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Goucher Poll Releases First Round of Inaugural Results

Marylanders Share Perceptions of Same-Sex Marriage, Immigration, and Expanded Gambling

Baltimore – The newly launched Goucher Poll asked Maryland citizens for their opinions toward same-sex marriage, immigration and undocumented immigrants, pit bull “inherently dangerous” court ruling, expanded gambling, and perceptions of the most important issues facing the state. Highlights of the results regarding these most pressing issues in the state are detailed below.

The poll, conducted October 21-25, surveyed a dual-frame (landlines and cell phones) random sample of 667 Maryland residents and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.79 percentage points. The sample is of all Maryland residents and does not restrict by registered or likely voters.

Additional crosstabs of the survey results are available upon request, and Mileah Kromer, the director of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center, is available for comment regardless of the weather. She can be reached at mileah.kromer@goucher.edu or 724-840-0990.

Most Important Issue

Forty-four percent of Maryland residents indicate that the economy is the most important issue facing the state today. Another 17 percent say the most important issue is education, followed by 7 percent saying it is taxes.

Expanded Gambling and Casinos

Half of Maryland residents indicate that they support expanded gambling in the state, while 44 percent oppose it. Residents who support expanded gambling say that bringing more revenue and jobs to the state are the primary reasons for their support, whereas opponents of the expansion express concerns over whether the expansion actually will benefit Maryland citizens or education in the state.

Nearly all Marylanders (87 percent) indicate that they have seen television ads on the gambling ballot initiative. These respondents were then asked to evaluate the “for expanded gambling,” or “Yes on 7,” ads and the “against expanded gambling,” or “No on 7,” ads.

For expanded gambling, or “Yes on 7,” television ads:

58 percent say these ads were “misleading”

30 percent say these ads were “truthful”

13 percent say they “don’t know” whether the ads were misleading or truthful

Against expanded gambling, or “No on 7,” television ads:

61 percent say these ads were “misleading”

24 percent say these ads were “truthful”

15 percent say they “don’t know” whether the ads were misleading or truthful

“Marylanders have been bombarded with television ads on the expanded gambling initiative, and the majority of residents view these ads as misleading. Despite this view, it appears that the promises of increased revenues and jobs are driving the opinion of Maryland residents,” said Mileah Kromer, director of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center. “If the initiative does pass, it will be interesting to see which side was really reflecting reality in their ads.”

Same-Sex Marriage

Fifty-five percent of residents support allowing same-sex couples to marry legally in Maryland; 39 percent oppose it. When asked their opinion on the effects that legalizing same-sex marriage would have on society in general, 64 percent indicate that it would have either “no effect,” or it would “change society for the better.” Thirty-two percent say it will “change society for the worse.”

“Maryland, along with three other states, will get to decide this November whether to recognize same-sex unions. While the majority of Maryland citizens appear to support gay marriage, it is important to remember that every time the issue has been on a state ballot, voters have come out against same-sex marriage,” said Kromer.

Pit Bull Court Ruling

Fifty-two percent of residents disagree with the recent court ruling that declared pit bulls and pit bull mixes are “inherently dangerous” dogs, while 42 percent agree. Forty percent of Marylanders indicate they own a dog, while 60 percent do not.

Results of the Goucher Poll indicate differences among owners and non-owners on the inherently dangerous nature of pit bulls and pit bull mixes:

Residents who own a dog: 62 percent disagree with the ruling, 36 percent agree

Residents who do not own a dog: 46 percent disagree with the ruling, 47 percent agree

“This will be an issue to watch in the upcoming state legislative session. This court decision has implications, not just for dog owners and advocates, but for renters, landlords, and property managers alike,” said Kromer. “What is most interesting is how much dog ownership shapes public opinion on this issue.”

Immigration

Fifty-seven percent of Marylanders support and 39 percent oppose allowing undocumented immigrants the ability to pay in-state or in-county tuition at Maryland public colleges and universities, according to poll findings.

Marylanders were asked about the recent federal policy, which allowed young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children the ability to obtain work permits and defer deportation. Seventy-one percent of residents support this policy, while 24 percent oppose it.

Residents were also asked about their general views toward undocumented immigrants working in the United States:

63 percent: Undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay in their jobs and eventually apply for U.S. citizenship.

16 percent: Undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay in their jobs only as temporary guest workers, but not to apply for U.S. citizenship.

17 percent: Undocumented immigrants should be required to leave their jobs and leave the United States.

