

CONFIDENCE IN POLICE ATTITUDES OF PENNSYLVANIANS

MOST PENNSYLVANIANS HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THEIR POLICE

SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH:

- **Over 80% of Pennsylvanians are confident in their police**
- **Women have more confidence in the police than men**
- **Whites have more confidence in police than Blacks or African Americans**

Most Pennsylvanians have at least some confidence in the police to protect them from violent crime (80.1%) and to solve crime (86.6%). A majority of Pennsylvanians (67.7%) trust the police. Similarly, most Pennsylvanians rate the police as fair when they deal with the public (85.2%), like giving citizens outcomes they deserve (80.7%).

This confidence in police seems to influence citizens' support of military grade equipment: more than two-thirds (69.2%) of Pennsylvanians agree that police should have military grade equipment. Some disagree because they believe the police do not need it (17.7%), they cannot trust the police to make good decisions (5.6%) or for some other reason (7.5%). Overall, PA residents are confident police will use such equip-

ment wisely.

While citizens are generally supportive of police, their confidence varies by social group. For example, a greater percentage of women (85.2%) than men (74.9%) have at least some confidence in the ability of the police to protect them from violent crime.

In particular, confidence in police is divided among racial groups in Pennsylvania. A greater percentage of Whites (90.5%) have at least some confidence in the police to solve crimes than do Blacks or African Americans (74.3%). Compared to Whites (20.4%), more Blacks or African Americans (43.2%) believe that the police presence in their neighborhood is inadequate. Finally, Whites (50.3%), more often than Blacks or African Americans (23.3%), rate the fairness of police high or very high.

THE RESEARCH

The Penn State Crime and Justice Poll is a survey of 600 randomly-selected Pennsylvanians designed to assess attitudes and beliefs about crime and the criminal justice system. Topics include:

- Attitudes toward police
- Prison policy
- Community corrections
- Capital punishment
- Militarization of police
- Police visibility
- The PA sex offender registry
- Juvenile justice
- Parole policy
- and other topics

The Pennsylvania Crime and Justice Poll was developed by the Criminal Justice faculty of the School of Public Affairs at Penn State Harrisburg and sponsored by the Penn State Justice and Safety Institute. Data were collected by The Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg.

You can get more information on the PA Crime and Justice Poll and the Criminal Justice Program online at: <http://harrisburg.psu.edu/public-affairs/criminal-justice>

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