

For Immediate Release

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### **Police support among Johnson County residents is high**

Overall trust of police is high in Johnson County, Iowa, according to a University of Iowa Hawkeye Poll. The poll also finds local citizens believe the police have the community's best interest in mind. County residents also support equipping police officers with body cameras.

The poll of 657 county residents, conducted March 23-29, 2015, finds strong trust in the police. 70.66 percent of respondents completely trust or somewhat trust the police, while 5.90 percent completely distrust the police, and 12.20 percent somewhat distrust the police.

Trust for police increases with age. 62.61 percent of 18–34 year-olds completely trust or somewhat trust the police and 70.86 percent of respondents 35–54 years old trust the police. Trust for the police increases significantly for 55–69 year-olds to 84.78 percent. 84.83 percent of respondents 70-years and older trust the police.

The results also show that female respondents trust the police more than men do. 77.87 percent of women respondents completely trust or somewhat trust the police compared to 63.31 percent of men. Conversely, 22.23 percent of men distrust the police versus 14.05 percent of women.

“We work very hard on the relationship with our community and do not take the issue of public trust lightly,” says Iowa City Police Chief Samuel Hargadine. “We value traits like problem solving which sometimes means making an arrest and sometimes it doesn't. We also value treating people fairly with dignity and respect even if they are being arrested.”

Goodwill for the police extends beyond measures of trust. 73.87 percent of respondents strongly agree or agree that the police have the community's best interests in mind. As with trust, this sentiment increases with age. 69.66 percent of 18–34 year old respondents and 82.85 percent of 55–69 year-old respondents believe the police have the community's best interest in mind.

The Iowa City Police recently announced that it would soon be equipping its officers with body cameras. Hawkeye Poll data show public support for this action is high; 84.6 percent of respondents support legislation that requires police officers to wear body cameras. 92.36 percent of Democrats, 76.61 percent of Republicans, and 79.51 percent of Independents support legislation requiring officers to wear body cameras. “We were researching body cameras a year prior to the events that occurred in Ferguson, Missouri,” says Iowa City Police Chief Samuel Hargadine. “Very soon we will have body cameras deployed and we are presently working with minority representation groups and the ACLU regarding the policies and privacy issues that go with implementing this technology.”

The data also show that police trust depends on where respondents live. For example, 63.05 percent of respondents who stated they lived in Iowa City completely trust or somewhat trust the police compared to 82.91 percent of respondents who live outside of Iowa City. The same pattern

holds for community interest: 71.16 of respondents who live in Iowa City believe the police have the community's best interest in mind, compared to 78.24 for respondents who do not live in Iowa City. Iowa City residents are more supportive than county residents of legislation requiring officers to wear body cameras and 52.10 percent of Iowa City residents strongly support the legislation compared to 38.01 percent of residents outside Iowa City.

"I was very pleased at the results of the poll and not surprised at the same time," says Hargadine. "There is always more work to do, one more person to talk to and one more issue that needs attention. As public servants you never stop working on those issues or listening to the problems people have and trying to solve what those problems are."

Johnson County Sheriff Lonny Pulkrabek agrees. "We appreciate the community support...[c]learly my co workers are doing our job as best as we can. We recognize that at times our job is very difficult but can be very rewarding and we always love to hear feedback from our community."

*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.

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