



RESULTS EMBARGOED UNTIL FRIDAY, MARCH 14, AT NOON E.S.T.

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**Goucher Poll Reveals Marylanders'
Politician Approval Ratings and Opinions on Health Care**

Baltimore – The Goucher Poll asked Marylanders for their perspectives regarding the job approval and favorability ratings of President Barack Obama, senators Ben Cardin and Barbara Mikulski, the U.S. Congress, Governor Martin O’Malley, and the Maryland General Assembly. Citizens also were asked their opinions about the Maryland health exchange website and their overall views of the new health care law.

Most Important Issue and Direction of State

The economy and jobs (28 percent) continue to be the most important issue facing the state, followed by education (13 percent), and taxes (13 percent). Residents also cite crime and prisons (6 percent), budget deficits (5 percent), and health care (4 percent) as important issues in Maryland.

Marylanders are less optimistic on the direction of the state than they were a year ago. Forty-one percent think things in the state are headed in the right direction, and 52 percent say Maryland has gotten off on the wrong track.

President Obama and Congress

Fifty-two percent of Marylanders approve of the job Barack Obama is doing as president, a 3 percent decline from his approval rating measured by the Goucher Poll a year ago. Forty percent disapprove of the job the president is doing.

Senators Ben Cardin and Barbara Mikulski fare much better individually than the legislative body in which they serve. Fifty percent of residents approve the job Mikulski is doing, while 27

percent disapprove, and 22 percent indicate they “don’t know” how to rate the senator. Forty-one percent approve of the job Cardin is doing, while 28 percent disapprove, and 31 percent indicated they “don’t know” how to rate the senator.

Marylanders continue to be displeased with the U.S. Congress: 83 percent disapprove, and 12 percent approve of the way Congress is handling its job. When asked to evaluate the job their representative in Congress was doing, 46 percent approve, and 31 percent disapprove.

Governor O’Malley and the Maryland General Assembly

Residents are divided in their opinions toward their state legislature and governor. Forty percent of Maryland residents approve of the job O’Malley is doing as governor, while half disapprove. Thirty-seven percent of the state’s citizens disapprove of the way the Maryland General Assembly is handling its job, while 39 percent approve. Another 23 percent indicate they “don’t know” what kind of job the state legislature is doing.

Health Care

Sixty percent of residents indicate they have heard of marylandhealthconnection.gov, Maryland’s health exchange website. Forty percent indicate they have not heard of it. Resident recognition of the website has increased since the Goucher Poll first asked about it when the health insurance exchange initially was launched.

Of those who have heard of marylandhealthconnection.gov:

- 24 percent have visited the website
- 43 percent have a negative view of the website
- 22 percent have a positive view of the website
- 28 percent volunteered they have a neutral view of the website

Marylanders remain divided when asked about the impact of the new health care law on the quality of health care here in Maryland:

- 38 percent think it will have a negative impact
- 10 percent think it will have no impact
- 44 percent think it will have a positive impact

“The troubled launch of marylandhealthconnection.gov is certainly dampening Marylanders opinions toward the new health care law, not to mention influencing the gubernatorial primary race,” said Mileah Kromer, director of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center. “Name recognition for the website is up—but our results suggest it is partially due to all the negative press that it has received.”

Additional crosstabs of the survey results are available upon request, and Mileah Kromer, the director of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center, is available for comment. She can be reached at mileah.kromer@goucher.edu or 724-840-0990. For additional media requests, please contact Kristen Pinheiro, director of media relations, at 410-337-6316 or Kristen.pinheiro@goucher.edu.



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About the Goucher Poll

The Goucher Poll is conducted under the auspices of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center, which is housed in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Goucher College. Directed by Mileah Kromer, the Goucher Poll conducts surveys on public policy, economic, and social issues in Maryland.

Goucher College supports the Goucher Poll as part of its mission to instill in its students a sense of community where discourse is valued and practiced. The Goucher Poll is fully funded by the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center endowment and does not take additional funding from outside sources.

The Goucher Poll seeks to improve public discourse in the state by providing neutral and nonbiased information on citizen perceptions and opinions. The data collected by the Goucher Poll are used to support faculty and student research.

Survey Methodology

To ensure all Maryland citizens are represented, the Goucher Poll is conducted using random digit dialing (RDD) of a stratified random sample using landline and cellular telephone numbers. The sample of telephone numbers for the survey is obtained from Survey Sampling International, LLC (<http://www.surveysampling.com/>).

