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FOR PUBLIC POLICY
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New Report Examines Arizonans' Trust in Police

Most Arizonans generally trust police officers and sheriff's deputies to do the right thing, but they remain wary of the potential for abuse of police power, according to a new report from Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University.

Confidence and Caution: Arizonans' Trust in the Police, which was commissioned by the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board (AzPOST), discusses Arizonans' outlooks on their law enforcement officers and traces the origins of some of their attitudes.

"Few relationships are more important to the quality of life in Arizona than that between residents and their law enforcement officers. Yet few relationships are also as complex and subject to change," according to Bill Hart, senior policy analyst and an author of the report. "Arizonans are nearly as concerned about how officers conduct themselves during contacts with the public as what actions the officers take. Little things can make a big difference in the public's trust."

In preparing ***Confidence and Caution***, Morrison Institute conducted focus groups across Arizona and commissioned a statewide public opinion poll. The research showed that Arizonans most value specific characteristics in law enforcement personnel. They want officers who are honest, respectful, fair, patient, and law-abiding.

Richard Toon, senior policy analyst and the report's co-author, said: "Arizonans appreciate the difficulty of police work, but the difficulty is no excuse for misdeeds, even small ones. They want their law enforcement officers to be more visible, more diverse, and more clearly subject to responsive complaint and disciplinary systems."

Morrison Institute for Public Policy (School of Public Affairs, College of Public Programs) is an Arizona State University resource for objective policy analysis and expertise. Morrison Institute researches public policy issues, informs policy makers and residents, and advises leaders on choices and actions.

Confidence and Caution: Arizonans' Trust in the Police is available at www.morrisoninstitute.org.