



Police Recruitment and Retention in Illinois

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Working with State Senator Chapin Rose's Office

Caleb Griffin is a graduate student in Political Science at the University of Illinois who participated in the Policy and Research Legislative Fellows Program from 2022-2023.

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Purpose

In 2022, the Center for Social and Behavioural Science at the University of Illinois launched the Legislative Fellowship Program. The program pairs PhD students at the

University of Illinois with state legislators. This particular project is the culmination of work with the office of Illinois Senator Chapin Rose. Its purpose is to research the current state of police retention and recruitment in Illinois.

1.2 List of Methods and Data Sources

1.2.1 Literature Review

A literature review was undertaken that focused on previous research on the causes of problems in police recruitment and retention. The primary scholarly work used in this report comes from the following sources:

- Hiring and Retention Issues in Police Agencies (Koper, Maguire, Moore, & Huffer, 2001).
- Police Recruitment and Retention for the New Millennium. (Wilson, 2010).
- Motivations for becoming a police officer: Re-assessing officer attitudes and job satisfaction after six years on the street (White, Cooper, Saunders, & Raganella, 2010).
- Stuck on a Plateau: Obstacles to Recruitment, Selection, and Retention of Women Police (Cordner & Cordner, 2011).
- Masculinity in Policing: The Need to Recruit More Women in American Police Departments (Rushin, 2021).
- Is It Cool to Be a Cop? Exploring the Differential Impact of Ferguson on Police Applicants (Rhodes, & Tyler, 2021).
- The impact of police–community relations: Recruitment and retention concerns of local police agencies (Skaggs, Harris, & Montgomery, 2021).
- Revisiting the Ferguson effect: Law enforcement perception of recruitment in the post George Floyd era (Copeland, Del Carmen, & Semukhina, 2022).

1.2.2 Existent Data Sources for Illinois and National Police Statistics Used

- FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program: Police Employee Data (1995-2019). This relies on self-reported statistics from police agencies given to the FBI.
- Recruitment & Retention Member Survey (Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, 2022). This is a survey of 239 police agencies in Illinois. This is referred to as the IACP survey in this report.

1.2.3 New Data Source

Survey and Focus Group An original online survey was designed for this project and administered to a convenience sample of 125 chiefs of police, regular officers, and police

recruits.¹ This survey (hereafter called the Griffin survey) was paired with a focus group of police officers in a medium-sized municipality in Illinois (hereafter just called police focus group).

1.3 Preview of Findings and Recommendations

Police recruitment and retention are significant problems in Illinois, which mirror a national trend. Perceived anti-police legislation such as the Safe-T act, critical rhetoric by elected officials, and a general sense of a lack of state support all negatively affect recruitment and retention. Recommendations to improve recruitment and retention include maintaining adequate funding for policing, increasing monetary incentives to diversify the force, and to include better signaling of legislative support for policing in general.

1.4 Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Dr. Michael Schlosser, who was Director of the Police Training Institute at the time of writing, and who made the data collection possible. Thank you also to Senator Chapin Rose, Landon Stenger, and Dr. Scott Althaus. And finally, thank you to the Center for Social and Behavioural Science for funding this fellowship.

2 What are the most important factors in determining retention and recruitment generally?

In 2001, the U.S. Department of Justice funded a meta-review of every study on determinants of change of police force size in the U.S. over time (Koper et al.). The report, after reviewing 55 previous studies, determined that there were no consistently predictive variables across the studies in determining police force size (ibid, iii). The most commonly reported variables, however are:

- **Fiscal constraints and budget.** The most commonly cited source of determining force size (p.3).
- **Lack of qualified recruits.** The smaller the pool of applicants, the more difficult it is to fill positions (iii). This is especially true when trying to promote diversity within police ranks.
- **Strength of national economy.** When economic conditions are strong, and unemployment low, police officers have more choices for potentially lucrative positions outside of policing (ibid, p.4; Copeland et al., 2022).

¹The online survey was sent to two groups of individuals. The first were police cadets at the Police Training Institute at the University of Illinois. 89 cadets completed the survey. The second were Illinois chiefs of police and regular officers. These individuals were recruited to complete the survey through the existing research contact list of Dr. Michael Schlosser, the outgoing director of the Police Training Institute. 58 of these solicitations resulted in completed surveys. Of the initial 147 respondents, 22 were dropped from the analysis for failing to complete a requisite amount of the survey. Survey demographics: Gender: men (82%), women (14%), other (5%). Race/Ethnicity: White (82%), Black (6%), Asian (1%), Other (10%). 14% were also Latino. Ideology: conservative (32%), centrist (37%), liberal (8%), unknown (24%). In terms of rank, 68% of the sample are recruits and 32% full-time police officers or Chiefs of Police. Like many convenience samples, this is not representative of police as a whole. In particular, this sample is more White and politically conservative than police generally.

- **Level of crime.** Only partially explains police force strength (Koper et al., 2001, p.8), but is the second most cited statistic by surveys of police officers. Police officers are less desirous to join in areas where they have higher volumes of call responses. That being said, policymakers do usually choose to increase funding for the police to incorporate new officers when they perceive that crime might be rising, but they don't tend to remove funding when crime rates drop (ibid, p.28). That may explain that lack of consistent evidence seen in previous studies.
- **Racial and economic inequality** This refers to the perception that police represent elites of one racial or economic group used to monitor or punish non-elites. It only partially explains police force strength (p.8).
- **Population density in jurisdiction.** More densely populated areas need greater numbers of police officers.
- **Decisions by elected officials in jurisdiction.** Fourth-most cited response to surveys of Chiefs of Police in determining force size. Does conflate somewhat with fiscal constraints and budget, given that these are dependent in part upon the decisions of elected officials.

In the years subsequent to this meta-review, another factor needs also to be considered: the new heights of police unpopularity due to incidents of police brutality, what is often called “the Ferguson effect” in the literature. Three recent studies have sought to determine the extent of the Ferguson effect. Using a survey of Police Chiefs in Texas, Copeland et al. (2022) report that the Ferguson effect is making officer recruitment difficult but is not impacting retention; furthermore, the Ferguson effect is less important for both retention and recruitment than budget and job market competitiveness. However, two qualitative studies (Adams, 2019; Laverone, 2017) *do* list the Ferguson effect as reasons officers have given for quitting or contemplating quitting.

