

Jeffrey Smith  
President  
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Michael Mini  
Vice President  
Lou Hall  
Treasurer  
Todd Pasbet  
Secretary  
Peter Cassano  
Sergeant-at-Arms



Jeffrey Smith  
President  
P.O. Box 273  
Richwood, NJ 08874  
[www.NJSOA.org](http://www.NJSOA.org)  
Tel (856) 459-8000  
Cell/Text Mail (609) 805-6337  
Fax (856) 582-2449  
Office E-Mail [top183@comcast.net](mailto:top183@comcast.net)  
Web E-Mail [Jeffrey.S.Smith@doc.state.nj.us](mailto:Jeffrey.S.Smith@doc.state.nj.us)

## NEW JERSEY SUPERIOR OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

[www.NJSOA.org](http://www.NJSOA.org)

Thursday, January 24, 2008

Mr. Michael Johnson  
Manager, General Testing  
Division of Selection Services  
NJ Dept of Personnel  
P. O. Box 310  
North Clinton Avenue  
Trenton, NJ 08650

Re: Supervising Parole Officer Promotional Examination (PS6064I)

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Reference is made to the attached letter dated 12/21/07 regarding the upcoming written examination for Supervising Parole Officer (PS6064I) tentatively scheduled for March 2008.

This is to advise that the NJ Superior Officers Association, which is the certified bargaining agent representing the District Parole Supervisors/Lieutenants of the NJ Division of Parole has numerous concerns regarding the upcoming examination. After much research, we have been unable to locate any other State Law Enforcement Agency, which has incorporated the use of an "Essay Test" for their law enforcement personnel. As past practice, the NJ Division of Parole has always used the standard NJDOP multiple-choice test. As representatives of this Bargaining Unit, we disagree with the use of an unfounded and untested examination. Please provide the rationale and impetus for the use of this "Essay Test" format.

In addition, there are many other issues that raise great concern of this untested and unproven format. There are many questions with regard to the Department's decision to administer an "essay examination" for this title. The following are some of the questions that we have with regard to this examination. Please provide answers so that we may evaluate the issue and determine if action is necessary and/or warranted in representing our members.

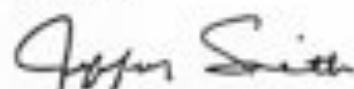
1. Who developed this specific test and how it will be graded and scored.
2. What criteria will be used to determine correct answers? E.G. If one candidate has four correct answers and uses improper grammar, and another candidate has three correct answers and uses proper grammar, how and who will be given a higher score?

3. What specific qualifications will the Scoring Administrator possess? Do they have a Masters Degree in English or proficiency in law enforcement or grammar?
4. The correspondence also indicates that there will be "plenty of time" (several hours) allowed for candidates who are not adept at keyboarding. Once again, the absence of a specific timeframe leads to the uncertainty. Specifically how much time will be allotted for completion of the examination?
5. Will there be "spell check " or any other grammatical aids used for this essay test?
6. Will "Subject Matter Specialists" prepare the examination questions?
7. Upon composing the essay answer on the computer will there be chance to review and alter it prior to submission, or will it be locked in place once the words are entered, similar to the Supervisory Battery Test, whereby, there is not an opportunity to alter an answer once chosen?
8. Will each question be given the same weight in the scoring process?
9. Will each subject area be given the same weight in the scoring process?
10. Will each subject area and/or question be rated independently?
11. In accordance with N.J.A.C. 4A: 4-2.15, what valid statistical method will be used as the scoring formula and/or conversion table? Please explain.

Finally, usually in an "Essay Test" format, the more content, the better your chances of scoring. Will this be the rule used in this particular Essay format? Regarding Parole Practice knowledge: there are numerous "modern accepted theories, practices and procedures concerned with the care, treatment and training of parolees". Once again this type of subject matter is nebulous and general. These items are not specific, factual or directly related to the type of knowledge, skills or abilities of a Supervising Parole Officer as delineated in the NJDOP job specifications. As is the case with all NJDOP tests, how and will there be an opportunity for a review of this "Essay" format in comparison to a standard correct version? After extensive review, these issues are open for numerous appeals, should this format be implemented.

In closing, we have cited several valid concerns regarding the logistics, administration, formulation and scoring of this unfounded test format for NJ Division of Parole District Parole Supervisors/Lieutenants. Please review the above noted concerns and provide answers to the questions posed. We are urging you to consider administering a promotional examination in the multiple choice format, as has been practice for the Division of Parole for many years. We look forward to a dialogue regarding the validity of this testing format. Thank you for your attention to this very important issue regarding the promotion of our law enforcement members. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Smith, President

CC:

Mario Iavicoli, Counsel  
Membership  
file