



Public Safety Employees Association, Inc.
"Representing Alaska's Finest"
A.F.S.C.M.E. Local 83



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Senate Judiciary Committee
Chairperson Hollis French

My name is Meagan Carmichael. I have worked as a business agent with PSEA since October 2009. During that time, employers have relied on polygraph exams to support several terminations of police officer employees. In one case, an employee declined to take a poly during an internal investigation, and the employer punished the officer by immediately placing him on admin leave, even though the CBA prohibits the employer from disciplining employees who decline polygraphs. The employer relied on his refusal to terminate the officer, and as evidence of his guilt. In another case, a citizen filed a complaint against an officer, and the complainant failed a polygraph regarding the truthfulness of his complaint. The employer disregarded the fact that the complainant failed the polygraph, and gave him a second chance by giving him a second polygraph. The internal investigative report omitted the fact that the complainant failed the polygraph, and the employer fired the officer anyway. Eyewitness testimony from five different police officers supported the officer's version of events. In a third case, an officer volunteered for and passed 2 polygraphs about the truthfulness of his statements during an investigation, but the employer ignored the fact that he passed both polygraphs and fired the officer for allegations of dishonesty anyway. He was a veteran officer with over 10 years of experience, with no prior integrity issues or discipline. When officers are fired for dishonesty, they often face losing their police certifications, and hence their livelihoods. The APSC relies on employer's internal investigations to revoke certificates, and they rely on polygraphs to revoke certificates. Officers cannot get hired as police officers in other states if their certificates are revoked in Alaska. Police officers should enjoy the same rights and protections as any other citizen of the state of Alaska, and the US. This bill will not prevent employers from asking police officers to take polygraphs, but it will protect the officer's ability to decline to take polygraphs, because they are inherently unreliable and inadmissible in court.

Thank you for your time. I am available for questions.
Meagan Carmichael