Poll shows big support for civilian flaggers

Boston Herald By Jay Fitzgerald
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Massachusetts residents overwhelmingly support use of civilian flaggers, rather than uniformed cops, to direct traffic at public road projects, a new poll finds.

About 86 percent of voters surveyed said they preferred civilian flaggers over police, according to the survey by Suffolk University's Beacon Hill Institute and WHDH-TV (Ch. 7).

The poll comes as the Patrick administration, via its transportation department, mulls changes to the law for details.

The current system has been the target of criticism from those who say it's nothing more than a paid perk for police.

However, after Gov. **Deval Patrick** and legislative leaders floated a plan earlier this year to possibly change the system, police unions lobbied hard to preserve the law, saying public safety is at stake.

The transportation agency is set to make recommendations for possible changes later this summer.

David Tuerck of the Beacon Hill Institute said he knew most people don't like costly police details but "I just didn't expect 86 percent."