That is intuitive. As is the case with any job, the attractiveness of policing depends in part upon the prestige of policing as a job, and the reputation of police officers generally (see Skaggs et al., 2022, p.2). The general unpopularity of the police resulting from the Ferguson effect has led to highly visible campaigns to defund the police. In a study of police officers undertaken after the peak of these movements, Skaggs et al. (2022) found that the primary major concern of these officers was a perceived lack of support, including support from media, the community, and city officials (p.6). These were not the only factors, however. Officers also listed pay levels and departmental climate as factors for wanting to quit.

2.1 Illinois cadet responses about not wanting to join

An open-ended survey question was included for cadets specifically in the Griffin survey, asking them to list factors that they considered when joining the police force; specifically, reasons that gave them pause when considering joining the police. These generally fell into the following five categories:

Dangers and safety concerns: This includes concerns about being harmed or killed on the job, fear of danger to oneself or one’s family, and worries about potential liabilities or lawsuits.

Public perception and negative attitudes towards police: This includes concerns about being hated, lack of community support, negative public opinion, and media portrayal of police.

Job-related factors: This includes issues related to pay, lack of room for growth, difficulties with the hiring process, grooming concerns, and concerns about policies and laws limiting officers’ ability to do their jobs.

Family-related concerns: This includes worries about being away from family, the toll the job takes on family life, and concerns about losing friends or loved ones due to negative perceptions of police.

Stress and mental health: This includes concerns about the mental demands and strain of the job, as well as worries about judgement from others and the potential for divorce.

3 Is police recruitment and retention a problem in Illinois?

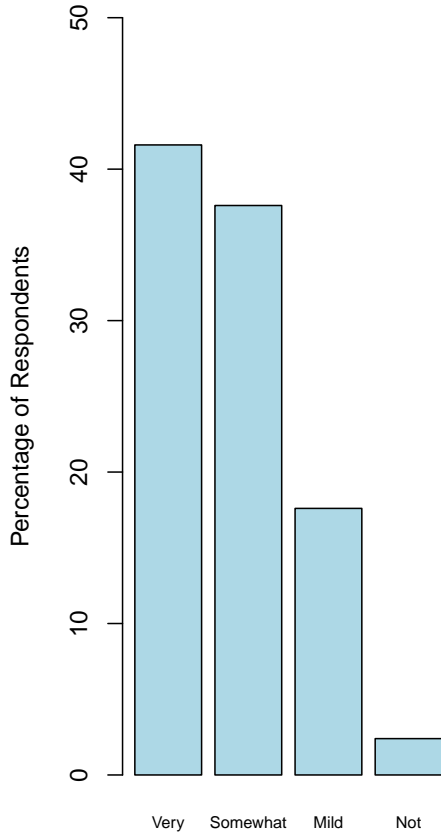
In 2022, the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police (hereafter IACP) surveyed 239 police agencies in Illinois on issues related to recruitment and retention (Recruitment & Retention Member Survey, 2022). According to respondents in their survey, recruitment and retention were the two biggest problems facing police departments in Illinois. 60% of the police agencies in Illinois reported being short-staffed in 2022, and with 846 anticipated retirements and resignations, that percentage could increase. Furthermore, 20% of agencies have a current shortage of more than 10 % of what they are authorized to have. And in terms of recruitment, nearly half of the new recruits are lateral hires—meaning that half of the officers were hired from a different police department, rather than being new hires.

The trend line is not encouraging. Consider that the IACP survey found that most police departments in Illinois reported over a 40% reduction in the number of people taking police entrance exams when compared to an IACP survey from three years previous. And *all* agencies in the survey reported experience a reduction in both the quality and quantity of candidates.²

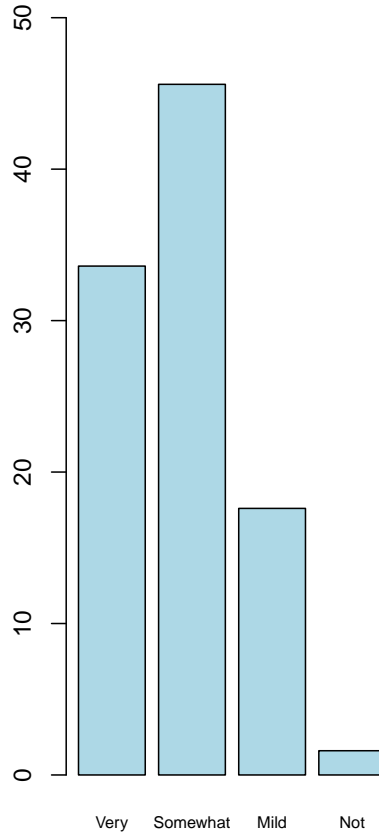
The Griffin survey found similar results.

²A CNN story from March 22, 2022 paints a grim portrait of this trend (see <https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/18/us/chicago-police-recruiting-standards>) The story reported that only 3,800 people took the Chicago Police Department’s entrance exam in 2022 as compared to an average of 22,000 in previous years.

How Problematic is RECRUITMENT



How Problematic is RETENTION?



Note that, of the two, recruitment was deemed as the more urgent problem. Nevertheless, in both cases, 78% of respondents deemed retention and recruitment to be a serious or somewhat serious problem, and only 2% of respondents thought it not a problem at all.

What does this look like on the ground? A respondent in the police focus group related that when he joined the force about 15 years ago, about a thousand people or more would show up for recruitment day. Now the same recruitment day attracts only thirty or forty candidates.

So is there a police retention and recruitment problem in Illinois? Yes; most departments cannot fill all their vacancies, the pool of potential recruits is smaller, and police themselves are extremely worried about recruiting new members and retaining old ones.

