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Marylanders support raising minimum wage, legalizing recreational marijuana, and banning Styrofoam containers

Residents concerned about pollution in the Chesapeake Bay and view race relations as in decline

BALTIMORE—The Goucher Poll asked Maryland residents about their opinions toward several policy issues being considered by the Maryland General Assembly, including increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, legalizing the recreational use of marijuana, raising the age for tobacco use, banning Styrofoam containers, and legalizing an aid-in-dying option. Residents were also asked their views toward racial justice issues, spending on public education, and the environment. The Goucher Poll surveyed **808** Maryland adults from **February 7-12** and has a margin of error of **+/-3.4 percent**.

Statewide Policy Issues

Marylanders were asked their opinions toward the minimum wage, minimum age for the sale of tobacco products, legalization of recreational marijuana, and a ban on Styrofoam containers:*

- **66 percent** support raising the minimum age for the sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products and **31 percent** oppose it.
- **67 percent** support raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour and **30 percent** oppose it.
- **57 percent** support legalizing the recreational use of marijuana and **37 percent** oppose it.
- **63 percent** support a statewide ban on Styrofoam products such as food containers, plates, and cups and **31 percent** oppose it.
- **62 percent** support the proposed “aid-in-dying” bill and **31 percent** oppose it.

*Please refer to the tables provided on pages 8-12 for exact wording for all questions on this survey.

State Spending on Public Education

Respondents were also asked whether the state government spends too little, about the right amount, or too much on public education.

Too little: **64 percent**

About the right amount: **24 percent**

Too much: **7 percent**

“The Democrats in the General Assembly have laid out a robust set of policy proposals this legislative session,” said Mileah Kromer, director of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center at Goucher College. “Our poll results suggest that much of their agenda is popular with the general public. Some of these issues, however, are contentious and will face formidable opposition from organized interests on their way to an uncertain fate at Gov. Hogan’s desk.”

Racial Justice Issues in Maryland

Residents were asked about several issues concerning race in Maryland today. Majorities of white and African American Marylanders agree that race relations in Maryland have gotten worse over the past few years. African American and white Marylanders, however, express very different views on other racial justice issues.

- **39 percent** of all Marylanders agree that “*people of all races receive equal treatment by the police in your community.*”
 - Among African Americans, **18 percent** agree.
 - Among whites, **47 percent** agree.
- **55 percent** of Marylanders agree that “*racial minorities face discrimination on the job or at work in Maryland.*”
 - Among African Americans, **69 percent** agree.
 - Among whites, **47 percent** agree.
- **53 percent** of Marylanders agree that “*race relations in Maryland have gotten worse over the past few years.*”
 - Among African Americans, **54 percent** agree.
 - Among whites, **54 percent** agree.
- **24 percent** of Marylanders agree that “*the criminal justice system in Maryland treats whites and blacks equally.*”
 - Among African Americans, **10 percent** agree.
 - Among whites, **30 percent** agree.
- **63 percent** of Marylanders agree that “*racism is a big problem in Maryland today.*”
 - Among African Americans, **72 percent** agree.
 - Among whites, **58 percent** agree.

Environment

Marylanders hold nearly identical views on the health of the environment and concerns toward pollution in the Chesapeake Bay as they did on the October 2014 Goucher Poll.

Sixty-two percent of residents rate the health of the environment in Maryland as either “poor” or “fair,” while **36 percent** rate it as “excellent” or “good.”

A large majority—**86 percent**—say that they are “very” or “somewhat” concerned with pollution in the Chesapeake Bay; **13 percent** say they are “not at all” or “a little” concerned.

To view archived polls, please visit www.goucher.edu/poll.

The second part of this poll will be released on Tuesday, February 19, at 12:01 a.m.

About the Goucher Poll

The Goucher Poll is conducted under the auspices of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center at Goucher College. Directed by Dr. 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 Maryland by providing neutral, unbiased, and independent information on citizen perceptions and opinions. The data collected by the Goucher 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.



