

(3) Setting the standards and policies governing medical examinations for fitness for duty and subsequent actions leading to separation, reassignment, or disability retirement.

First, with respect to the hiring process, the Commission prepares and issues the job standards and testing methods that are used. It has been the Commission's longstanding policy and practice to follow closely the requirement of the basic Civil Service Act of 1883 that "examinations for testing the fitness of applicants for public service shall be practical in their character and so far as may be shall relate to those matters which will fairly test the relative capacity and fitness of the persons examined to discharge the duties of the service into which they seek to be appointed."

May I say as an insertion, Mr. Chairman, I believe the congressional draftsmen, 82 years ago, were very sound in their approach in calling for examinations that were practical and were job oriented.

The competitive examining program directed by the Commission makes use of various methods for determining the relative fitness of applicants, such as: evaluations of experience and training from information submitted by the applicant; written and performance tests of skills, aptitudes and abilities; interviews; reference checks; and qualifications investigations.

The decision as to which devices to use is based on whether the method is practical, whether it is suitable for the purpose intended, and whether it is acceptable from a public relations standpoint.

Furthermore, we direct that measurement devices do not call for information concerning the political, racial, or religious opinions or affiliations of any persons, or cover knowledge gained only through such affiliations.

Over the years a variety of psychological tests have been developed which meet these standards. These are tests which measure the applicant's specific job knowledge or his aptitudes to learn to perform the duties of an occupation and to pursue a successful career.

I assume that your special inquiry is not concerned with this category of psychological tests. Rather, I understand your area of interest to be those tests and questionnaires which ask the applicant to reveal personal information, such as his feelings, his likes and dislikes, his personal and social habits, and the like.

Incidentally, I see no basic distinction between "questionnaires" and "tests"; I use the term "test" to cover the variety of so-called personality traits such as the applicant's behavior toward other people in terms of, for example, aggressiveness or anxiety. They generally yield scores which seek to show the degree to which the applicant has or exhibits such traits.

Personality tests of the type in question fail to satisfy merit system precepts for employment on a number of grounds:

- (1) They were developed for clinical use, and are not designed to measure the specific characteristics needed by persons working in particular occupations.

- (2) These tests are subject to distortion, either purposefully or otherwise. Therefore, the scores are undependable as a basis for employment decisions.

- (3) The scores on such tests can easily be grossly misinterpreted and misapplied by persons who are not qualified psychiatrists or psychologists trained to interpret such test results in the light of their total study of the individual.