3.1 Why is understaffing so problematic?

Problems in retention and recruitment lead to understaffing, which is problematic for two broad sets of reasons.³ The first regards changes to the composition of the pool of admitted applicants. Officer shortages can lead to a lowering of standards (or shortening of training time) in order to admit more candidates, and hence lead to less qualified candidates becoming police officers, a trend which has “demonstrably negative consequences” (see Koper et al. 2001, p.4). The argument is intuitive: less choice in candidates leads to the hiring of less qualified candidates. This paired with the necessity of quicker training time to fill urgent positional voids, leads to an overall decline in the quality of officers in the state, which in turn leads to worse outcomes. Worse outcomes leads to lower regard of the police, and less desire to join the police force among potential candidates. A problematic cycle.

Secondly, there is the toll understaffing takes on the ability of police officers to do their job. Staffing shortages can worsen response times, decrease officer safety and increase burn out. A respondent in the police focus group, for example, mentioned the apprehension he sometimes feels when called on to investigate a scene knowing that (because of understaffing), backup is too far away to provide adequate help. In that case, he faces a choice of proceeding alone or waiting for backup, each of which carries potential negative consequences that are exacerbated by understaffing. Another respondent mentioned the toll understaffing takes on quality of life for police officers; nearly everyone in his department is already logging significant overtime. Each illness, holiday break, or other leave of absence stresses the department more.

3.2 Is this an Illinois or national problem?

Illinois is certainly not alone in experiencing a problem with police retention and recruitment; this has been a national trend too. Some Illinois legislators have claimed that the lack of officers is due to a boom in police hiring in the 1990s; the majority of whom are now retiring.⁴ That is certainly part of the problem, but not the entirety of it.⁵ Law en-

³Note that this report presupposes a status quo arrangement for policing; that is, that the state should fund a law enforcement agency for keeping the peace and enforcing the law. One potential response to any problem in police recruitment or retention is to call for further divestment of funding for policing and to either replace it (in part or whole) with social welfare programs. This document does not explore such options for two reasons. The first reason is audience-directed. As a document intended for consumption by State officials (and their constituents), there appears to be little appetite for exploring such options at this time. The second is one of scope. Exploring such options involves imagining and examining many hypotheticals about how society would need to be ordered for policing to be abolished or replaced (in whole or part). That is beyond the scope of this report.

⁴See for example: <https://www.illinoisenatedemocrats.com/caucus-news/75-senator-doris-turner-news/3955-turner-celebrates-newly-signed-law-to-increase-police-retention-and-recruitment>

⁵It is true that federal policymakers invested billions of dollars in expanding the nation’s police forces through the COPS program in the 1990s, but Koper et al. note that only about half of police departments grew in size during the latter part of the 1990s (2001, p.27). It appears that, overall, about 61,000 officers were hired across the nation as part of the COPS program (Koper et al., 2001, p.45). Koper and colleagues do caution, however, that retiring Baby Boomers will likely exacerbate the officer shortage (2001, p.3-4). Most of this happened during 2010 to 2014, however (Copeland et al., 2022). Further wariness about only accepting COPS program hiring as the determining factor should also arrive from the fact that only about half of police officers retire as police officers in large police departments; a number that drops to one fifth in smaller departments (Koper et al., 2001, iii-iv). Many of these officers leave the force long

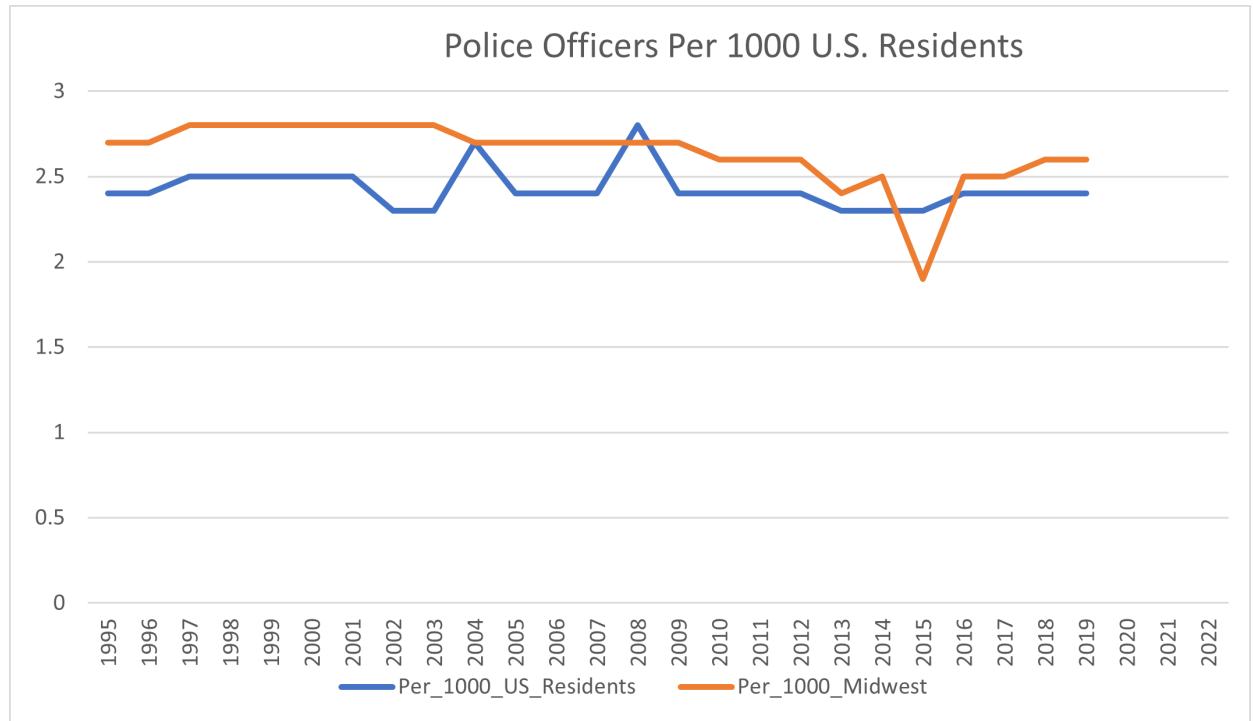
forcement has had a difficult time filling vacancies for about a decade, however (Copeland et al., 2022). Copeland and colleagues do lay part of the blame on retirees, but also cite the aftereffects of the 2008 financial crisis, increasing requirements for new police officers, and difficulties in fulfilling demands for a more diverse police force. They also report that demographic change has played a result: Americans as a whole are less qualified for the demands of being a police officer—no drug use, good physical health, etc.—compared to previous eras. Furthermore, the generations that police are targeted for new recruits (Millenials and Gen Z) tend to value more rapid advancement opportunities, better work-life balance, and more flexibility than is offered by policing (Wilson et al., 2010). They are also more likely to be affected by the criticism of police over matters such as racial profiling and excessive use of force which discourage some from the profession.