Survey Methodology

To ensure all Maryland residents are represented, the Goucher 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 for the survey is obtained from Survey Sampling International, LLC (<http://www.surveysampling.com/>).

The survey was conducted **Thursday, February 7, to Tuesday, February 12**. During this time, interviews were conducted 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Monday to Friday and 12 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. 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. **Seventy-seven percent** of the interviews were conducted on a cell phone and **23 percent** were conducted on a landline.

Interviews for this survey were completed with **808** Maryland adults. For a sample size of **808**, there is a 95 percent probability the survey results have a plus or minus **3.4 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 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 Obama?

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 Poll Sample Demographics (in percent)

	Maryland Adult Population Parameter	Weighted Sample Estimate Adults (n=808)	Weighted Sample Estimate Registered Voters (n=707)
Gender			
Male	47	47	47
Female	53	53	53
Age			
18 to 24	12	12	9
25 to 34	18	18	18
35 to 44	16	16	17
45 to 54	18	18	19
55 to 64	17	17	18
65+	19	18	19
Race			
White	61	61	62
Black	30	30	29
Other	9	9	9
Education			
High school or less	35	35	33
Tech school/some college	26	26	26
College degree	21	21	22
Adv./professional degree	18	18	19
Geography			
Central Region	21	17	18
Montgomery County	17	15	15
Prince George's County	15	11	10
Baltimore County	14	14	14
Baltimore City	11	21	21
Western Region	8	8	8
Eastern Shore Region	8	8	8
Southern Region	6	6	6

Counties included in regions:

- 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, unaffiliated, or something else?

Of the **808** Maryland adult residents surveyed, **707** 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 (Oct 2018)	Weighted Sample Estimate Registered Voters (n=707)
Democratic Party	55	51
Republican Party	26	28
Unaffiliated (Independent)	18	17
Other Party (Green/Libertarian/Other)	2	4
Total=	100	707 +/-3.7

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	30	29
Moderate	43	43
Progressive	23	23
Don't know (v)	4	4
Total=	808 +/-3.4	707 +/-3.7

The following question was asked to the full sample of **808 Maryland adults**. Please refer to **page 13** for the results by registered voter and other key demographics. Results are in percent and may not add up exactly to 100 due to weighting and rounding.

Q: EDUCFUND

Do you think the state government spends [**too much, too little, or about the right amount**] to fund **public education** in Maryland?

	FEB 16	FEB 17	FEB 18	FEB 19
Too little	66	66	71	64
About the right amount	24	23	19	24
Too much	8	7	8	7
Don't know (v)	3	4	2	5
Total=	545 +/-4.2	776 +/-3.5	800 +/-3.5	808 +/-3.4

Q: POLICYINT

Next, I'm going to ask you about a few policy issues currently being considered in Maryland.

Q: SMOKE

Do you [**support or oppose**] raising the minimum age for the sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products in Maryland from 18 to 21?

	FEB 19
Strongly oppose (p)	13
Oppose	18
Support	24
Strongly support (p)	42
Don't know (v)	3
Refused (v)	1
Total=	808 +/-3.4

Q: MINWAGEChanging topics, do you [**support or oppose**] raising the state minimum wage to \$15 dollars per hour?**PROBE**

	FEB 17	FEB 18	SEPT 18	FEB 19
Strongly oppose (p)	22	17	15	13
Oppose	16	14	10	17
Support	20	20	22	24
Strongly support (p)	40	46	49	43
Don't know (v)	2	2	4	2
Refused (v)	--	1	1	1
Total=	776 +/-3.5	800 +/-3.5	831 +/-3.4	808 +/-3.4

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

	OCT 13	MAR 14	FEB 15	FEB 16	FEB 17	SEPT 18	SEPT 19
Strongly oppose (p)	20	24	24	22	24	22	22
Oppose	21	15	20	17	12	11	15
Support	26	26	27	29	26	21	27
Strongly support (p)	25	24	25	25	32	41	30
Don't know (v)	8	10	4	6	5	5	5
Refused (v)	1	1	0	0	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

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

Q: FOAM

Do you [**support or oppose**] a statewide ban on Styrofoam products such as food containers, plates, and cups?

