GOUCHER COLLEGE | POLL

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Goucher College Poll results: Many police reforms popular among Marylanders; Residents hold positive view of Gov. Hogan, the Democratic Party, and direction of the state

BALTIMORE (October 12, 2020)—The Goucher College Poll asked Maryland residents their views on various statewide issues, including the direction of and most important issue facing the state and their opinions toward Gov. Larry Hogan. Residents were also asked their views on police, the Black Lives Matter movement, the Democratic and Republican parties, and several police reform proposals. The Goucher College Poll surveyed 1,002 Maryland adults from September 30 to October 4, 2020, and it has a margin of sampling error of +/3.1 percent. Results by voter registration and other key demographics are provided.

Opinions Toward Police, Police Reforms, and the Black Lives Matter Movement

Residents were asked whether they support or oppose several police reforms currently being proposed in Maryland and around the country.

- **87 percent** support creating a record of police misconduct cases that would be available to the public and other law enforcement agencies, **10 percent** oppose.
- **85 percent** support requiring that criminal misconduct charges against police officers be investigated by an independent state prosecutor rather than by internal police affairs, **10 percent** oppose.
- **82 percent** support requiring police officers to undergo racial bias training, **17 percent** oppose.
- **79 percent** support creating statewide de-escalation and use-of-force policies for all Maryland police departments to follow, **16 percent** oppose.
- **79 percent** support increasing funding for police departments to hire more or better trained officers, **19 percent** oppose.
- **60 percent** support banning police from using chokeholds or strangleholds when making an arrest, **35 percent** oppose.
- **54 percent** support reducing the budget for the police department in their community and shifting the funds to social programs related to mental health, housing, and education, **43 percent** oppose.
- **28 percent** support the movement to "defund the police," while **68 percent** oppose.

Residents were also asked whether they held a favorable or unfavorable view of "the police" and "the Black Lives Matter movement":

- **66 percent** view "the police" favorably, **30 percent** unfavorably.
  - Among Black Marylanders: **54 percent** favorably, **41 percent** unfavorably
  - Among white Marylanders: **73 percent** favorably, **24 percent** unfavorably

- **65 percent** view "the Black Lives Matter" movement favorably, **29 percent** unfavorably.
  - Among Black Marylanders: **85 percent** favorably, **11 percent** unfavorably
  - Among white Marylanders: **56 percent** favorably, **38 percent** unfavorably

"Maryland residents are largely supportive of key police reforms that are currently being discussed by state lawmakers and have dominated our national discourse. Some of these proposals, like creating statewide use-of-force policies and requiring police officers to undergo racial bias training, earn support from majorities of Democrats and Republicans," said **Mileah Kromer, director of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center at Goucher College**. "But there's a mixed message on police budgets. Residents support both increasing funding to hire more or better trained police offers and reducing police budgets to allocate more money to social programs."

Gov. Hogan and Perceptions of Maryland

Seventy-one percent of Marylanders approve of the job Larry Hogan is doing as governor, **23 percent** disapprove, and **5 percent** say they don't know. **Sixty-three percent** say Maryland is heading in the right direction and **31 percent** say Maryland is off on the wrong track.

Thirty percent of Marylanders identify the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic as the most important issue facing the state of Maryland today. **Twenty-two percent** say economic issues and **8 percent** of Marylanders identify education as the most important.

Favorability Ratings of Political Parties

Not surprising, given the 2-to-1 advantage in party registration, the Democratic Party is viewed more favorably (**54 percent** favorable) in Maryland than the Republican Party (**35 percent** favorable).

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 percenta**ge point sampling error from the actual population distribution for any given survey question. For the sample of **918 Maryland adults** identified as registered voters, there is a **95 percent** probability the survey results have a plus or minus **3.2 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)
Gender			
Male	47	47	46
Female	53	53	54
Age			
18 to 24	12	12	12
25 to 34	18	18	18
35 to 44	16	16	16
45 to 54	18	18	18
55 to 64	17	17	17
65+	19	19	18
Race			
White	61	61	61
Black	30	30	31
All other	9	9	8
Education			
High school or less	35	35	34
Tech/AA/some college	26	26	26
Four-year college degree	21	21	21
Adv./professional degree	18	18	19
Region			
Montgomery County	17	17	17
Prince George's County	15	15	15
Baltimore City	11	11	11
Baltimore County	14	14	14
Central Region	21	21	21
Southern Region	6	6	6
Eastern Shore Region	8	8	8
Western Region	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).

