecticut currently bases the selection of employees on objective employment examinations and other structured personnel assessment tools. The design of the examinations is based upon professional guidelines and the principle of employment based upon individual merit. This reliance upon professional and scientific guidelines and merit principles would be severely tested and jeopardized by the adoption of the collective bargaining approach advocated for in Bill 1049.

The design of public sector examinations must already comply with a large body of professional and legal guidelines. Some of the applicable laws, professional guidelines and standards include the *Civil Right Act of 1991*, the EEOC *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures*, the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* of the American Psychological Association, the Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology's *Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures*, the U.S. Department of Labor's *Testing and Assessment: An Employer's Guide to Good Practices*, and the principles from various court cases. These guidelines impact all aspects of selection system development in the public sector.

Since the mid 1880s, public sector selection systems have been developed based upon merit principles. Over the last 150 years, the model of selection based upon merit has been further developed and refined. Merit is operationalized by the specific assessment devices used for a specific job, and this tailoring of tests is based upon professional principles emphasizing reliability, validity, and fairness. That is, through a scientific process, merit is defined and measured in terms of job-related characteristics. In addition, in the public sector, merit is usually defined in terms of the results of an open and transparent process. This process ensures that the selection systems used are seen as fair by all stakeholders.

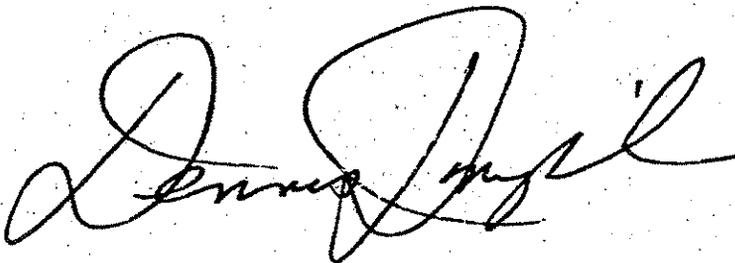
Thus, under current law, the selection and testing systems used by the State of Connecticut are designed to be fair, valid, reliable, open, transparent, and consistent with a variety of professional and legal guidelines. This is a complex task that requires a high degree of professional sophistication and is not a process that is easily handled within a collective bargaining environment.

Although I have a large number of concerns with regard to the present bill, I will mention two major ones. First, during the past twenty years, public sector organizations have realized that they must speed up the recruitment and hiring process. A great deal of progress has been made to this goal. In all likelihood, the addition of collective bargaining in this process would lead to greater cost and long time periods between postings and hiring.

Second, although overall public sector hiring systems are very open, during the period prior to the administration of the test, it is critical that the security of tests and items be maintained. This need for security during the early stages is not consistent with the use of a collective bargaining process. This potential threat to security would increase the costs and time involved in developing tests and assessment devices. In addition, it would make it more difficult to attract assessment professionals for job openings with the state.

Merit is a central concept underlying public sector selection. The development of merit based selection systems is a process that requires trained professionals and is not one that would benefit from inclusion in the collective bargaining system. The proposed bill could well have the effect of increasing the time and cost involved in developing assessments, while at the same time leading to security problems.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis Doverspike". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "D" at the beginning and end.

Dennis Doverspike, Ph.D., ABPP  
Licensed Psychologist, #3539 (OHIO)