GOUCHER COLLEGE | POLL

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Goucher College Poll results: Joe Biden leads Donald Trump in Maryland by wide margin; Partisan divide over mail-in vs. in-person voting

BALTIMORE (October 8, 2020)—The Goucher College Poll asked Maryland likely voters for their candidate preferences in the upcoming United States presidential race. Voters were also asked to rate each major party's presidential and vice presidential candidate and whether they planned to cast their ballots in person or by mail. The Goucher College Poll was conducted from September 30 to October 4, 2020, and surveyed 1,002 Maryland adults of which 776 were identified as likely voters. The sample of 776 likely voters has a margin of sampling error of +/-3.5 percent.

Presidential Race in Maryland

If the election for United States president were held today, **61 percent** of Maryland likely voters say they would vote for Democratic candidate Joe Biden and **30 percent** for Republican candidate Donald Trump. Green Party candidate Howie Hawkins and Libertarian Jo Jorgensen earn **2 percent** of the vote each. **Five percent** either don't know or refused to say which candidate they support.

Likely voters were also asked how they viewed the two major party presidential and vice presidential candidates. Reflecting the heavily Democratic lean of the state, Democrats Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are viewed far more favorably than Republicans Donald Trump and Mike Pence.

- **61 percent** view Kamala Harris favorably, **35 percent** view her unfavorably
- **60 percent** view Joe Biden favorably, **39 percent** view him unfavorably
- **35 percent** view Mike Pence favorably, **63 percent** view him unfavorably
- **32 percent** view Donald Trump favorably, **67 percent** view him unfavorably

When asked about how the incumbent Donald Trump is handling his job as president, **32 percent** of likely voters approve and **67 percent** disapprove.

Ballot Style Preference

Maryland likely voters are evenly divided on the method they will use to cast their ballot this November. Reflecting national trends, there is a significant divide in the method of voting along party lines.

- **51 percent** say they will vote in-person either during early voting or on Election Day.
    - Among Democratic likely voters: **39 percent**
    - Among Republican likely voters: **72 percent**
- **48 percent** say they will vote by mail by either mailing the ballot in or using a ballot drop box.
    - Among Democratic likely voters: **59 percent**
    - Among Republican likely voters: **28 percent**

"Given the political demographics of the state, it's never been a question of whether the Biden-Harris ticket would carry Maryland, but rather by how much," said Mileah Kromer, director of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center. "If this gap in voter preferences widens just slightly on Election Day, it would result in the largest margin of victory in Maryland for a presidential candidate since President Lyndon B. Johnson defeated Barry Goldwater in 1964."

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.

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 **Wednesday, September 30, to Sunday, October 4**. 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. **Ninety-two percent** of the interviews were conducted on a cell phone and **8 percent** were conducted on a landline.

Interviews for this survey were completed with **1,002** Maryland adults. For a sample size of **1,002**, there is a **95 percent** probability the survey results have a plus or minus **3.1 percentage** point sampling error from the actual population distribution for any given survey question. For the sample of **776 Maryland adults** identified as likely voters, there is a **95 percent** probability the survey results have a plus or minus **3.5 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 Donald Trump?
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 *Adults* (n=1,002)	Weighted Sample Estimate *Registered Voters* (n=918)	Weighted Sample Estimate *Likely Voters* (n=776)
Gender				
Male	47	47	46	44
Female	53	53	54	56
Age				
18 to 24	12	12	12	12
25 to 34	18	18	18	16
35 to 44	16	16	16	16
45 to 54	18	18	18	18
55 to 64	17	17	17	19
65+	19	19	18	19
Race				
White	61	61	61	64
Black	30	30	31	29
All other	9	9	8	7
Education				
High school or less	35	35	34	33
Tech/AA/some college	26	26	26	25
Four-year college degree	21	21	21	21
Adv./professional degree	18	18	19	20
Region				
Montgomery County	17	17	17	18
Prince George's County	15	15	15	15
Baltimore City	11	11	11	10
Baltimore County	14	14	14	13
Central Region	21	21	21	21
Southern Region	6	6	6	7
Eastern Shore Region	8	8	8	8
Western Region	8	8	8	8

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

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 **1,002** Maryland adult residents surveyed, **918** indicated they were registered voters with the Democratic, Republican, or other party or registered unaffiliated (i.e., independent) and **776** were identified as likely voters (see page 9 for full screen).

Maryland Voter Registration (in percent)

	Party Registration (Jan. 2020)	Weighted Sample Estimate *Registered Voters (n=918)*	Weighted Sample Estimate *Likely Voters (n=776)*
Democratic Party	55	54	55
Republican Party	25	25	27
Unaffiliated (i.e. independent)	19	20	17
Other party	1	1	1
Total=	100	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**]?