Maryland Voter Registration (in percent)

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

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

The following questions were asked to the full sample of **1,002 Maryland adults**. **A link to the results by demographic are found at the bottom of page 14**. 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]

	FEB 20
COVID-19/coronavirus	30
Economic issues	22
Education	8
Health care	5
Politics and political leaders/leadership	5
Crime/criminal justice/policing	4
Environmental issues/concerns	3
Racism/race relations/racial justice	3
Other:	13
Don't know (v)	6
Total=	1,002 +/-3.1

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**	**SEPT 18**	**FEB 19**	**SEPT 19**	**FEB 20**	**OCT 20**
Wrong track	22	29	30	25	35	32	31
Right direction	62	62	54	59	46	49	63
Don't know/refused (v)	16	9	16	16	19	19	6
Total=	776 +/-3.5	800 +/-3.5	831 +/-3.4	808 +/-3.4	763 +/-3.6	713 +/-3.7	1,002 +/-3.1

Q: HOGANJOB

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

	FEB 17	**FEB 18**	**SEPT 18**	**FEB 19**	**SEPT 19**	**FEB 20**	**OCT 20**
Strongly disapprove (p)	7	7	8	4	5	7	11
Disapprove	10	11	9	10	9	13	12
Approve	36	38	36	39	39	43	39
Strongly approve (p)	27	23	28	30	25	19	32
Don't know (v)	20	19	17	14	21	17	5
Refused (v)	0	2	3	3	2	1	1
Total=	776 +/-3.5	800 +/-3.5	831 +/-3.4	808 +/-3.4	763 +/-3.6	713 +/-3.7	1,002 +/-3.1

Q: GROUPS
I'm going to read a few names of people or groups in public life and I'd like you to tell me whether you have a [**favorable or unfavorable**] opinion of each one…
[POLICE to BLM randomized]
Q: POLICE
Q: DEM_PARTY
Q: REP_PARTY
Q: BLM

	Very Unfav	Unfav	Fav	Very Fav	DK (v)	Ref (v)
The police	11	19	39	27	3	1
The Democratic Party	24	19	37	17	2	1
The Republican Party	39	22	18	17	2	1
The Black Lives Matter movement	20	10	30	35	4	2

N=1,002, +/-3.1

Q: REDUCE
Do you [**support or oppose**] reducing the budget for the police department in your community and shifting the funds to social programs related to mental health, housing, and education?
PROBE

	OCT 20
Strongly oppose (p)	28
Oppose	15
Support	21
Strongly support (p)	33
Don't know (v)	2
Refused (v)	1
Total=	1,002 +/-3.1

[CHOKE TO RECORD ROTATED]

Q: CHOKE
Do you [**support or oppose**] banning police from using chokeholds or strangleholds when making an arrest?
PROBE

	OCT 20
Strongly oppose (p)	22
Oppose	13
Support	12
Strongly support (p)	48
Don't know (v)	4
Refused (v)	1
Total=	1,002 +/-3.1

Q: BIAS
Do you [**support or oppose**] requiring police officers to undergo racial bias training?
PROBE

	OCT 20
Strongly oppose (p)	8
Oppose	9
Support	16
Strongly support (p)	66
Don't know (v)	1
Refused (v)	0
Total=	1,002 +/-3.1

Q: FORCE
Do you [**support or oppose**] creating statewide de-escalation and use-of-force policies for all Maryland police departments to follow?
PROBE

	OCT 20
Strongly oppose (p)	9
Oppose	7
Support	24
Strongly support (p)	55
Don't know (v)	4
Refused (v)	1
Total=	1,002 +/-3.1

Q: INCREASE
Do you [**support or oppose**] increasing funding for police departments to hire more or better trained officers?
PROBE

	OCT 20
Strongly oppose (p)	9
Oppose	10
Support	26
Strongly support (p)	53
Don't know (v)	1
Refused (v)	1
Total=	1,002 +/-3.1

Q: PROSECUTOR

Do you [**support or oppose**] requiring that criminal misconduct charges against police officers be investigated by an independent state prosecutor rather than by internal police affairs?
PROBE

	OCT 20
Strongly oppose (p)	6
Oppose	4
Support	19
Strongly support (p)	66
Don't know (v)	3
Refused (v)	1
Total=	1,002 +/-3.1

Q: RECORD

Do you [**support or oppose**] creating a record of police misconduct cases that would be available to the public and other law enforcement agencies?
PROBE

	OCT 20
Strongly oppose (p)	5
Oppose	5
Support	26
Strongly support (p)	61
Don't know (v)	2
Refused (v)	1
Total=	1,002 +/-3.1

Q: DEFUND

Last question about police. Do you [**support or oppose**] the movement to "defund the police"?

	OCT 20
Strongly oppose (p)	48
Oppose	20
Support	13
Strongly support (p)	15
Don't know (v)	3
Refused (v)	1
Total=	1,002 +/-3.1

Click to see results by demographics.