The survey was conducted Sunday, March 2, to Thursday, March 6. During this time, interviews were conducted 12-9 p.m. on Sunday and 5-9 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The Goucher Poll uses Voxco Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) software to administer its surveys. Interviews are conducted by a staff of professionally trained, paid student interviewers.

Interviewers attempted to reach respondents with working phone numbers a maximum of five times. Only Maryland adults—residents aged 18 years or older—were eligible to participate. Interviews were not conducted with adults who were reached at business or work numbers. For each landline number reached, one adult from that household was selected on the basis of being the oldest or youngest adult in that residence. Half of the interviews were conducted on a cell phone, and half were conducted on a landline.

Interviews for this survey were completed with 861 Maryland citizens. For a sample size of 861, there is a 95 percent probability the survey results have a plus or minus 3.3 percent margin of error from the actual population distribution for any given survey question. Margin of errors are higher for subsamples.

Survey Question Design

The Goucher Poll provides the questions as worded and the order in which they were administered to respondents.

BRACKETED ITEMS []: Items and statements in brackets are rotated to ensure respondents do not receive a set order of response options presented to them, which maintains question construction integrity by avoiding respondent agreement based on question composition.

Example: [agree or disagree] or [disagree or agree]

PROBE (p): Some questions contain a “probe” maneuver to determine a respondent’s intensity of opinion/perspective. Probe techniques used in this questionnaire mainly consist of asking a respondent if his or her response is more intense than initially provided.

Example: Do you have a [favorable or unfavorable] opinion of President Obama?

PROBE: Would you say very favorable/unfavorable?

OPEN ENDED: The open-ended question provides no response options, i.e. it is entirely up to the respondent to provide the response information. Any response options provided to the interviewer are not read to the respondents; they are only used to help reduce interviewer error and time in coding the response.

VOLUNTEER (v): Volunteer responses means the interviewer did not offer a response option in the question, as read to the respondent. Interviewers are instructed not to offer “don’t know” or “refused” or “some other opinion” to the respondent, but the respondent is free to volunteer that information for the interviewer to record.

Sample Demographics

	MD Population Parameter	Weighted Sample Estimate
Gender		
Male	.48	.50
Female	.52	.50
18 to 24 Years	.13	.13
25 to 34 Years	.18	.18
35 to 44 Years	.17	.17
45 to 54 Years	.20	.20
55 to 64 Years	.16	.16
65 Years and Older	.16	.16
White	.63	.59
Black	.29	.27
Other	.08	.13
Capitol	.36	.37
Central	.46	.46
Eastern	.08	.07
Southern	.06	.06
Western	.04	.04

Population parameters are based on Census estimates as of July 2011.

Sample is weighted by age, gender, and region.

Distribution of Regions

Capitol—Frederick, Montgomery, Prince George’s

Central—Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard

Eastern—Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester

Southern—Calvert, Charles, St. Mary’s

Other Sample Demographics

Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

If respondent indicates they are an Independent:

Because you indicated you were an Independent, do you typically lean toward the Republican or Democratic candidate during elections?

Party Identification	
Republican	.28
Democrat	.53
Independent	.09
Other	.07
Don't Know/Refused (v)	.03

Survey Results¹

Q: IMPISSUE

What do you think is the most important issue facing the state of Maryland today?

[OPEN ENDED]

	Percent
Economy/Jobs	27.5
Education	13.0
Taxes	12.8
Crime/Prisons	6.2
Budget Deficit	5.2
Health Care	4.0
Corruption/Dislike of Government Officials, Parties	3.4
Environmental Concerns	3.4
Guns/Gun Control	2.6
Transportation/Roads/Mass Transit	2.1
Drugs/Marijuana	1.6
Immigration	1.1
Other (v)	7.2
Don't Know/Refused (v)	10.0
Total=861 +/-3.3	100.0

¹ Percent totals may not add up to 100 due to weighting and/or rounding.

Q: OBAMAJOB

Do you [approve or disapprove] of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

PROBE

	MAR 13	OCT 13	MAR 14
Strongly Disapprove (p)	23.3	22.1	25.4
Disapprove	14.4	17.0	14.8
Approve	34.6	32.4	31.2
Strongly Approve (p)	22.8	22.1	20.9
Don't Know (v)	4.6	5.3	7.0
Refused (v)	0.4	1.0	0.6
Total=	100.0 (791, +/-3.4)	100.0 (665, +/-3.8)	100.0 (861 +/-3.3)

Q: CONGJOB

Do you [approve or disapprove] of the way Congress is handling its job?