	FEB 19
Strongly oppose (p)	12
Oppose	19
Support	27
Strongly support (p)	36
Don't know (v)	6
Total=	808 +/-3.4

Q: TERMINAL

As you may have heard, a policy recently was proposed that would allow terminally ill patients to obtain a prescription for a fatal dose of drugs from a willing doctor. To be eligible, these patients would have to be diagnosed as having less than six months to live, be mentally competent, and self-administer the drugs. Do you [**oppose or support**] this policy?

PROBE

	FEB 15	FEB 19
Strongly oppose (p)	23	17
Oppose	12	14
Support	32	33
Strongly support (p)	28	29
Don't know (v)	4	6
Refused (v)	1	2
Total=	619 +/-3.9	808 +/-3.4

Q: RACEINTRO

Next, I'm going to read you some statements about issues involving race in Maryland today. For each one, please let me know if you [agree or disagree] with it. . .

PROBE

[POLICE to PROBLEM rotated]

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	DK/REF (v)
Q: POLICE People of all races receive equal treatment by the police in your community.	28	27	23	16	6
Q: WORK Racial minorities face discrimination on the job or at work in Maryland.	10	26	32	23	9
Q: WORSE Race relations in Maryland have gotten worse over the past few years.	10	30	25	28	7
Q: JUSTICE The criminal justice system in Maryland treats whites and blacks equally.	36	31	16	8	9
Q: PROBLEM Racism is a big problem in Maryland today.	10	22	33	30	5

Total=808, +/-3.4

Note: POLICE was previously asked on the OCT15, FEB16, and FEB17 polls. WORK and WORSE were previously asked on the FEB17 poll. See www.goucher.edu/poll for those results.

Q: HEALTH

Next, changing topics to the environment...how would you rate the overall health of the environment in Maryland today—[excellent, good, fair, or poor]?

	OCT 14	FEB 19
Poor	14	15
Fair	48	47
Good	31	32
Excellent	5	4
Don't know (v)	2	1
Refused (v)	>1	1
Total=	708 +/-3.7	808 +/-3.4

Q: BAYCONCERN

How concerned—[**very, somewhat, a little, not at all**]**—**are you about pollution in the Chesapeake Bay?

	OCT 14	FEB 19
Not at all concerned	4	3
A little concerned	10	10
Somewhat concerned	24	26
Very concerned	61	60
Don't know (v)	1	1
Total=	708 +/-3.7	808 +/-3.4

Results by Demographics (in percent)

- Column percentages
- Unless specified, “don’t know,” “refused,” and other volunteered responses are not included below
- Margin of error is higher for subsamples
- Refer to tables above for questions as worded

	Registered Voters				Maryland Adults							
		Party Registration			Gender		Age			Race		
	All (n=707)	Dem (n=362)	Ind (n=119)	Rep (n=200)	Male (n=380)	Female (n=428)	18-34 (n=245)	35-54 (n=277)	55+ (n=286)	White (n=493)	Black (n=242)	Other (n=73)
Q: EDUCFUND												
Too little	62	75	68	35	54	72	72	69	52	54	80	77
Right Amount	25	17	23	41	32	17	22	17	33	31	11	18
Too much	7	3	7	15	10	4	4	6	9	9	3	3
Q: SMOKE												
Oppose	31	23	32	40	38	25	38	31	24	34	27	26
Support	65	74	66	53	59	71	59	64	72	62	70	72
Q: MINWAGE												
Oppose	31	11	37	61	36	24	29	31	29	43	7	19
Support	67	85	61	37	61	74	70	67	66	53	93	79
Q: LEGALMJ												
Oppose	36	30	30	53	31	43	25	30	54	39	38	25
Support	59	64	66	44	64	51	69	65	39	57	54	70
Q: FOAM												
Oppose	30	22	36	39	38	25	34	29	30	30	33	30
Support	63	72	57	53	55	68	63	61	62	63	60	66
Q: TERMINAL												
Oppose	31	29	28	39	27	34	31	24	37	26	40	32
Support	61	61	69	55	68	56	65	64	56	68	49	62

