

For Immediate Release

May 20, 2015

Support for Justice Center Mixed

Nearly a year after the last failed special election to build a Johnson County Justice Center, support remains mixed. A University of Iowa Hawkeye Poll conducted March 23-29, 2015 of 657 residents of Johnson County indicated a wide division on how to proceed. 33.65 percent of respondents want to build a new justice center next to the courthouse to enhance courthouse space and security and replace the existing jail. 24.54 percent of respondents support building a new addition to the courthouse to address courthouse space and security concerns but continue to use the current jail. 31.34 percent wish to continue to use the current courthouse and jail with minor repairs as needed.

Support for the justice center differs by gender. A plurality of women support building a new justice center while men support the continued use of the current courthouse. 40.02 percent of women want to build a new justice center next to the courthouse, compared to 27.14 percent of men. 39.07 percent of men wish to continue using the current courthouse and jail with minor repairs as needed, compared to 23.76 percent of women. 22.44 percent of women support a new addition but continuing to use the current jail, compared to 26.67 percent of men.

Party identification also does not divide support for justice center. Most Democrats and Republicans support building a new justice center, 36.47 percent of Democrats and 37.65 percent of Republicans. Support was weakest among Democrats and Republicans for building a new addition but continuing to use the current jail, 22.84 percent of Democrats and 18.52 percent of Republicans. 32.42 percent of Independents prefer building a new addition but continuing to use the current jail, compared to 31.37 percent of respondents who wish to build a new justice center, and 29.37 percent support continuing to use current courthouse and jail.

Support for the justice center varies by household income. Among respondents who reported less than \$50,000 in household income, support was strongest for continuing to use the current courthouse and jail at 38.15 percent. A plurality of respondents who reported income greater than \$100,000 favor building a new justice center at 39.57 percent. Support is mixed for respondents with household income between \$50,000 and \$100,000: 32.49 percent support building a new justice center while 32.07 percent wish to continue to use the current courthouse and jail.

Respondents' beliefs about the police divide their support for the justice center. 43.73 percent of respondents who strongly agree that the police have the community's best interests in mind wish to build a new justice center while 18.2% prefer to use the current facilities. In contrast, 46.77 percent of respondents who strongly disagree, disagree, or neither agree or disagree that the police have the community's best interests in mind prefer to continue to use the current courthouse and jail with only 19.8% preferring to build a new justice center.

Voter turnout in the November 2014 midterm election does not affect justice center support. Among respondents who are sure they voted in the most recent election, 40.16 percent support

building a new justice center, 22.85 percent support building a new addition but continuing to use the current jail, and 26.19 percent prefer continuing to use the current courthouse and jail. Among respondents who did not vote in the most recent election, 43.28 percent support continuing to use the current courthouse and jail, 24.41 percent support building a new addition but continuing to use the current jail, and 24.78 percent support building a new justice center.

Background: The Hawkeye Poll was conducted March 23-29, 2015 by the Hawkeye Poll. The poll was conducted by the Hawkeye Poll Cooperative, comprised of UI faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students in political science, with the cooperation and facilities of the Iowa Social Science Research Center, directed by UI Political Science Professor Frederick J. Boehmke. The faculty adviser for the poll is UI Professor of Political Science Frederick J. Boehmke. The poll is a teaching, research and service project of the UI Department of Political Science. The Department of Political Science, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Office of the Provost fund the poll.

Respondent identification: A random sample was acquired with 50 percent household landline numbers and 50 percent mobile phone numbers. For households, an initial attempt was made on answering the phone to reach the “youngest male who is 18 years or older.” All who stated they were over age 18 and willing to participate in the survey were included.

Sample: The survey consisted of 657 Johnson County, Iowa residents; the margin of error is +/- 3.9 percent. Among these respondents, 50.08 percent were Democrat, 13.36 percent Republican and 31.72 percent Independent. 39.91 percent considered themselves moderate, while 43.15 percent self-identified as liberal and 16.95 percent as conservative.

Weighting: Reported results are weighted by sex and age.

MEDIA CONTACTS: Abigail Rury, Hawkeye Poll, 319-335-3381 (office), 319-331-5214 (cell), abigail-rury@uiowa.edu; Frederick Boehmke, Hawkeye Poll, 319-335-2342 (office), 716-866-9277 (cell), frederick-boehmke@uiowa.edu.

END