Regardless of the cause, police departments are reporting more difficulties filling vacancies and retaining officers than ever before. For example, in a 2021 survey of state and local governments, 64% of respondents listed policing as a hard-to-fill position, the highest on their list of positions besides nursing (Young, 2021). This has increased over 21% over 10 years based on the same survey administered in earlier years. And a 2019 and 2021 report by the Police Executive Research forum found that that police departments across the country are facing reduced staffing, seeing less applicants, and officers departing (resignations were up 42% in 2021 compared to previous years).⁶

This has not yet related in a substantial drop in sworn officers according to the national police employee data provided by the FBI as part of its Uniform Crime Reporting Program (see graphic below), but if current trends continue, will soon do so.

before then. Consider also a 1999 national survey of police departments that found that two thirds of officers who left small agencies did so within five years, and one third in large agencies did the same (Koper et al., p.4).

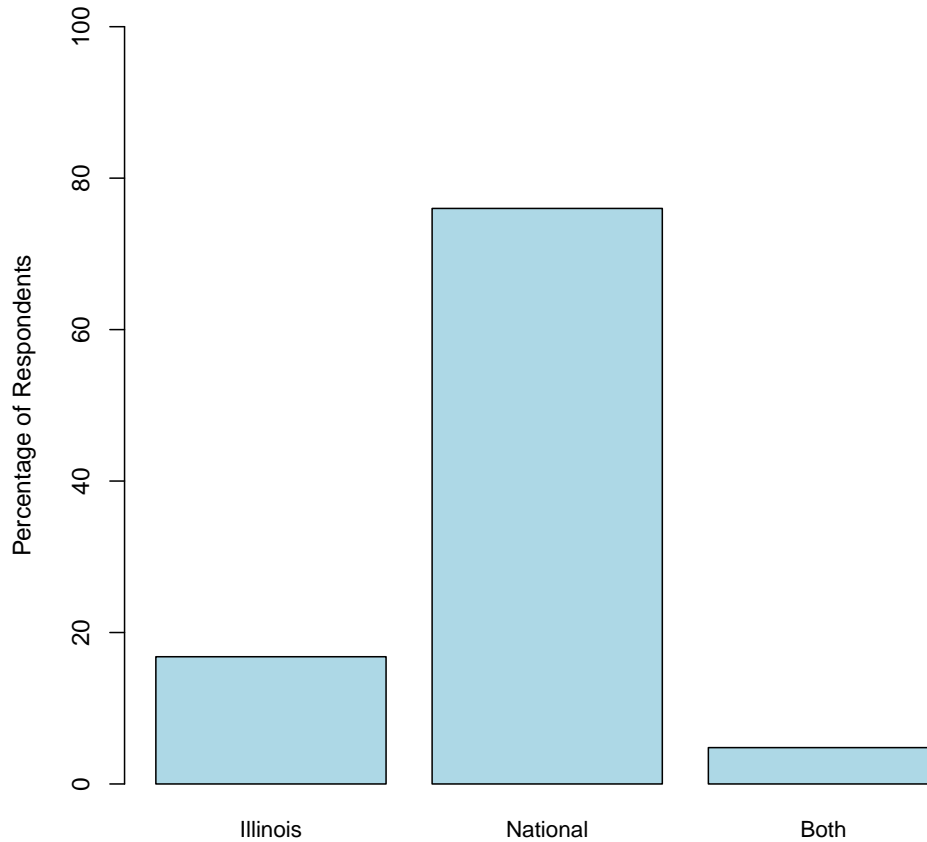
⁶See also this CNN news story on the report: <https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/18/us/chicago-police-recruiting-standards>



The FBI also keep individual state data on the number of police employees, but it is more variable given that it relies on voluntarily reports (and hence smaller samples are more volatile). That data, however, suggests that in Illinois specifically, there has been a drop from 4 officers per 1,000 residents in 2008 to 3 officers per 1,000 residents in 2019.

The Griffin survey, however, found that officers in Illinois considered struggles with police recruitment and retention to be a national problem rather than only an Illinois one.

Is this an Illinois or National Problem?



That being said, this report also considers unique factors in Illinois that might make retention and recruitment more difficult. The primary difference cited by law enforcement are legislative efforts such as the SAFE-T act that affect policing in Illinois, as well as the general “climate” of perceived friendliness towards police that police officers attribute to the state.

3.3 Police Climate in Illinois as a Result of Legislative Action

3.3.1 SAFE-T Act

What is the SAFE-T act?

HB 3653 SA 2, also called the Omnibus Police Reform Bill or the SAFE-T act, was passed in Illinois on January, 2021. Since then, three “trailer” bills have also passed that

amended the original language and stipulations of the 764 page document. The act in its original form had many stipulations, but in my reading of the bill and reactions to the bill, the ones with any plausible likelihood to affect police recruitment and retention in Illinois are the following:

1. Requires death in custody of law enforcement to be reported to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority which will be public, including an annual report evaluating deaths in custody as a trend.
2. Police misconduct records shall be permanently retained.
3. Requires statewide minimum standards for Officer mental health screenings.
4. Requires officer-worn body cameras, which will be implemented by city size by 2025. Law enforcement agencies must provide an annual report on the use of officer-worn body cameras.
5. Requires additional reporting for officer involvement in incidents with mental health, and the discharging of firearms.
6. Bans the use of equipment from military surplus programs.
7. Alters the conditions when force (including deadly force) is allowed to be used. In the new language, an officer is justified in use of force when he “reasonably believes, based on the totality of the circumstances, to be necessary to effect the arrest and any force which he reasonably believes, based on the totality of the circumstances, to be necessary to defend himself or another from bodily harm while making the arrest.” However, if the officer reasonably believes that the person to be arrested can be apprehended at a later date and that the person is not likely to cause bodily harm to others, use of force is not allowed (see p.283 of act). Also, prior to making any use of force, the officer should make reasonable efforts to identify themselves and warn that deadly force may be used. And deadly force shall not be used against someone suspected of committing a property offense. Also prohibits restraints above the shoulder, projectiles that target the head, pelvis, or back; indiscriminate projectiles into crowd, or use of chemical irritants without warning that they will be used. It also prohibits deadly forces to prevent escape unless great bodily harm will result (p.288 of act). It also stipulates that police officers have to intervene when force is excessive (p.290 of act).
8. Abolishes monetary bail to take place on January 1, 2023 (p.307 - 335), and stipulates that all persons charged with an offense shall be eligible for pretrial release before conviction except in certain cases such as a capital offense until a hearing is held or they present a real and present threat to the safety of others (p.342 of act). Currently on hold with the Illinois Supreme Court at the time of writing.