	All Adults	Registered Voters	Likely Voters
Conservative	26	26	28
Moderate	44	44	40
Progressive	27	28	30
Don't know/refused (v)	3	2	2
Total=	1,002 +/-3.1	918 +/-3.2	776 +/-3.5

The following question was asked to the full sample of **1,002 Maryland adults**. **A link to the results by demographic 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: TRUMPJOB
Do you [**approve or disapprove**] of the way Donald Trump is handing his job as president?
PROBE

	All Adults	Reg. Voters	Likely Voters
Strongly disapprove	58	59	62
Disapprove	7	6	5
Approve	9	9	7
Strongly approve	23	23	25
Don't know (v)	2	2	1
Refused (v)	1	1	--
Total=	1,002 +/-3.1	918 +/-3.2	776 +/-3.5

The following questions were asked to the sample of **918 Maryland registered voters**. **A link to the results by demographic 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: ATTENTION
How much attention have you been paying to the election or campaigns for president: [**a lot, some, a little, or none at all**]?

	OCT 20
None at all	3
A little	10
Some	21
A lot	66
Don't know (v)	--
Refused (v)	--
Total=	918 +/-3.2

ATTENTION SKIP LOGIC:
- **IF none at all, don't know, or refused, GO TO <u>DEMOGRAPHICS</u>**
- **IF a little, some, a lot, GO TO <u>INTEREST</u>**

Q: INTEREST
As you know, the next election for president of the United States and members of Congress will be held in November. How interested would you say you are in these elections: **extremely interested, very interested, somewhat interested, or not interested**?

	FEB 17	SEPT 17	FEB 18	APR 18	SEPT 18	OCT 20
Not interested	7	11	0	6	7	1
Somewhat interested	25	27	25	26	24	12
Very interested	29	28	33	32	29	28
Extremely interested	38	34	42	36	40	58
Don't know (v)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total=	698 +/-3.7	671 +/-3.8	658 +/-3.8	524 +/-4.2	696 +/-3.7	889 +/-3.3

INTEREST SKIP LOGIC:
- **IF not interested, don't know, or refused, GO TO DEMOGRAPHICS**
- **IF somewhat, very, or extremely interested, GO TO LV**

Q: LV
OK, what are the chances that you will vote in the general election for president of the United States and Congress this November—are you [**absolutely certain to vote, very likely to vote, are the chances about 50-50, or will you probably not vote**]?

	OCT 20
Will probably not vote	1
Chances are about 50-50	2
Very likely to vote	9
Absolutely certain to vote	88
Don't know (v)	--
Refused (v)	--
Total=	877 +/-3.3

LIKELY VOTER SCREEN
To receive **BALLOT**, **PRES_ELECT**, and **CAND_FAV**
- REGVOTE: Registered to vote **AND**
- ATTENTION: Paying a little, some, or a lot of attention to the campaign for president **AND**
- INTEREST: Somewhat, very, or extremely interested in the election **AND**
- LV: Very likely or absolutely certain to vote

Q: BALLOT
Next, I'm going to read you a list of ways voters in Maryland can cast their ballots for the upcoming election. Please tell me which one best describes you:
[statements rotated]

Statement #1: I'll vote in-person either during early voting or on Election Day.
Statement #2: I'll vote by mail either by mailing my ballot in or using a ballot drop box.

	OCT 20
Vote in-person	51
Vote by mail	48
Haven't decided yet (v)	1
Don't know (v)	--
Refused (v)	--
Total=	776 +/-3.5

Q: PRES_ELECT
OK. If the election for president of the United States were held today, who would you vote for…
[candidates randomized]

	OCT 20
Democratic candidate Joe Biden	61
Republican candidate Donald Trump	30
Green Party candidate Howie Hawkins	2
Libertarian candidate Jo Jorgensen	2
Don't know (v)	2
Refused (v)	3
Total=	776 +/-3.5

Q: CAND_FAV

Next, I'd like you to rate each of the Democratic and Republican candidates for president and vice president. Regardless of who you plan to vote for, please tell me whether you have a [**favorable or unfavorable**] opinion of them.

PROBE

[candidates rotated]

	Very Unfav	Unfav	Fav	Very Fav	DK (v)	Ref (v)
Joe Biden	24	15	28	32	1	1
Donald Trump	58	9	11	21	1	1
Mike Pence	49	14	14	21	2	1
Kamala Harris	26	9	30	31	4	1

N=776, +/-3.5

Click to see results by demographic.