



RESULTS EMBARGOED UNTIL THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, AT NOON E.S.T.

Press Contact Information

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Baltimore – The Goucher Poll asked citizens for their perspectives regarding the job approval and favorability ratings of President Barack Obama and U.S. political parties, as well as their opinions about economic conditions. Citizens also were asked about their thoughts regarding the new health care law.

Perceptions of President Obama, Political Parties, and Congress

Fifty-seven percent of Marylanders have a favorable view of President Barack Obama, slightly lower than it was a year ago at this time, according to the Goucher Poll. Thirty-four percent hold an unfavorable view of the president. When asked to rate how well he is handling his job as president, 39 percent disapprove, and 55 percent approve.

Only 5 percent of Marylanders approve of how Congress is doing its job; 91 percent disapprove.

Maryland residents were asked which party—the Democratic or Republican Party—will do a better job leading the state over the next few years. About half of Maryland residents think the Democratic Party will do a better job; 23 percent think the Republican Party will do a better job; and 20 percent volunteer that “neither party” will do a better job.

Half of Maryland residents hold a favorable view of the Democratic Party, while a quarter hold a favorable view of the Republican Party. Seventeen percent of Marylanders have a favorable view of the Tea Party.

Personal Financial Situation

Marylanders are slightly less optimistic about their personal economic situation than they were a year ago. When asked if they expect their current financial to get better, stay about the same, or get worse over the next year:

October 2013

Get Worse: 18 percent

Stay About the Same: 31 percent

Get Better: 47 percent

October 2012

Get Worse: 11 percent

Stay About the Same: 31 percent

Get Better: 50 percent

And, when asked how their current personal financial situation compares to a year ago, 28 percent indicated that it was worse, 45 percent say it is about the same, and 27 percent say it is better.

Health Care

Fifty-three percent of Maryland residents indicate they have heard of marylandhealthconnection.gov, Maryland's health exchange website. Forty-seven percent indicate they have not heard of it. Of those indicating they have heard of the website, about 20 percent have visited it since its launch at the beginning of October.

Marylanders were then asked how prepared different groups—the federal government, the Maryland state government, insurance companies, and Maryland citizens—were to handle the new health care law.

17 percent indicated the federal government was prepared
33 percent indicated the Maryland state government was prepared
45 percent indicated the insurance companies were prepared
28 percent indicated Maryland citizens were prepared

When asked about the impact of the new health care law on the quality of health care here in Maryland, 48 percent of Marylanders said it will have a positive impact; 35 percent said it would have a negative impact; and 11 percent said it will have no impact.

“Despite Maryland's status as an ‘early adopter,’ advertisements during Ravens games, and a catchy commercial, almost half of Maryland residents have not heard of the website for Maryland's health insurance exchange—marylandhealthconnection.gov,” said Mileah Kromer, director of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center. “However, it does appear residents in the state are cautiously optimistic that the new health care law will have a positive impact on health care here in Maryland.”

The poll, conducted October 27-31, surveyed a dual-frame (landlines and cell phones) random sample of 665 Maryland residents and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.8 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. She can be reached at mileah.kromer@goucher.edu or 724-840-0990. For additional media requests, please contact Kristen Pinheiro, director of media relations, at 410-337-6316 or kristen.pinheiro@goucher.edu.



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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, 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, October 27, to Thursday, October 31. During this time, interviews were conducted 1-9 p.m. on Sunday and 5-9 p.m. 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-eight percent of the interviews were conducted on a cell phone, and 62 percent were conducted on a landline.

Interviews for this survey were completed with 665 Maryland citizens. For a sample size of 665, there is a 95 percent probability the survey results have a plus or minus 3.8 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 respondents do not receive a set order of response options presented to them, 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 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 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	.48
Female	.52	.52
Age		
18 to 24 Years	.13	.13
25 to 34 Years	.18	.18
35 to 44 Years	.17	.18
45 to 54 years	.20	.20
55 to 64 Years	.16	.16
65 Years and Older	.16	.15
Race		
White	.63	.61
Black	.29	.31
Other	.08	.08
Region		
Capitol	.36	.37
Central	.46	.47
Eastern	.08	.07
Southern	.06	.05
Western	.04	.04

*Population parameters are based on Census estimates as of July 2011.
Sample is weighted by age, race, 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:

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

Party Identification	
Republican	.27
Democrat	.54
Independent	.11
Other	.07
Don't Know/Refused (v)	.01

Survey Results¹

Q: OBAMAFAV

Do you have a [favorable or unfavorable] opinion of President Barack Obama?