This was the bill in its original form, and it attracted significant criticism, especially from law enforcement. The Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, for example, reported being “extremely disappointed by the process, the lack of discussion and collaboration with members of law enforcement by our law makers.”⁷ Apart from the way the bill was

⁷see <https://www.ilchiefs.org/statement-of-president-black-on-the-omnibus-police-reform-legislation>

passed, there was significant criticism (and confusion) about many of the stipulations in the bill. In an apparent effort to remove some of that confusion, and remedy the most contested aspects of the bill, the first Trailer bill (9 HB 3443 SA5) was signed by Governor Pritzker on June 25, 2021, followed by a second (HB 3512 SA1) on January 5, 2022, and a third (HB1095) on December 1, 2022. I will briefly list the most significant changes made by each of the trailer bills below.

Trailer Bill 1

1. Allows an officer to review body camera video before writing an initial report except when an officer has been involved in a shooting.
2. Eliminated language about allowing a person to flee if arrest can be made at a later date (see p.150 of bill).
3. Allows tasers to be fired at the backs of fleeing suspects.

Trailer Bill 2

1. Clarified language of phone calls allowed after arrest.
2. Clarified that labeling of body camera footage does not constitute altering footage.

Trailer Bill 3

1. Further clarified conditions of pretrial detention by giving judges more leeway into considering additional factors when setting release conditions. It also expanded the list of offenses that qualify for pretrial detention, including when the judge deems the release a threat to the safety of persons in the community.
2. Clarified continued trespassing as an arrestable (instead of citation-only) offense.

After three trailer bills amended the original language and intent of the law, it is difficult to summarize what the SAFE-T is succinctly. A reasonable attempt is this: the SAFE-T act is a police reform bill designed to increase police accountability by mandating use of body cameras, altering conditions of the use of deadly force, as well as achieving system-wide criminal justice change by replacing pretrial detention with citations for non-violent crimes and eliminating cash bail.

Of course, this is one definition, and is not going to be used by every person when describing the SAFE-T act. Indeed, that is one of the problems with evaluating the SAFE-T act is finding consensus on what the act is. The Griffin survey included an open ended question asking respondents to describe the SAFE-T act. The responses tended to fall into six categories:

1. A law designed to harm police, make policing more difficult, or further worsen police image.
2. An opportunity for police reform.
3. A law that alters daily police practices and operations.

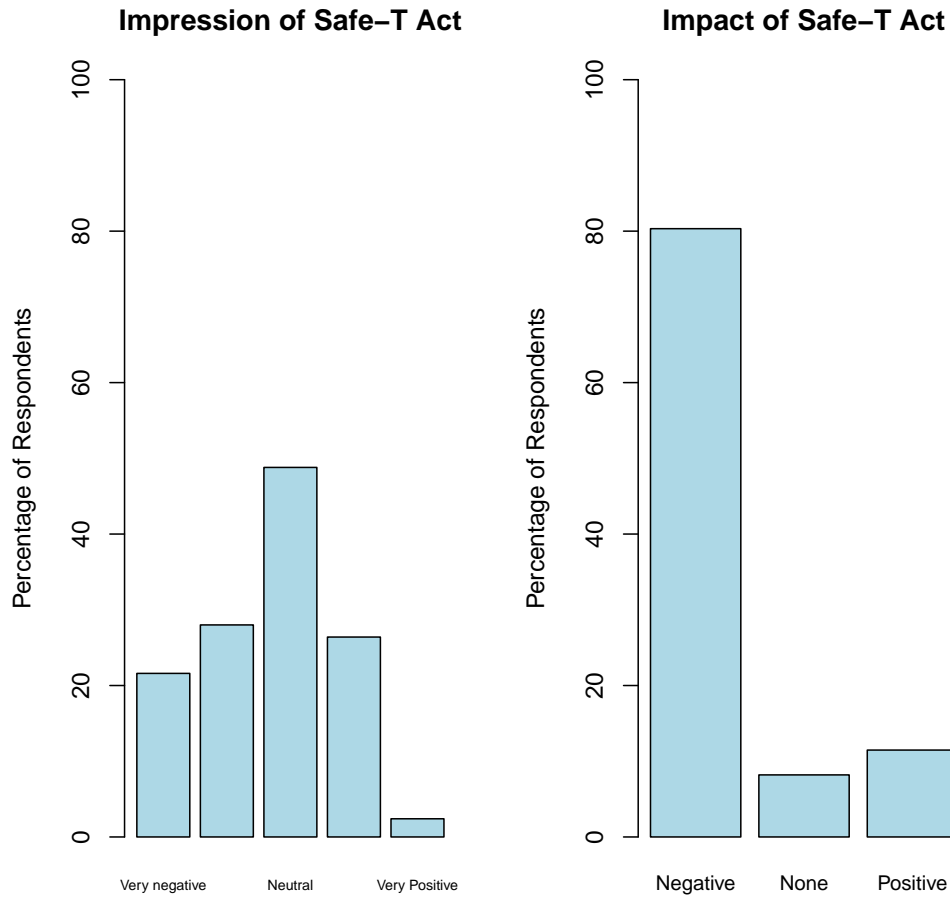
4. A law that administers additional training requirements for police.
5. A law that eliminates cash bail and changes sentencing guidelines.
6. A measure to increase police accountability on use of force.

What role has the SAFE-T Act played in recruitment or retention?