PROBE

	MAR 13	OCT 13	MAR 14
Strongly Disapprove (p)	57.3	62.3	51.5
Disapprove	26.6	29.1	31.4
Approve	9.1	4.2	10.0
Strongly Approve (p)	0.9	0.5	2.1
Don't Know (v)	5.5	3.6	4.5
Refused (v)	0.6	0.4	0.5
Total=	100.0 (791, +/-3.4)	100.0 (665, +/-3.8)	100.0 (861 +/-3.3)

Q: CONGJOB2

What about the representative in Congress from your district? Do you [approve or disapprove] of the way your representative is handling his or her job?

PROBE

	Percent
Strongly Disapprove (p)	13.0
Disapprove	18.0
Approve	34.2
Strongly Approve (p)	11.4
Don't Know (v)	23.2
Refused (v)	0.2
Total=861 +/-3.3	100.0

Q: MIKJOB

Do you [approve or disapprove] of the way Barbara Mikulski is handling her job as U.S. senator?

PROBE

	Percent
Strongly Disapprove (p)	12.4
Disapprove	15.0
Approve	30.1
Strongly Approve (p)	20.2
Don't Know (v)	21.9
Refused (v)	0.4
Total=861 +/-3.3	100.0

Q: CARDJOB

Do you [approve or disapprove] of the way Ben Cardin is handling his job as U.S. senator?

PROBE

	Percent
Strongly Disapprove (p)	10.3
Disapprove	17.4
Approve	30.8
Strongly Approve (p)	10.0
Don't Know (v)	31.4
Refused (v)	0.1
Total=861 +/-3.3	100.0

Q: OMALLJOB

Do you [approve or disapprove] of the way Martin O'Malley is handling his job as governor?

PROBE

	MAR 13	MAR 14
Strongly Disapprove (p)	25.4	30.1
Disapprove	17.1	19.9
Approve	38.4	28.3
Strongly Approve (p)	8.4	11.5
Don't Know (v)	10.6	10.2
Refused (v)	0.1	0.0
Total=861 +/-3.3	100.0 (791, +/-3.48)	100.0 (861 +/-3.3)

Q: MDGAALL

Now, thinking about the Maryland state legislature, do you [approve or disapprove] of the way the Maryland General Assembly is handling its job?

PROBE

	MAR 13	MAR 14
Strongly Disapprove (p)	14.5	15.3
Disapprove	23.1	21.8
Approve	32.4	34.0
Strongly Approve (p)	5.1	5.4
Don't Know (v)	24.8	23.3
Refused (v)	0.1	0.3
Total=	100.0 (791, +/-3.48)	100.0 (861 +/-3.3)

Q: TRACK

In general, do you think things in the state are [headed in the right direction, or have they gotten off on the wrong track]?

	OCT 12	MAR 13	OCT 13	MAR 14
Wrong Track	40.3	46.8	45.6	51.7
Right Direction	55.8	43.6	44.7	41.0
Don't Know/Refused (v)	4.0	9.7	9.7	7.2
Total=	100.0 (667, +/- 3.79)	100.0 (791, +/-3.48)	100.0 (665, +/-3.8)	100.0 (861 +/-3.3)

Q: WEB1

Next, changing subjects, have you heard of the website marylandhealthconnection.gov?

	OCT 13	MAR 14
Yes	53.0	59.9
No/Don't Know	47.0	40.1
Total=	100.0 (665, +/-3.8)	100.0 (861 +/-3.3)

If "Yes":

Q: WEB2

Because you said you have heard of it, have you visited the marylandhealthconnection.gov website?

	OCT 13	MAR 14
Yes	19.7	23.9
No/Don't Know	80.3	76.1
Total=	100.0 (352, +/-5.2)	100.0 (516 +/-4.3)

Q: WEB3

From what you have seen or heard, do you have a [positive or negative] view of marylandhealthconnection.gov?

	Percent
Negative	43.3
Positive	21.7
Neutral/Not Negative or Positive (v)	28.0
Don't Know (v)	6.5
Refused (v)	0.5
Total=515 +/-4.3	100.0

Q: IMPACT

Thinking generally about the new health care law, do you think it will have a [positive impact, a negative impact, or no impact] on the quality of health care here in Maryland?

	OCT 13	MAR 14
Negative Impact	34.7	37.7
No Impact	10.6	10.3
Positive Impact	48.3	44.2
Don't Know (v)	6.3	7.4
Refused (v)	0.1	0.4
Total=	100.0 (665, +/-3.8)	100.0 (861 +/-3.3)