

**GOUCHER
COLLEGE**

POLL

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Goucher College Poll results:

Majority support legal recreational marijuana and access to abortion; majority of Marylanders have a mostly positive view of state economic conditions; Gov. Larry Hogan maintains strong job approval rating; President Joe Biden popular, but approval rating declines; residents think Maryland is a Northern state

BALTIMORE (October 26, 2021)—The Goucher College Poll asked Maryland residents their views on various statewide issues, including the direction of the state, the current economic situation, and Gov. Larry Hogan, as well as their views on President Joe Biden and Sens. Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen. Residents were also asked their views on the legalization of recreational marijuana and abortion, government spending, visiting a state park, and whether Maryland was a Northern or Southern state. The Goucher College Poll surveyed 700 Maryland adults from October 14 to 20, 2021, and has a margin of error of +/-3.7 percent. Results by voter registration and other key demographics are provided.

Legalization of Recreational Marijuana, Attitudes Toward Abortion, and State Spending

Sixty percent of Maryland residents support the legalization of recreational marijuana, and **33 percent** oppose it. This represents a slight decline in support since the March 2021 poll, where **67 percent** of Marylanders supported legalization.

Most Marylanders (**88 percent**) want to keep abortion legal though they are divided on whether that means legal in all (**44 percent**) or only under certain circumstances (**44 percent**).

Respondents were asked whether the state government spends too little, about the right amount, or too much on several broad budgetary items.

Public education

Too little: **54 percent**

Right amount: **31 percent**

Too much: **9 percent**

Public transportation

Too little: **40 percent**

Right amount: **43 percent**

Too much: **9 percent**

Roads and highways

Too little: **47 percent**

Right amount: **41 percent**

Too much: **8 percent**

State parks

Too little: **27 percent**

Right amount: **59 percent**

Too much: **6 percent**

Housing and community development

Too little: **47 percent**

Right amount: **30 percent**

Too much: **15 percent**

Unemployment assistance

Too little: **32 percent**

Right amount: **34 percent**

Too much: **27 percent**

Interest in Visiting a Maryland State Park

The visitation rates to Maryland state parks have significantly increased over the past two years, according to an analysis by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. The results of the poll indicate that **84 percent** of residents are “somewhat” (**33 percent**) or “very” (**51 percent**) interested in visiting a state park during the next year; **16 percent** are not interested in visiting.

“Skyrocketing visitation rates to Maryland state parks over the past two years have left the Department of Natural Resources struggling to meet the increased demand. Our results indicate that parks will continue to be a sought-after destination for many state residents over the next year,” says Mileah Kromer, director of the Sarah T. Hughes Center for Politics at Goucher College. “But there is a pretty clear disconnect: Despite clear pressures on the park system from increased visitation, nearly sixty percent of residents think that the amount of funding that state parks receive is ‘about right.’”

Gov. Larry Hogan and Perceptions of Maryland

Hogan remains a popular figure in the state. **Sixty-eight percent** of Marylanders approve of the job Hogan is doing as governor, **22 percent** disapprove, and **7 percent** say they don’t know.

Fifty-nine percent say Maryland is heading in the right direction, and **31 percent** say Maryland is off on the wrong track. The majority of Marylanders—**53 percent**—hold a mostly positive view of the Maryland

economy, while **37 percent** hold a mostly negative view.

President Joe Biden, Sens. Chris Van Hollen and Ben Cardin

Fifty-three percent of residents approve of the job Biden is doing as president and **43 disapprove** of it. This represents a drop in approval since March 2021, when **62 percent** of residents approved of the job Biden was doing as president and **31 percent** disapproved.

Forty-four percent of Marylanders approve of the job U.S. Sen. Chris Van Hollen is doing, **26 percent** disapprove, and **29 percent** don't know. Van Hollen will be up for re-election in the 2022 cycle.

Forty-six percent of Marylanders approve of the job U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin is doing, **26 percent** disapprove, and **26 percent** don't know.