Given that the passage of the SAFE-T act has taken place over several years, and some of the key provisions are not even yet in full effect, it is impossible to point to a definite impact (or lack of impact) as a result of passage. The initial overwhelmingly negative reaction by law enforcement, however, is suggestive that it can only hurt police recruitment and retention in the short term. As one Chief of Police told me:

“The SAFE-T act is making it tough for police to stay in the force; they feel they are more under a microscope than ever before. Now, when they arrest somebody, they are constantly running through a checklist of everything they may or may not be allowed to do. Some police are retiring even though their pensions aren’t due because they’re so annoyed at the SAFE-T act; some are even leaving for other states.”

The Griffin survey, besides asking respondents to define the SAFE-T act, also asked them about their overall impression of the SAFE-T act, and whether they thought it would hurt retention and recruitment.



It is surprising that the modal response to their overall impression is “neither positive nor negative”; police sentiment seems to have warmed slightly since the initial furor over passage. This may also reflect positive reaction to the three trailer bills that amended the SAFE-T act in a pro-police direction, or the fact that one of the most significant aspects (the end of cash bail) is still yet to be put into effect. I saw some evidence of that from the police focus group; consider the following responses:

Response 1: “Initially the SAFE-T act was vehemently opposed, but now its fangs have been taken off for the most part....but it may affect perceptions of how hard it is to do policing in Illinois, and thus may be keeping people away from the state who want to come in and do policing here. So it may affect recruitment.”

Response 2: “It did cause some deputies to retire early because they didn’t want to deal with it. So it’s not effecting recruitment that much, but more retention.”

Response 3: “At first, everyone was scared about what it would do, but now it doesn’t seem to be as big a deal.”

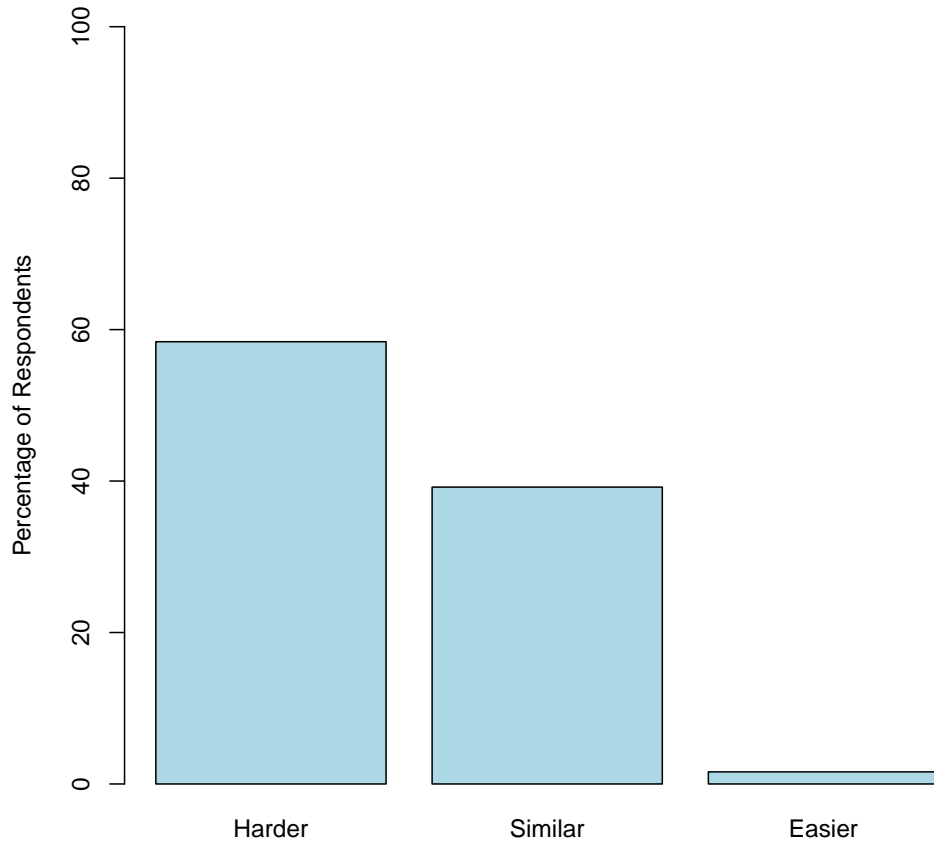
That being said, a fifth of respondents have a “very negative” view of the SAFE-T act, and only 2% have a “very positive” view. Furthermore, respondents are overwhelmingly pessimistic about the impact of the SAFE-T act on retention and recruitment specifically. I also asked respondents to justify their answers in an open-ended question. For those who felt negatively about the impact of the SAFE-T act on police recruitment and retention, their answers generally fell into four main categories:

1. **Negative impact on perception of police:** These responses highlighted that the SAFE-T Act has made law enforcement a less desirable career, leading to a decrease in recruitment and retention.
2. **Increased liability and restrictions on officers:** Many responses suggested that the SAFE-T Act places undue burdens on officers, making it more difficult for them to do their job effectively. A common refrain here was that “the act gives criminals more rights than the police”, and that officers are subject to increased scrutiny without adequate support. Many complaints that officers are afraid to do their job, or rather that the SAFE-T act makes them afraid that they’ll face criminal charges just for doing their job.
3. **Lack of stakeholder input:** Complaints that the act was passed by legislators in a rush or in a one-sided manner, and without police input.
4. **Negative impact on community safety:** Some responses suggested that the act does not make communities safer, and criminals can get out of arrests or prison with no charges or consequences. Complaints that it has given a sense that the legislature does not care about law enforcement and does not want people who commit crimes to be held accountable.

Police Climate in General in Illinois

My interactions with police officers over the course of this project led me to believe that one of the primary difficulties in recruiting police officers in Illinois (and retaining them once recruited) is a general perception of anti-police sentiment in Illinois. To quantify this hunch, I included three survey questions regarding this perception. Respondents were asked whether they thought being a police officer was harder in Illinois than in other states, and if so—why? They were also asked to rate the support they felt they received from the state government.