“Maryland residents appear to lean toward immigration policies that favor a pathway to citizenship, rather than policies with a focus on deportation,” said Kromer. “Marylanders support policies that help younger undocumented immigrants, particularly those who were brought here as children. It will be interesting to see if this general sentiment is reflected in the passage of the Maryland DREAM Act this November.”



RESULTS EMBARGOED UNTIL MONDAY, OCTOBER 29, AT 2 P.M. EST

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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 is 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, October 21, through Thursday, October 25, 2012.** 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 **667** Maryland citizens. For a sample size of **667** there is a 95 percent probability that the survey results have a plus or minus **3.79** 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	0.48	0.48
Female	0.52	0.52
Age		
18 to 24 years	0.13	0.13
25 to 34 years	0.18	0.17
35 to 44 years	0.17	0.18
45 to 54 years	0.20	0.20
55 to 64 years	0.16	0.16
65 years and older	0.16	0.16
Race		
White	0.63	0.59
Black	0.29	0.31
Other	0.08	0.10
Region		
Capitol	0.36	0.38
Central	0.46	0.46
Eastern	0.08	0.07
Southern	0.06	0.05
Western	0.04	0.04

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

Sample is weighted by gender, age, race, and region.

Distribution of Regions

Capitol—Frederick, Montgomery, Prince George’s

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

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

Southern—Calvert, Charles, St. Mary’s

Western—Garrett, Allegany, Washington

Survey Results¹

Most Important Issue

Q: IMPISSUE

What do you think is the most important issue facing the state of Maryland today?

[OPEN ENDED]

	Percent
Economy/jobs	43.6
Education	16.5
Taxes	7.3
Budget deficit	5.4
Electoral issues	3.9
Gay marriage	3.7
Crime/drugs	2.5
Gambling	2.5
Healthcare	1.7
Other:	6.8
Don't know (v)	6.0
Refused (v)	0.1
Total=667, +/- 3.79	100.0

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

Expanded Gambling and Casinos

Q: INTROCAS

Next, I'd like to ask you a few questions about gambling in Maryland.

Do you [**oppose or support**] expanding gambling in the state to include table games and the construction of a new casino in Prince George's County?

PROBE

	Percent
Strongly oppose (p)	24.1
Oppose	20.0
Support	29.5
Strongly support (p)	20.7
Don't know (v)	5.4
Refused (v)	0.3
Total=667, +/- 3.79	100.0

IF "Strongly Opposed" or "Opposed" GO TO **OPPCAS**

IF "Strongly Support" or "Support" GO TO **SUPCAS**

IF "Don't Know" or "Refused" SKIP TO **TV**

Only respondents who answered “Strongly Opposed” or “Opposed” were asked OPPCAS.

Q: OPPCAS

Because you said you opposed expanded gambling, can you tell me the main reason for your opposition?

[OPEN-ENDED]

	Percent
Concerned that Maryland citizens will not benefit from expansion	19.2
Concerned that schools will not get revenue as promised	18.3
Simply a “matter of principal”	10.8
Concerned about increased crime at gambling locations	9.5
Concerned about gambling addiction	8.5
Gambling is a “waste of money”	5.9
Already enough gambling in Maryland	4.5
Opposed to gambling on religious grounds	3.6
Expanded gambling is just an excuse to collect more taxes	2.5
Not quite sure why/gut feeling	1.5
Concerned about reducing business at the existing casinos	1.2
Other	14.6
Total=293, +/- 5.73	100.0

Only respondents who answered “Strongly Support” or “Support” were asked SUPCAS.

Q: SUPCAS

Because you said you supported expanded gambling, can you tell me the main reason for your support?

[OPEN-ENDED]

	Percent
Will bring needed revenue to the state	35.9
Will bring more jobs to the state	19.1
Help fund education/schools	18.1
More opportunity to enjoy gambling as a leisure activity	10.1
Revenue from gambling will help balance the budget	7.4
Why not/no reason not to expand gambling	2.0
Increase tourism to the state	1.8
Other	4.6
Don't know (v)	1.1
Total=334, +/- 5.36	100.0

Q: TV

Over the past few months, have you seen any television ads about the expanded gambling ballot initiative—known as Question 7—on television?

	Percent
Yes	87.1
No	11.8
Don't know (v)	1.0
Refused (v)	0.2
Total=667, +/- 3.79	100.0

IF “Yes” GO TO **TVADS1**

IF “No” SKIP **TVADS1** and **TVADS2**

IF “Don't Know” or “Refused” SKIP **TVADS1** and **TVADS2**

Only respondents who answered “Yes” on TV were asked TVADS1 and TVADS2.