Both Cardin and Van Hollen earn majority support from registered Democrats: **62 percent** and **56 percent** approve, respectively.

Maryland: More Northern or Southern?

The question of whether Maryland is more of a Northern or Southern state is hotly debated topic. **Sixty-five percent** of Marylanders say it's more of a Northern state, while **27 percent** say it's more of a Southern state.

To view archived polls, please visit www.goucher.edu/poll. The second part of this poll will be released on Wednesday, October 27, at 12:01 a.m.

About the Goucher College Poll

The Goucher College Poll is conducted under the auspices of the Sarah T. Hughes Center for Politics 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 Center for Politics 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 Center for Politics 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 **October 14 to 20, 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-four percent** of the interviews were conducted on a cell phone and **16 percent** were conducted on a landline.

Interviews for this survey were completed with **700** Maryland adults. For a sample size of **700**, there is a **95 percent** probability the survey results have a **+/-3.7 percentage** point sampling error from the actual population distribution for any given survey question. For the sample of **631 Maryland adults** identified as registered voters, there is a **95 percent** probability the survey results have a **+/-3.9 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) and U.S. Census.

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 Population Parameter <i>Adults</i>	Weighted Sample Estimate <i>Adults</i> (n=700)	Weighted Sample Estimate <i>Registered Voters</i> (n=631)
Gender			
Male	48	48	47
Female	52	52	53
Age			
18 to 24	11	11	11
25 to 34	17	17	17
35 to 44	17	17	17
45 to 54	17	17	17
55 to 64	17	17	17
65+	21	21	21
Race			
White	59	59	60
Black	31	31	31
All other	10	10	9
Education			
High school or less	34	34	32
Tech/AA/some college	25	25	26
Four-year college degree	22	22	23
Adv./professional degree	19	19	19
County/Region			
Montgomery County	17	17	17
Prince George's County	16	16	16
Baltimore County	14	14	14
Baltimore City	10	10	9
Anne Arundel County	10	10	10
Central Region	12	12	12
Western Region	6	6	7
Eastern Shore Region	7	7	7
Southern Region	8	8	8

Counties included in region

- Central: 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 700 Maryland adult residents surveyed, 631 indicated they were registered voters with the Democratic, Republican, or other party or registered unaffiliated (i.e., independent).

Maryland Voter Registration (in percent)

	Maryland Voter Registration <i>September 2021</i>	Weighted Sample Estimate <i>Registered Voters (n=631)</i>
Democratic Party	55	56
Republican Party	24	25
Unaffiliated (i.e., independent)	20	17
Other party	2	2
Total=	100	631 +/-3.9%

Note: Voter registration statistics from the Maryland State 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	Registered Voters
Conservative	23	23
Moderate	53	54
Progressive	21	20
Don't know/refused (v)	3	3
Total=	700 +/-3.7	631 +/-3.9

The following questions were asked to the full sample of **700 Maryland adults**. **A link to the results by demographics 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: TRACK

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

	FEB 18	FEB 19	SEPT 19	FEB 20	OCT 20	MAR 21	OCT 21
Wrong track	29	25	35	32	31	31	31
Right direction	62	59	46	49	63	62	59
Don't know/refused (v)	9	16	19	19	6	7	10
Total=	800 +/-3.5	808 +/-3.4	763 +/-3.6	713 +/-3.7	1,002 +/-3.1	725 +/-3.6	700 +/-3.7

Q: HOGANJOB

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

PROBE

	FEB 18	FEB 19	SEPT 19	FEB 20	OCT 20	MAR 21	OCT 21
Strongly disapprove (p)	7	4	5	7	11	11	8
Disapprove	11	10	9	13	12	14	14
Approve	38	39	39	43	39	35	47
Strongly approve (p)	23	30	25	19	32	30	21
Don't know (v)	19	14	21	17	5	9	7
Refused (v)	2	3	2	1	1	1	3
Total=	800 +/-3.5	808 +/-3.4	763 +/-3.6	713 +/-3.7	1,002 +/-3.1	725 +/-3.6	700 +/-3.7

Q: MDECON

Do you have a [**mostly negative or mostly positive**] view of the current economic situation in Maryland?