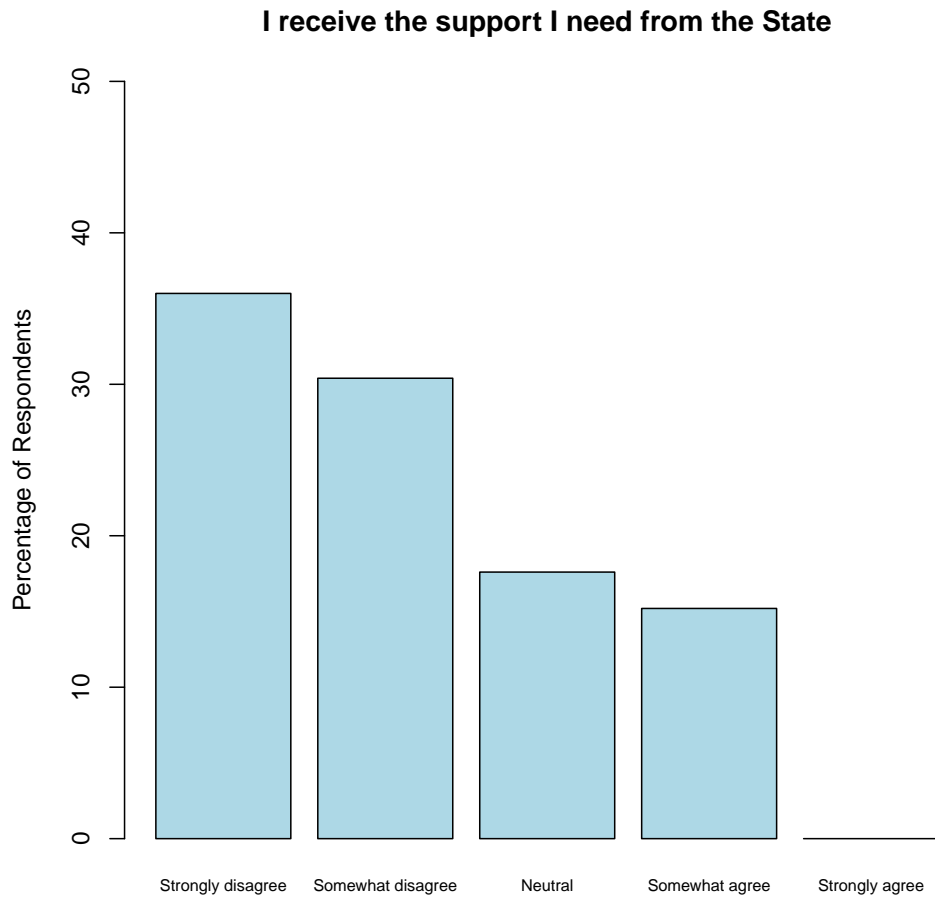
How does Illinois policing compare to other states?



The modal response to the question posed above is that it is harder being a police officer in Illinois (59% of respondents). More concerning, only 2% of respondents think that being a police officer in Illinois is probably easier than in other states. When asked to justify their answers in an open-ended question, those who felt it is harder to be a police officer in Illinois cited a variety of issues. The most common were the following:

1. A lack of support from government officials.
2. Laws that are restrictive and may change frequently.
3. Increased paperwork and training mandates that can be time-consuming and overwhelming.
4. A climate that is hostile to law enforcement, especially in larger cities like Chicago.
5. High levels of crime and violence, especially in urban areas.

6. A lack of trust and respect from the public due to incidents of police misconduct and negative media coverage.
7. In Cook County specifically, a failure to prosecute certain crimes and a lack of resources for law enforcement.



When asked to rate the level of support they felt they received from the state, the modal response is “strongly disagree” (36 % of respondents). Two thirds of respondents disagree in some form that they receive adequate support from the state, and not a single respondent strongly agreed that they received adequate support from the state. Respondents in the police focus group responded similarly:

Response 1: “It just feels like the state wants to experiment with policing. They want to take away the money from police departments without taking away problem of crime.

They're just not supportive. ”

Clearly, police in Illinois feel embattled to a significant degree. They feel that their efforts are unappreciated, their work environment more difficult than that of colleagues in other states, and that their state government is either hostile or unsupportive of their efforts. Conditions like these (whether justified in their perceptions or not) can only harm efforts to recruit and retain police officers.

4 How can Illinois better recruit and retain police officers?

This report now turns to recommendations for addressing the problems in police recruitment and retention. First, the recommendations in the literature are reconsidered. Following that, input from the Griffin survey is added.

4.0.1 Revisiting Recommendations from the Literature

4.0.2 Fiscal constraints and budget

Several officers in the police focus group spoke favourably about the competitive pay police officers receive in Illinois. Indeed, police in Illinois earn the 6th most in the nation (DePietro, 2020). So there is no current problem with police pay relative to other states. That being said, defunding movements which have gained prominence in Illinois may raise some uncertainty among officers about future pay.

Of course, equanimity on the point above depends in part on who is doing the funding. Different departments are funded by different entities. For example, some police agencies are funded by the state, some by municipalities, and others by universities. Municipalities often “poach” police from other agencies in the state through lucrative signing bonuses and other incentives. This creates problems for under-funded locations, who may struggle to compete with richer areas in attracting police officers.

4.0.3 Lack of qualified recruits and racial inequality

I pair these two factors because they are interrelated. Part of the problem police struggle to find qualified recruits is because they struggle to recruit from women and minority groups.

States and municipalities need to continue to try demographically represent the populations they serve, as this has been shown to increase trust in police and improve police treatment of minority communities (Peyton, Weiss, & Vaughn, 2022). Also police are regarded as more legitimate when they represent their community demographically (Skogan & Frydl, 2004). Lack of representation can also lead to more tense relationships with minority groups (Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993), which in turn leads to less minority group members wanting to join the police force (Holdaway, 1991).

