



*The Beacon Hill Institute for  
Public Policy Research*

# News Release

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## *Poll Shows Widespread Voter Support for Civilian Flaggers*

BOSTON – (August 6, 2008) - A poll conducted jointly by Suffolk University's Political Research Center and Beacon Hill Institute, in conjunction with Channel 7 News, shows that 86% of registered voters in Massachusetts favor the use of civilian flaggers at work sites on public roads.

The poll comes as Massachusetts residents await a decision by the state Secretary of Transportation and Public Works on a \$3.5 billion transportation bond bill, enacted in April, under which he "may promulgate regulations and recommend guidelines for the use of police details at public works sites."

Under current law, the job of directing traffic at public works sites is, in effect, reserved exclusively for paid uniformed police officers. The April legislation authorizes the Secretary of Transportation and Public Works to make recommendations "on the use of alternative personnel" for directing traffic at the work sites. In other states, the work is generally performed by civilian flaggers, rather than uniformed police officers.

The Political Research Center asked 400 registered voters the following question:

*Currently, only uniformed police officers are used for the purpose of directing traffic around work sites on Massachusetts public roads. Other states use civilian flaggers. Would you favor a change in Massachusetts laws that would allow civilian flaggers to direct traffic around work sites on public roads?*

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The responses were:

	<b>Number Responding</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	345	86%
<b>No</b>	42	11%
<b>Undecided</b>	12	3%
<b>Refused to Respond</b>	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	400	100%

The question was one of several in the latest poll conducted by the Suffolk University Political Research Center. Commenting on the responses, David Paleologos, Director of the Center, said: "This question had the most lopsided margin of all the questions posed in the poll. Across age, gender, geography, and political party affiliation, it was overwhelmingly supported."

David G. Tuerck, Executive Director of the Beacon Hill Institute at Suffolk University, observed that "in a time of severe budget constraints, voters in the Commonwealth appear to see the use of civilian flaggers as a needed cost-saving change."

The 7NEWS/Suffolk University poll was conducted Thursday, July 31, 2008 through Sunday, August 3, 2008. The margin of error is +/- 4.90 percent at a 95 percent level of confidence. All respondents from the statewide survey were registered voters in Massachusetts. Marginal and cross-tabulation data will be posted on the Suffolk University Political Research Center web site - [www.suffolk.edu/college/1450.html](http://www.suffolk.edu/college/1450.html) - on August 6, 2008. Additional questions are embargoed for broadcast on August 13, 2008.