	Maryland Adults							
	College		Region			Ideology		
	>4-year degree (n=492)	4-year degree + (n=316)	MG/ PG (n=259)	Central/ Balt Metro (n=372)	Outside Urban Corridor (n=177)	Cons (n=240)	Mod (n=346)	Prog (n=184)
Q: EDUCFUND								
Too little	61	68	67	65	56	45	66	84
Right Amount	26	22	24	21	30	32	24	13
Too much	8	5	3	8	10	13	6	0
Q: SMOKE								
Oppose	36	23	24	29	46	40	30	22
Support	60	73	75	65	50	56	67	74
Q: MINWAGE								
Oppose	33	25	16	31	47	48	29	6
Support	65	71	81	67	48	49	67	93
Q: LEGALMJ								
Oppose	37	38	33	37	44	53	34	20
Support	59	55	61	57	53	41	58	78
Q: FOAM								
Oppose	38	19	28	30	37	45	29	16
Support	57	70	66	64	54	45	63	83
Q: TERMINAL								
Oppose	32	28	34	29	31	43	28	19
Support	60	63	63	60	63	47	63	78

	Registered Voters				Maryland Adults							
	All (n=707)	Party Registration			Gender		Age			Race		
		Dem (n=362)	Ind (n=119)	Rep (n=200)	Male (n=380)	Female (n=428)	18-34 (n=245)	35-54 (n=277)	55+ (n=286)	White (n=493)	Black (n=242)	Other (n=73)
Q: POLICE												
Disagree	56	78	51	21	51	60	64	59	45	45	79	51
Agree	38	20	37	70	42	34	28	39	46	47	18	43
Q: WORK												
Disagree	37	17	50	62	39	33	38	30	40	43	24	30
Agree	54	75	42	25	51	58	58	58	48	47	69	58
Q: WORSE												
Disagree	38	34	38	45	41	39	46	40	34	40	36	49
Agree	55	60	50	51	52	53	48	52	58	54	54	40
Q: JUSTICE												
Disagree	67	82	64	45	63	70	73	71	58	60	83	62
Agree	23	10	23	43	29	20	24	21	28	30	10	33
Q: PROBLEM												
Disagree	32	20	44	47	41	25	38	33	28	37	25	32
Agree	63	77	48	49	54	70	58	62	67	58	72	60
Q: HEALTH												
Poor/Fair	61	71	57	44	58	65	73	61	52	54	77	68
Excellent/Good	38	27	41	55	41	33	25	37	46	45	21	32
Q: BAYCONCERN												
Not at all/Little	12	9	13	16	14	11	13	11	14	14	12	7
Very/Somewhat	87	90	87	83	83	88	85	89	84	85	85	92

	Maryland Adults							
	College		Region			Ideology		
	>4-year degree (n=492)	4-year degree + (n=316)	MG/PG (n=259)	Central/Balt Metro (n=372)	Outside Urban Corridor (n=177)	Cons (n=240)	Mod (n=346)	Prog (n=184)
Q: POLICE								
Disagree	52	62	61	61	37	36	58	77
Agree	42	32	32	35	54	54	38	17
Q: WORK								
Disagree	42	26	30	33	50	51	37	14
Agree	48	66	61	57	41	36	58	75
Q: WORSE								
Disagree	40	40	39	35	51	38	41	42
Agree	54	52	51	58	44	55	52	52
Q: JUSTICE								
Disagree	61	75	73	69	54	51	68	87
Agree	30	15	22	20	35	37	23	7
Q: PROBLEM								
Disagree	37	26	33	26	45	40	34	20
Agree	60	67	62	69	51	57	60	76
Q: HEALTH								
Poor/Fair	64	58	60	68	52	55	62	73
Excellent/Good	35	39	38	31	47	43	36	26
Q: BAYCONCERN								
Not at all/Little	15	9	8	13	19	23	8	8
Very/Somewhat	83	91	90	86	81	76	89	92