



RESULTS EMBARGOED UNTIL FRIDAY, MARCH 15, AT NOON EST

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Goucher Releases Poll Results on Hydraulic Fracturing/Fracking

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Baltimore—The Goucher Poll asked Maryland citizens for their perspectives on hydraulic fracturing—or fracking, a process that uses the high-pressure injection of water, sand, and chemicals to remove natural gas from rocks deep in the earth’s surface.

About half of the respondents to the survey were given questions with the words “hydraulic fracturing or fracking” included. The other half of respondents were given the same questions without the inclusion of the words “hydraulic fracturing or fracking.”

Here are the results for the questions as worded:

For respondents who heard a description of the process and the words “hydraulic fracturing or fracking”:

- 51 percent have heard “a lot” or “some” about the process; 48 percent have heard “not much” or “nothing so far.”
- 37 percent view the process as “very safe” or “somewhat safe;” 34 percent view the process as “not very safe” or “not at all safe;” 29 percent “don’t know” if the process is safe.
- 49 percent think the state should not encourage the process because of the potential environmental impact; 27 percent think the state should encourage the process.

For respondents who heard a description of the process but without the words “hydraulic fracturing or fracking”:

- 42 percent have heard “a lot” or “some” about the process; 57 percent have heard “not much” or “nothing so far.”

- 36 percent view the process as “very safe” or “somewhat safe;” 29 percent view the process as “not very safe” or “not at all safe;” 35 percent “don’t know” if the process is safe.
- 48 percent think the state should not encourage the process because of the potential environmental impact; 31 percent think the state should encourage the process.

“Our results suggest a potential decrease in perceived safety of the process when residents hear the word ‘fracking,’” said Mileah Kromer, director of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center. “Across both sets of questions, we find that about half of Maryland citizens think the state should not encourage the process because of the potential environmental impact, while about 30 percent think the state should encourage it.”

The poll, conducted March 3-7, surveyed a dual-frame (landlines and cell phones) random sample of 791 Maryland residents and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.48 percentage points. Margin of error is higher for subsamples. The sample is of all Maryland residents and does not restrict by registered or likely voters.

Mileah Kromer, the director of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center, is available for comment. She can be reached at mileah.kromer@goucher.edu or 724-840-0990.



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About the Goucher Poll

The Goucher Poll is conducted under the auspices of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center, which is housed in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Goucher College. Directed by Mileah Kromer, Ph.D., 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 the state by providing neutral and nonbiased information on citizen perceptions and opinions. The data collected by the Goucher Poll are used to support faculty and student research.

Survey Methodology

To ensure all Maryland citizens are represented, the Goucher Poll is conducted using random digit dialing (RDD) of a 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 Sunday, March 3, to Thursday, March 7. During this time, interviews were conducted from 1 to 6 p.m. on Sunday and from 5 to 9 p.m. on Monday through Thursday. 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. For each landline number reached, one adult from that household was selected on the basis of being the oldest or youngest adult in that residence. Thirty-five percent of the interviews were conducted on a cell phone, and 65 percent were conducted on a landline.

Interviews for this survey were completed with 791 Maryland citizens. For a sample size of 791 there is a 95 percent probability that the survey results have a plus or minus 3.48 percent margin of error from the actual population distribution for any given survey question. Margin of errors are higher for subsamples.

Survey Question Design

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

BRACKED ITEMS []: Items and statements in brackets are rotated to ensure that respondents do not receive a set order of response options presented to them, which maintains question construction integrity by avoiding respondent acquiescence 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 a respondent if his or her response is 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: The open-ended question provides no response options, 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 respondents; they are only used to help reduce interviewer error and time in coding the response.

VOLUNTEER (v): Volunteer responses means that the interviewer did not offer that response option in the question as read to the respondent. 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.

Sample Demographics

	MD population parameter	Weighted sample estimate
Gender		
Male	.48	.50
Female	.52	.50
Age		
18 to 24 years	.13	.13
25 to 34 years	.18	.18
35 to 44 years	.17	.17
45 to 54 years	.20	.20
55 to 64 years	.16	.16
65 years and older	.16	.16
Race		
White	.63	.63
Black	.29	.23
Other	.08	.14
Region		
Capitol	.36	.36
Central	.46	.46
Eastern	.08	.08
Southern	.06	.06
Western	.04	.04

Population parameters are based on Census estimates as of July 2011.

Sample is weighted by age, gender, and region.

Distribution of Regions

Capitol—Frederick, Montgomery, Prince George’s

Central—Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard

Eastern—Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester

Southern—Calvert, Charles, St. Mary’s

Western—Allegany, Garrett, Washington

Other Sample Demographics

Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

If respondent indicates they are an Independent:

Since you indicated you were an Independent, during elections, do you typically lean toward the Republican or Democratic candidate?

Party Identification	
Republican	.31
Democrat	.53
Independent	.10
Other	.06

Survey Results¹

Half of the survey respondents randomly received FRACK1A, FRACK1B, and FRACK1C, while the other half received FRACK2A, FRACK2B, and FRACK2C. The sets of questions differ by one key component—FRACK1A/1B/1C contains the words “hydraulic fracturing or fracking” in the content of the question and FRACK2A/2B/2C does not.

Q: FRACK1A

How much have you heard or read about hydraulic fracturing, or fracking—a process that uses the high-pressure injection of water, sand, and chemicals to remove natural gas from rocks deep in the earth's surface—a lot, some, not much, or nothing so far?

Q: FRACK2A

How much have you heard or read about a process for extracting natural gas that involves using a high-pressure injection of water, sand, and chemicals to remove natural gas from rocks deep in the earth's surface—a lot, some, not much, or nothing so far?

	1A	2A
A Lot	18.7	17.5
Some	32.2	24.8
Not Much	15.1	19.0
Nothing so Far	33.0	37.5
Don't Know/Refused (v)	1.0	1.2
Total=791, +/-3.48	100.0 (415)	100.0 (376)

¹ Percent totals may not add up to 100 due to weighting and/or rounding.

Q: FRACK1B

As far as you know, do you think hydraulic fracturing or fracking is a very safe method to extract natural gas from the ground, somewhat safe, not very safe, or not at all safe?

Q: FRACK2B

As far as you know, do you think this process is a very safe method to extract natural gas from the ground, somewhat safe, not very safe, or not at all safe?

	1B	2B
Very Safe	7.2	6.9
Somewhat Safe	29.4	29.4
Not Very Safe	16.7	15.8
Not at all Safe	17.5	13.2
Don't Know/Refused (v)	29.2	34.8
Total=791, +/-3.48	100.0 (415)	100.0 (376)

Q: FRACK1C

Some people say the state should encourage hydraulic fracturing because of the economic benefits, while others say the state should not encourage hydraulic fracturing or fracking because of potential environmental impact. Which comes closer to your view?

Q: FRACK2C

Some people say the state should encourage drilling for natural gas by this process because of the economic benefits. Others say the state should not encourage drilling because of the potential, environmental impact. Which comes closer to your view?

	1B	2B
The state should encourage drilling because of economic benefits	27.1	30.6
The state should <u>not</u> encourage drilling because of potential environmental impact.	49.0	48.1
Don't Know/Refused (v)	23.9	21.3
Total=791, +/-3.48	100.0 (415)	100.0 (376)