

**GOUCHER  
COLLEGE**

**POLL**

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**Goucher College Poll results:**

**Two-thirds of Marylanders support legalization of recreational cannabis; Biden popular;  
Residents unsatisfied with current state of American democracy**

BALTIMORE (March 9, 2021)—The Goucher College Poll asked Maryland residents their views on various statewide issues, including the direction of and most important issue facing the state, satisfaction with American democracy, and their opinions of Gov. Larry Hogan, the Maryland General Assembly, and President Joe Biden. Residents were also asked their views toward the legalization of recreational marijuana. The Goucher College Poll surveyed 725 Maryland adults from February 23 to 28, 2021 and has a margin of error of +/-3.6 percent. Results by voter registration and other key demographics are provided.

**Legalization of Recreational Marijuana**

**Two-thirds** of Maryland residents support the legalization of recreational marijuana, and **28 percent** oppose it. Support is now at its highest point since the Goucher College Poll started measuring attitudes toward legalization in October 2013.

Some clear divisions in support along partisan lines remain, but more Republicans than not now support legalization for the first time on a Goucher College Poll:

- Among Democrats: **77 percent** support / **18 percent** oppose
- Among Republicans: **50 percent** support / **47 percent** oppose
- Among independents: **60 percent** support / **34 percent** oppose

Two years ago, **57 percent** of residents supported legalizing the recreational use of marijuana, and **37 percent** opposed it.

“The Maryland General Assembly is considering a bill to legalize the use of recreational cannabis. This most recent effort comes on the heels of four states voting to legalize recreational cannabis by ballot measure this past November and, most recently, New Jersey and Virginia passing adult-use marijuana legalization laws,” said Mileah Kromer, director of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center at Goucher College. “We’ve consistently found that a majority of Marylanders support the legalization of recreational cannabis, but this is the first time Republican support has reached 50 percent.”

### **Gov. Larry Hogan and Perceptions of Maryland**

**Sixty-five percent** of Marylanders approve of the job Hogan is doing as governor, **25 percent** disapprove, and **9 percent** say they don’t know. This represents a dip from his October 2020 approval rating (**71 percent**) but is on par with his approval rating from this time last year (**62 percent**).

Almost half of Maryland residents (**48 percent**) approve of the job the Maryland General Assembly is doing, **30 disapprove**, and **19 percent** say they don’t know. Notably, **67 percent** of Black Marylanders approve of the job the Maryland General Assembly is doing.

**Sixty-two percent** say Maryland is heading in the right direction, and **31 percent** say Maryland is off on the wrong track. Around this time last year, **fewer than half** said Maryland was heading in the right direction.

A plurality (**48 percent**) of Marylanders identify COVID-19 as the most important issue facing the state of Maryland today. **Fifteen percent** say economic issues and **7 percent** of Marylanders identify education as the most important.

### **President Joe Biden and Satisfaction With American Democracy**

Biden earns strong approval ratings among Marylanders after two months in office. **Sixty-two percent** of residents approve of the job Biden is doing as president and **31 disapprove** of it. Not surprising, Democrats (**86 percent**) are far more likely to approve than their Republican (**17 percent**) counterparts are.

In mid-February 2017, a similar point in his presidency, **29 percent** of Marylanders approved of the way Donald Trump was handling his job as president of the United States and **64 percent** disapproved.

Marylanders are generally unsatisfied with the state of American democracy.

- **Thirty-one percent** say they are satisfied.
  - Among Democrats: **40 percent**
  - Among Republicans: **16 percent**
  - Among Unaffiliated/independent: **30 percent**
- **Sixty-four percent** say they are unsatisfied.
  - Among Democrats: **59 percent**
  - Among Republicans: **80 percent**
  - Among Unaffiliated/independent: **61 percent**

## About the Goucher College Poll

The Goucher College Poll is conducted under the auspices of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center at Goucher College. The center is directed by Dr. Mileah Kromer, associate professor of political science.

The Goucher College Poll is funded by the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center endowment and does not take additional funding from outside sources. The mission of the Goucher College Poll is to improve public discourse in Maryland by providing neutral, unbiased, and independent information on resident perceptions and opinions. The data collected by the poll are used to support faculty and student research.

The Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center is a member of the Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations and the American Association for Public Opinion Research Transparency Initiative.

For more information, or to view archived polls, please visit [www.goucher.edu/poll](http://www.goucher.edu/poll).



## Survey Methodology

To ensure all Maryland residents are represented, the poll is conducted using random digit dialing (RDD) of a county-level stratified random sample using landline and cellular telephone numbers. The sample of telephone numbers and interviewing were provided by Dynata (<https://www.dynata.com/>). The survey was conducted **February 23 to 28, 2021**. During this time, interviews were conducted from 1 to 9 p.m.

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. **Eighty-seven percent** of the interviews were conducted on a cell phone and **13 percent** were conducted on a landline.

Interviews for this survey were completed with **725** Maryland adults. For a sample size of **725**, there is a **95 percent** probability the survey results have a **+/-3.6 percentage** point sampling error from the actual population distribution for any given survey question. For the sample of **654 Maryland adults** identified as registered voters, there is a **95 percent** probability the survey results have a **+/-3.8 percentage** point sampling error from the actual population distribution for any given survey question. Margins of error are higher for subsamples. In addition to sampling error, all surveys are subject to sources of non-sampling error, including question wording effects, question order effects, and non-response bias. Margin of error is not adjusted for design effects. Data is weighted by gender, age, race, region, and educational attainment of the state to represent adult population targets established by the most recent American Community Survey (ACS).

## Survey Question Design

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

**BRACKETED ITEMS [ ]:** Items and statements in brackets are rotated to ensure respondents do not receive a set order of response options, 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 respondents if their responses are more intense than initially provided.

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

**PROBE:** Would you say very favorable/unfavorable?

**OPEN-ENDED:** No response options are provided for an open-ended question, 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 respondent; 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 that response option in the question as read to the interviewer. 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.

**Goucher College Poll Sample Demographics (in percent)**

	Maryland Adult Population Parameter	Weighted Sample Estimate <i>Adults</i> (n=725)	Weighted Sample Estimate <i>Registered Voters</i> (n=654)
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	47	47	47
Female	53	53	53
<b>Age</b>			
18 to 24	12	12	10
25 to 34	18	18	18
35 to 44	16	16	15
45 to 54	18	18	19
55 to 64	17	17	19
65+	19	19	19
<b>Race</b>			
White	61	61	61
Black	30	30	31
All other	9	9	8
<b>Education</b>			
High school or less	35	35	32
Tech/AA/some college	26	26	27
Four-year college degree	21	21	22
Adv./professional degree	18	18	19
<b>Region</b>			
Montgomery County	17	17	18
Prince George's County	15	15	15
Baltimore City	11	11	9
Baltimore County	14	14	14
Central Region	21	21	21
Southern Region	6	6	7
Eastern Shore Region	8	8	9
Western Region	8	8	8

### Counties included in region

- Central: Anne Arundel, Carroll, Harford, and Howard
- Southern: Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's
- Eastern Shore: Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester
- Western: Allegany, Garrett, Frederick, and Washington

### Registered Voters

Registered voter screen question:

#### Q: REGVOTE

Are you registered to vote at your current address?

If "Yes," follow up: Are you registered as a Republican, Democrat, independent or unaffiliated, or something else?

Of the 725 Maryland adult residents surveyed, 654 indicated they were registered voters with the Democratic, Republican, or other party or registered unaffiliated (i.e., independent).

### Maryland Voter Registration (in percent)

	Party Registration (Jan. 2021)	Weighted Sample Estimate Registered Voters (n=654)
Democratic Party	55	54
Republican Party	25	26
Unaffiliated (i.e. independent)	18	18
Other party	2	2
Total=	100	100

Information on voter registration in Maryland from the Board of Elections can be found at <http://www.elections.state.md.us>.

**Q: IDEO**

Do you consider yourself to be politically [conservative, moderate, or progressive]?

	Adults	Reg. Voters
Conservative	28	29
Moderate	43	43
Progressive	25	25
Don't know/refused (v)	4	3
Total=	725 +/-3.6	654 +/-3.8

**Q: CHILD**

Do you have children under 18 years old living in your household?