Women are especially under-represented in policing, making up only about 13% of sworn officers (Ness, 2021). A *Police Quarterly* article reported on a survey of both Police Chiefs and female Pennsylvania Police officers in 2011 that shed light on the problems in retaining and hiring women police officers (Cordner & Cordner, 2011). The results revealed that in terms of recruitment, both women officers and Police Chiefs agreed that the primary reason for lack of Women police officers is simply that not many women apply for police positions. Women in their sample, however, commented that Pennsylvania police agencies are not proactive enough about recruiting women and don't seem to have very woman friendly departmental cultures. Furthermore, they complained fitness tests tended to penalize women officers. Women also commented on lack of family-friendly policies on maternal leave, child care, and so forth. As far as remedies, women officers suggested more targeted recruitment of women, more mentorship programs for women, and more family-friendly policies. The authors conclude by recommending the following (recommendations which are also proposed by Rushin, 2021): that departments can work harder to attract women candidates by targeting locations (or platforms) where female readership is more common. This could include targeted ads for women. This could also include emphasizing community service by police officers instead of law enforcement. This finding is echoed by Stephen Rushin, who, in summarizing previous research, finds that over a third of police recruitment videos featured the use of weapons (Rushin, 2021, p.1521). The authors also recommend that physical fitness standards need to be relaxed for women as technological advancements have made physical grappling, strength, and speed less vital components of the job. And to encourage retention, police departments need to offer more family-friendly policies including generous maternity leave, and flexibility for mothers. The authors also recommend toning down the "boot camp" mentality of Police Academies to make them less intimidating to women candidates.

In another study, White and colleagues recommend the following: tailoring police recruitment by demographic to make it more attractive to women and minority police officers (2010). Although they stress that motivations for joining need to be known before that can happen. Their own work finds that women police officers have identified job security and service as two key aspects of joining the police, more so than men officers. But, the authors caution that "save the world" advertising for policing can result in disillusionment about the realities of everyday policing. Instead the authors recommend modest calls to help, benefits, security, and career advancement.

Finally, in reviewing other studies on increasing diversity among police, Rhodes and Tyler (2021) find that agencies that devote more resources to recruitment and hiring, employ affirmative action policies, and creatively target women and minorities through informal networks (e.g., local churches and businesses) have been successful in increasing the number of women and minority hires.

Illinois has taken at least one important step in this direction through passing House Bill 3863 in May 10, 2022, which creates the Law Enforcement and Retention Fund to aid cities, universities, and non-profits in the recruitment and retention of police officers. Money for the fund comes from registration/renewal fees and fines from the Sex Offender Registration Act. While there is currently only about 300,000 dollars in the fund, this is an important step, especially given that it specifies that grants should be prioritized

towards underserved areas and to achieving diversity in officer recruitment.

4.0.4 Decisions by elected officials to create a police-friendly climate

These two categories are paired because one of the takeaways from this report should be that police officers are keenly sensitive to the level of support they feel they receive from their employers in government. From a policing perspective, this suggests that elected officials should seek to cultivate friendly relations with Chiefs of Police and to avoid inflammatory rhetoric about the character of police officers.

4.0.5 Recommendations from the Griffin Survey

Two open-ended response questions were included in the survey to allow police officers to give their input on recommendations *they* would give in improving retention and recruitment. The first involve what they would like to see, the second are strategies they are already implementing in their departments. Their answers to the first fall into the following categories:

1. Leadership and organizational changes to improve retention and community relations.
2. Maintenance or improvement of pay and benefits for law enforcement officers
 - (a) More resources at an affordable rate to help officers deal with stress of job (therapy, counseling, etc.).
 - (b) Higher pay rates for newer recruits.
 - (c) Ensure competitiveness of police pensions with other state pensions.
 - (d) Return retirement age to previous standard.
3. Greater legislative support for law enforcement.
 - (a) Enact pro-police instead of “pro-criminal” laws.
 - (b) More knowledge in the legislature for how policing works on a day-to-day basis before passing laws that affect the job.
 - (c) More public support from elected officials toward the police and less anti-police rhetoric.
 - (d) More input from police officers is needed when making laws that affect their working conditions.
4. Recruitment and training improvements.
 - (a) Shorter hiring process.
 - (b) Greater focus on recruitment through social media.

Their answers to the second question (about already-implemented practices) fall into these following categories:

1. **Advertising strategies:** This includes attending job fairs, utilizing social media platforms for advertising and recruitment, increasing pay and benefits, offering incentives for lateral hires, and introducing individualized recruiting and a lateral hire program.
2. **Community outreach and engagement:** This involves promoting the department as a great place to work and live, establishing youth programs and police outreach programs. Also includes attending public events, and improving community relations.
3. **Training and equipment:** This includes providing access to training, ride-alongs, load-bearing vests, and money for equipment and training.
4. **Positive work environment:** This involves creating a positive work environment, having good leadership in all areas, and offering support systems for officers.
5. **Adjustments to standards and requirements:** This includes reducing the college requirement, lowering standards, allowing beards and tattoos, and offering waivers on tests.
6. **Other strategies:** This includes offering retention and recruitment bonuses, providing better family insurance, and broadening recruiting efforts to attract minorities.

4.0.6 Final Recommendations and Conclusion

The purpose of this report was to research the current state of police recruitment and retention in Illinois. It did so both by examining previous literature on the topic of police recruitment and retention more generally, and also by asking police in Illinois to weigh in directly on what they thought. In synthesizing previous findings and the ones offered by police in the Griffin survey, it is clear there is a problem with police recruitment and retention, and that there are available recommendations to fix these problems. Such recommendations do not happen in a vacuum, and some are easier to implement than others. The purpose of this report is not to highlight which ones are politically or economically feasible, but will make some general recommendations for municipal and state-level authorities to consider in order to improve police recruitment and retention.

1. Retain or increase current levels of funding for policing. Like any profession, attracting candidates depends in part upon the attractiveness of compensation for services rendered.
 - (a) Include additional monetary incentives to spur departments to increase women and minority hires.
 - (b) Legislative changes to policing needs to come with more funding to provide comprehensive training on the changes.
2. Signal support for policing at the state and municipal level. This includes statements of public support and avoidance of language that is considered “anti-police.” This report has revealed how sensitive police are to the climate in which they work, and a perception that the climate is hostile diminishes appetite to become officers.

3. Include police input in legislative acts that affect their job. Not only will this help avoid the necessity of endless amendments to laws that are not feasible for police to actually carry out “on the ground”, but it will also help police be better motivated to enforce laws that they had a share in crafting; it gives a sense of ownership in the process that is important.

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