

Wilmington, Delaware
July 9, 2020

#4838

Sponsor:

**Council
Member
Oliver**

Co-Sponsor:

**Council
Member
Harlee**

WHEREAS, the Delaware Council on Police Training has outlined 801 Rules and Regulations relating to the qualifications and admission into the Police Academy of Police Officers and potential officers in the State of Delaware; and

WHEREAS, requirements and regulations include being a citizen of the United States of America, a high school graduate, and declared psychologically sound by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist, and applicants with felonies or any criminal history are rejected. In addition, applicants are disqualified if they have been dishonorably discharged from military service; and

WHEREAS, applicants need only pass competency exams related to general law enforcement knowledge after acceptance and training at 70% to qualify; and

WHEREAS, these regulations also require the hiring department to complete a thorough background and character investigation of any applicant; however, there are no details regarding the extent of this character investigation, or the criteria utilized to determine eligibility; and

WHEREAS, social media is a strong determinant of character, and should be investigated thoroughly in the case of individuals applying to protect and serve a diverse community in order to identify persons with any affiliations or memberships with hate groups, such as Alt-Right, Neo-Nazis, KKK , or gang affiliations with drug related criminal activities symbolized through various skin tattoos, or hyper visible hate symbols or gang signs posted on social media pages ; and

WHEREAS, the Wilmington Police Department is not required to engage in implicit bias or sensitivity trainings to improve the unconscious attitudes or stereotypes of its members in community understanding, interaction, and policing; and

WHEREAS, a study by the Harvard Business Review in July 2019 revealed that diversity and sensitivity trainings helped employees “acknowledge their own racial biases, provide informal mentorship to racial minorities, and recognize the excellent work of their peers who were racial minorities;” and

WHEREAS, unconscious, or implicit, bias can be defined as “prejudice or unsupported judgments in favor of or against one thing, person, or group as compared to another, in a way that is usually considered unfair” from research conducted by Vanderbilt University; and

WHEREAS, given the increasing diversity of our country evident in nearly every City, Town, County, and State, Police officers need ongoing, cutting-edge training in both identifying and managing unconscious and implicit biases they may bring with them to the police force; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to rid public servants of such biases in order to improve their interactions with, and ensure they serve equally, all those in their communities they take an oath to protect; and

WHEREAS, training in racial literacy and cultural sensitivity would allow officers to better understand and value the diversity of American lifestyles, situations, and communication styles; and

WHEREAS, such diversity in the U.S. is present across all ages, races, genders, abilities, and nations of origin; and

WHEREAS, individuals unable to eliminate such biases should not be incorporated into the police force; and

WHEREAS, Forbes reports that, for unconscious bias and sensitivity training to be effective, it must be ongoing and long-term; and

WHEREAS, the Wilmington City Council is committed to a transparent and well-represented Wilmington, as well as a safe and secure Wilmington.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON that we encourage the Wilmington Police Department to immediately and permanently incorporate Unconscious Bias and Sensitivity trainings into their workplace curriculums and standards, beginning with trainings at the Police Academy. In addition, the Council strongly recommends that the Wilmington Police Department identify racist or gang related tattoos as immediate grounds for disqualification of potential applicants, and thoroughly investigate all applicant's social media channels for hyper visible hate symbols as major disqualifying elements of an applicant's character background checks.

Passed by City Council,

Attest: _____

City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: Those who serve and protect our communities should be familiar with, and value equally, all members of the community, regardless of gender, race, color, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation. Incorporating implicit bias, sensitivity, and diversity trainings and programs long-term is essential so that the Wilmington Police Department may identify and correct dangerous biases within officers and other employees. The Department needs to also become familiar with racist and gang-related symbology so that they can reject applicants with ties to such organizations. The Wilmington City Council encourages the immediate and permanent introduction and use of such programs and standards.