	Adults
Yes	35
No	64
Refused (v)	1
Total=	725 +/-3.6

The following questions were asked to the full sample of **725 Maryland adults**. **A link to the results by demographics are found at the bottom of page 11.** Results are in percent and may not add up exactly to 100 due to weighting and rounding.

**Q: IMPISSUE**

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

[OPEN-ENDED]

	<b>MAR 21</b>
COVID-19	48
Economic issues	15
Education	7
Crime/criminal justice/policing	6
Politics and political leaders/leadership	5
Health care	1
Transportation/infrastructure	1
Guns/gun control/mass shootings	1
Immigration	1
Housing issues	1
Drugs/opioid addiction	1
Environmental issues	1
Other:	8
Don't know (v)	5
Total=	725 +/-3.6



**Q: TRACK**

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

	FEB 17	FEB 18	FEB 19	SEPT 19	FEB 20	OCT 20	MAR 21
Wrong track	22	29	25	35	32	31	31
Right direction	62	62	59	46	49	63	62
Don't know/Refused (v)	16	9	16	19	19	6	7
Total=	776 +/-3.5	800 +/-3.5	808 +/-3.4	763 +/-3.6	713 +/-3.7	1,002 +/-3.1	725 +/-3.6

**Q: HOGANJOB**

Do you [approve or disapprove] of the way Larry Hogan is handling his job as governor?

**PROBE**

	FEB 17	FEB 18	FEB 19	SEPT 19	FEB 20	OCT 20	MAR 21
Strongly disapprove (p)	7	7	4	5	7	11	11
Disapprove	10	11	10	9	13	12	14
Approve	36	38	39	39	43	39	35
Strongly approve (p)	27	23	30	25	19	32	30
Don't know (v)	20	19	14	21	17	5	9
Refused (v)	0	2	3	2	1	1	1
Total=	776 +/-3.5	800 +/-3.5	808 +/-3.4	763 +/-3.6	713 +/-3.7	1,002 +/-3.1	725 +/-3.6

**Q: MDGAJOB**

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

**PROBE**

	<b>FEB 17</b>	<b>FEB 18</b>	<b>FEB 19</b>	<b>FEB 20</b>	<b>MAR 21</b>
Strongly disapprove (p)	11	16	9	15	16
Disapprove	13	18	21	12	14
Approve	35	34	33	35	35
Strongly approve (p)	7	8	8	6	13
Don't know (v)	33	24	26	29	19
Refused (v)	1	1	3	2	2
Total=	776 +/-3.5	800 +/-3.5	808 +/-3.4	713 +/-3.7	725 +/-3.6

**Q: LEGALIZE**

Do you [**support or oppose**] making marijuana legal for recreational use in Maryland?

**PROBE**

	<b>OCT 13</b>	<b>MAR 14</b>	<b>FEB 15</b>	<b>FEB 16</b>	<b>FEB 17</b>	<b>SEPT 18</b>	<b>SEPT 19</b>	<b>MAR 21</b>
Strongly oppose (p)	20	24	24	22	24	22	22	17
Oppose	21	15	20	17	12	11	15	11
Support	26	26	27	29	26	21	27	27
Strongly support (p)	25	24	25	25	32	41	30	40
Don't know (v)	8	10	4	6	5	5	5	4
Refused (v)	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
Total=	665 +/-3.8	861 +/-3.3	619 +/-3.9	545 +/-4.2	776 +/-3.5	831 +/-3.4	808 +/-3.4	725 +/-3.6

Note: “For recreational use” was added to question wording in SEPT18.

**Q: BIDENJOB**

Changing topics to national politics, do you [**approve or disapprove**] of the way Joe Biden is handling his job as president?

**PROBE**

	<b>MAR 21</b>
Strongly disapprove (p)	26
Disapprove	5
Approve	20
Strongly approve (p)	42
Don't know (v)	6
Refused (v)	1
Total=	725 +/-3.6

**Q: DEMOCRACY**

Are you [**satisfied or unsatisfied**] with the way American democracy is working these days?

**PROBE**

	<b>MAR 21</b>
Very unsatisfied (p)	44
Unsatisfied	20
Satisfied	22
Very satisfied (p)	9
Don't know (v)	4
Refused (v)	1
Total=	725 +/-3.6

**[See results by demographics.](#)**