PROBE

	October 2012	March 2013	October 2013
Very Unfavorable (p)	21.6	24.0	21.0
Unfavorable	10.6	13.9	12.8
Favorable	25.4	26.5	31.5
Very Favorable (p)	34.7	29.3	25.2
Don't Know (v)	6.8	5.6	9.0
Refused (v)	0.9	0.7	0.5
Total=	100.0 (667, +/- 3.7)	100.0 (791, +/-3.4)	100.0 (665, +/-3.8)

Q: OBAMAJOB

Do you [approve or disapprove] of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

PROBE

	March 2013	October 2013
Strongly Disapprove (p)	23.3	22.1
Disapprove	14.4	17.0
Approve	34.6	32.4
Strongly Approve (p)	22.8	22.1
Don't Know (v)	4.6	5.3
Refused (v)	0.4	1.0
Total=	100.0 (791, +/-3.4)	100.0 (665, +/-3.8)

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

Q: CONGJOB

Do you [approve or disapprove] of the way Congress is handling its job?

PROBE

	March 2013	October 2013
Strongly Disapprove (p)	57.3	62.3
Disapprove	26.6	29.1
Approve	9.1	4.2
Strongly Approve (p)	0.9	0.5
Don't Know (v)	5.5	3.6
Refused (v)	0.6	0.4
Total=	100.0 (791, +/-3.4)	100.0 (665, +/-3.8)

Q: ECONPAST

Thinking back, is your current personal financial situation [better, about the same, or worse] than it was a year ago?

	October 2012	October 2013
Worse	23.9	27.9
About the Same	41.0	44.7
Better	34.1	26.5
Don't Know (v)	0.4	0.2
Refused (v)	0.6	0.7
Total=	100.0 (667, +/-3.7)	100.0 (665, +/-3.8)

Q: ECONFUTURE

Now, thinking ahead, do you expect your current financial situation to [get better, stay about the same, or get worse] a year from now?

	October 2012	October 2013
Get Worse	10.9	18.2
Stay About the Same	31.3	30.5
Get Better	49.6	46.8
Don't Know (v)	7.8	4.4
Refused (v)	0.4	0.1
Total=	100.0 (667, +/-3.7	100.0 (665, +/-3.8)

Q: WEB1

Next, changing subjects, have you heard of the website marylandhealthconnection.gov?

	Percent
Yes	53.0
No/Don't Know	47.0
Total=665, +/-3.8	100.0

If "Yes":

Q: WEB2

Because you said you have heard of it, have you visited the marylandhealthconnection.gov website?

	Percent
Yes	19.7
No	80.3
Total=352, +/-5.2	100.0

Q: PREPARE

As you may know, the new health care law was implemented at the beginning of this month. Next, I'd like you to rate how prepared different groups were to handle the new health care law. For each group, please tell me if you think they were [prepared or unprepared].

PROBE**[FEDPREP to CITPREP randomized]****Q: FEDPREP**

The federal government

Q: STPREP

The Maryland state government

Q: INSPREP

The health insurance companies

Q: CITPREP

Maryland citizens

	Federal Government	State Government	Insurance Companies	Maryland Citizens
Very Unprepared (p)	46.1	17.2	12.4	21.1
Unprepared	31.7	30.5	26.5	33.8
Prepared	12.2	25.6	34.4	24.9
Very Prepared (p)	4.9	7.1	10.8	3.1
Don't Know (v)	4.7	18.9	15.8	16.3
Refused (v)	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.8
Total=665,+/-3.8	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Q: IMPACT

Thinking generally about the new health care law, do you think it will have a [positive impact, a negative impact, or no impact] on the quality of health care here in Maryland?

	Percent
Negative Impact	34.7
No Impact	10.6
Positive Impact	48.3
Don't Know (v)	6.3
Refused (v)	0.1
Total=665,+/-3.8	100.0

Q: LEADSTATE

Next, I'd like to ask your thoughts and opinions about political parties. Thinking ahead over the next few years, which political party do you think will do a better job of leading the state: [the Republican Party or the Democratic Party]?

	Percent
Republican Party	22.6
Democratic Party	50.9
Neither (v)	19.7
Don't Know (v)	4.9
Refused (v)	1.8
Total=665,+/-3.8	100.0

[DEMFAV and REPFAV randomized]

Q: DEMFAV

Do you have a [favorable or unfavorable] opinion of the Democratic Party?

PROBE

Q: REPFAV

Do you have a [favorable or unfavorable] opinion of the Republican Party?

PROBE

	Dem	Rep
Very Unfavorable (p)	17.4	31.6
Unfavorable	22.3	32.3
Favorable	36.7	20.7
Very Favorable (p)	14.0	4.0
Don't Know (v)	7.3	9.0
Refused (v)	2.2	2.4
Total=665,+/-3.8	100.0	100.0

Q: TEAFAV

Do you have a [favorable or unfavorable] opinion of the Tea Party?

PROBE

	Percent
Very Unfavorable (p)	41.1
Unfavorable	22.5
Favorable	12.2
Very Favorable (p)	5.0
Don't Know (v)	18.5
Refused (v)	0.7
Total=665,+/-3.8	100.0