Q: TVADS1

I'd like to ask you a few questions about those television ads.

Thinking only about the ads in **support** of expanded gambling—or the “pro” or “yes on Question 7” ads—all and all, do you believe they were [**misleading or truthful**]?

PROBE

	Percent
Very misleading (p)	21.5
Misleading	36.1
Truthful	26.1
Very truthful (p)	3.7
Don't know (v)	12.6
Total=579, +/- 4.07	100.0

Q: TVADS2

Now, thinking only about the ads in **opposition** to expanded gambling—or “anti” or “no on Question 7” ads—do you believe they were [**misleading or truthful**]?

PROBE

	Percent
Very misleading (p)	15.3
Misleading	46.0
Truthful	17.5
Very truthful (p)	6.0
Don't know (v)	14.8
Refused (v)	0.3
Total=579, +/- 4.07	100.0

Same-Sex Marriage

Q: MARRY

Next, I'd like to get your views on same-sex marriage. All in all, do you [**support or oppose**] allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry legally here in Maryland?

PROBE

	Percent
Strongly oppose (p)	24.7
Oppose	14.5
Support	19.8
Strongly support (p)	35.6
Don't know (v)	4.4
Refused (v)	1.0
Total=667, +/- 3.79	100.0

Q: SOCIETY

Taking your best guess, do you think that allowing two people of the same sex to legally marry will [**change our society for the better, have no effect, or change our society for the worse**]?

	Percent
Change for the better	22.3
Have no effect	41.6
Change for the worse	31.8
Don't know (v)	3.2
Refused (v)	1.1
Total=667, +/- 3.79	100.0

Pit Bull Court Ruling

Q: PITBULL1

As you may have heard, a recent Maryland court ruling has declared that pit bull and pit bull mixes are “inherently dangerous” dogs.

What is your opinion? Do you [**agree or disagree**] that pit bulls and pit bull mixes are “inherently dangerous” dogs?

PROBE

	Percent
Strongly disagree (p)	30.1
Disagree	22.1
Agree	16.2
Strongly agree (p)	26.0
Don't know (v)	4.9
Refused (v)	0.6
Total=667, +/- 3.79	100.0

Q: DOG

Do you, personally, own a dog?

	Percent
Yes	40.3
No	59.7
Total=667, +/- 3.79	100.0

Opinion toward Pit Bull Court Ruling by Dog Ownership

	Dog Owner	
	Yes	No
Disagree	61.9	45.8
Agree	35.8	46.6
Don't know/refused (v)	2.2	7.6
Total=667, +/- 3.79	100	100

Immigration

Q: DREAM

As you may know, there is a debate over whether to allow undocumented immigrants the opportunity to pay in-state or in-county tuition at Maryland public colleges and universities, provided they meet eligibility requirements such as graduating from a Maryland high school and filing income taxes.

So, provided they meet the eligibility requirements, do you [**support or oppose**] allowing undocumented immigrants the opportunity to pay in-state or in-county tuition at Maryland public colleges and universities?

PROBE

	Percent
Strongly oppose (p)	23.5
Oppose	15.1
Support	31.5
Strongly support (p)	25.3
Don't know (v)	4.6
Refused (v)	0.1
Total=667, +/- 3.79	100.0

Q: NODEPORT

This past summer the federal government announced a policy in which young undocumented immigrants who came to the country with their parents as children will be able to obtain work permits and will not face deportation. Do you [**support or oppose**] this policy?

PROBE

	Percent
Strongly oppose (p)	10.9
Oppose	13.1
Support	37.0
Strongly support (p)	34.0
Don't know (v)	4.6
Refused (v)	0.5
Total=667, +/- 3.79	100.0

Q: IMMGEN

Now, thinking more generally about undocumented immigrants in the U.S. I'm going to read you three statements, and I'd like for you to tell me which one comes closest to your opinion. . .

[STATEMENTS ROTATED]

#1 Undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay in their jobs and to eventually apply for U.S. citizenship.

#2 Undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay in their jobs only as temporary guest workers, but not to apply for U.S. citizenship.

#3 Undocumented immigrants should be required to leave their jobs and leave the U.S.

	Percent
Statement #1	62.7
Statement #2	15.2
Statement #2	16.9
Some other opinion (v)	2.8
Don't know (v)	1.7
Refused (v)	0.8
Total=667, +/- 3.79	100