	SEPT 17	FEB 18	FEB 19	SEPT 19	OCT 21
Mostly negative	33	31	28	29	37
Mostly positive	57	60	61	60	53
Don't know (v)	10	9	11	10	10
Refused (v)	0	>1	0	1	0
Total=	671 +/-3.8	800 +/-3.5	808 +/-3.4	763 +/-3.6	700 +/-3.7

Q: BIDENJOB

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

PROBE

	MAR 21	OCT 21
Strongly disapprove (p)	26	31
Disapprove	5	12
Approve	20	27
Strongly approve (p)	42	26
Don't know (v)	6	3
Refused (v)	1	1
Total=	725 +/-3.6	700 +/-3.7

[ROTATE: VANHOLLEN and CARDIN]

Q: VANHOLLEN

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

PROBE

	FEB 17	OCT 21
Strongly disapprove (p)	9	13
Disapprove	10	13
Approve	28	27
Strongly approve (p)	16	17
Don't know (v)	36	29
Refused (v)	1	1
Total=	776 +/-3.5	700 +/-3.7

Q: CARDIN

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

PROBE

	FEB 17	OCT 21
Strongly disapprove (p)	10	14
Disapprove	11	12
Approve	29	27
Strongly approve (p)	16	19
Don't know (v)	34	26
Refused (v)	>1	2
Total=	776 +/-3.5	700 +/-3.7

Q: LEGALIZEDo you [**support or oppose**] making marijuana legal for recreational use in Maryland?**PROBE**

	MAR 14	FEB 15	FEB 16	FEB 17	SEPT 18	SEPT 19	MAR 21	OCT 21
Strongly oppose (p)	24	24	22	24	22	22	17	21
Oppose	15	20	17	12	11	15	11	12
Support	26	27	29	26	21	27	27	25
Strongly support (p)	24	25	25	32	41	30	40	35
Don't know (v)	10	4	6	5	5	5	4	4
Refused (v)	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	3
Total=	861 +/-3.3	619 +/-3.9	545 +/-4.2	776 +/-3.5	831 +/-3.4	808 +/-3.4	725 +/-3.6	700 +/-3.7

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

Q: ABORTIONDo you think abortions should be [**legal under any circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances**]?

	OCT 21
Legal under any circumstances	44
Legal only under certain circumstances	44
Illegal in all circumstances	10
Don't know (v)	2
Refused (v)	>1
Total=	700 +/-3.7

Q: SPEND

Changing topics, I'd like to know whether you think the Maryland state government spends [**too much, too little, or about the right amount**] of resources on each one of the following areas. . .

[ROTATE: SP_EDUC to SP_EMPLOY]

	Too Little	Right Amount	Too Much	Don't know (v)	Refused (v)
Q: SP_EDUC Kindergarten to 12th grade public education	54	31	9	5	1
Q: SP_TRANSPORT Public transportation	40	43	9	8	>1
Q: SP_ROADS Roads and highways	47	41	8	4	0
Q: SP_PARKS State parks	27	59	6	8	0
Q: SP_HOUSING Housing and community development	47	30	15	8	>1
Q: SP_EMPLOY Unemployment assistance	32	34	27	7	0

N=700, +/-3.7%

Q: VISIT_PARK

How interested—[**very interested, somewhat interested, or not at all interested**]—are you in visiting a Maryland state park during the next year?

	OCT 21
Not at all interested	16
Somewhat interested	33
Very interested	51
Don't know (v)	0
Refused (v)	0
Total=	700 +/-3.7

Q: NORTH_SOUTH

In general, do you think Maryland is [more of a Northern state or more of a Southern state]?

	OCT 21
More Northern	65
More Southern	27
Some other response (v)	3
Don't know (v)	5
Refused (v)	>1
Total=	700 +/-3.7

[See results by demographics.](#)