



**Results Embargoed Until Tuesday, October 7, at 12:01 a.m.**

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**Goucher Poll Reveals Marylanders' Politician Approval Ratings,  
Perceptions of Biggest State Issues, and Opinions on Disease Outbreaks/Preparedness**

**Baltimore** – The Goucher Poll asked Maryland citizens for their perspectives regarding the state's gubernatorial candidates, political parties, most important issue facing Maryland, personal financial situation, Governor Martin O'Malley and his presidential run, President Obama, and Congress. Residents were also asked about the proposal to move the official start date of Maryland public schools until after Labor Day, as well as their views on the possibility of an Ebola outbreak.

**Ebola Outbreak and Preparedness**

Marylanders are concerned about an outbreak of a disease like Ebola happening in the United States. Sixty-six percent say they are "very" or "somewhat" concerned that an outbreak of a disease like Ebola will happen in the United States; 33 percent are either "a little" or "not at all" concerned. When asked about the preparedness of the Maryland health care system to handle an outbreak, 44 percent think Maryland is unprepared, and 38 think Maryland is prepared.

"With the first reported U.S. case and an Ebola patient being housed at the NIH facility here in Maryland, it is no wonder residents are expressing high levels of concern about a potential outbreak of a highly infectious disease," said Mileah Kromer, director of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center. "And even though Maryland is home to some of the world's best health care facilities, residents don't believe Maryland is prepared to handle an outbreak."

**Favorability of Gubernatorial Candidates and Perceptions of Political Parties**

Thirty-two percent of residents have a favorable opinion of Democratic gubernatorial candidate

Anthony Brown, while 35 percent hold an unfavorable opinion. Another 32 percent indicate they “don’t know” whether they have a favorable or unfavorable opinion.

When asked about Republican gubernatorial candidate Larry Hogan, 28 percent of residents have favorable opinion, and 27 percent have an unfavorable opinion. Forty-five percent say they “don’t know” how to rate Hogan as a candidate.

It must be noted that the candidates’ political party affiliations were not included in the wording of these specific poll questions.

Marylanders were also asked which political party—the Republican or Democratic Party—they had the most confidence in to address various issues. Residents have more confidence in the Democratic Party to handle environmental, social, transportation, education, and job creation issues, while they expressed similar amounts of confidence in the Republican and Democratic Party to address economic development, taxes, and criminal justice issues.

Environmental issues: Democrats (57%)/Republicans (23%)  
Economic development: Democrats (43%)/Republicans (38%)  
Social issues: Democrats (61%)/Republicans (21%)  
Transportation issues: Democrats (48%)/Republicans (24%)  
Job creation: Democrats (44%)/Republicans (34%)  
Taxes: Democrats (41%)/Republicans (40%)  
Education: Democrats (52%)/Republicans (25%)  
Crime and criminal justice: Democrats (39%)/Republicans (36%)

“Without the respective party affiliations of the candidates given in the question, it appears many Marylanders are simply unsure how to rate Brown and Hogan,” said Kromer. “This is not the case when asked about policy areas; Marylanders are sure and sometimes divided on which party is best equipped to handle some of the key campaign issues. The clock is ticking for the candidates to tell Marylanders who they are and where they stand.”

### **Most Important Issue, Direction of State, and Personal Financial Situation**

The economy and jobs (25 percent) continue to be the most important issue facing the state, followed by taxes (18 percent) and education (11 percent).

Marylanders are less optimistic on the direction of the state than they were a year ago. Thirty-eight percent think things in the state are headed in the right direction, and 52 percent say Maryland has gotten off on the wrong track.

When asked how their current personal financial situation compares to a year ago, 31 percent indicated it is worse; 41 percent say it is about the same; and 26 percent say it is better.

Looking ahead, 47 percent think their personal financial situation will get better over the next year, while 14 percent think it will get worse. Thirty-five percent think their situation will stay about the same.

### **Governor O'Malley and His Potential Presidential Run**

Forty percent of Marylanders have a favorable opinion of Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley, and 43 percent have an unfavorable opinion of him.

Nineteen percent of residents think Governor O'Malley should run for president in 2016, while 65 percent do not think he should run.

### **President Obama and U.S. Congress**

Fifty-four percent of Marylanders approve of the job Barack Obama is doing as president, about the same as his approval rating measured by the Goucher Poll a year ago. Thirty-seven percent disapprove of the job the president is doing.

Marylanders continue to be displeased with the U.S. Congress: 79 percent disapprove, and 14 approve of the way Congress is handling its job. When asked to evaluate the job their representative in Congress was doing, 49 percent approve, and 29 percent disapprove.

### **Post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools**

The proposal to move the official start date of Maryland public schools until after the Labor Day Weekend is popular among Marylanders. Seventy-one percent support the proposal, while 17 percent are opposed.



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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 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 Sunday, September 28, to Thursday, October 2. During this time, interviews were conducted 12-9 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. Fifty percent of the interviews were conducted on a cell phone, and 50 percent were conducted on a landline.

Interviews for this survey were completed with 708 Maryland citizens. For a sample size of 708, there is a 95 percent probability the survey results have a plus or minus 3.7 percentage point sampling error from the actual population distribution for any given survey question. Margins of error are higher for subsamples.

### 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 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:** 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 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.

## Sample Demographics

	MD Population Parameter	Weighted Sample Estimate
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	.48	.49
Female	.52	.51
18 to 24 Years	.13	.13
25 to 34 Years	.18	.18
35 to 44 Years	.17	.16
45 to 54 Years	.20	.20
55 to 64 Years	.16	.17
65 Years and Older	.16	.16
White	.63	.59
Black	.29	.31
Other	.08	.10
Capitol	.36	.31
Central	.46	.52
Eastern	.08	.07
Southern	.06	.06
Western	.04	.04

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

**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	.28
Democrat	.55
Independent	.09
Other	.05
Don't know/refused (v)	.03

## Survey Results<sup>1</sup>

### Q: IMPISSUE

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

[OPEN ENDED]

	Percent
Economy/jobs	25.1
Taxes	17.6
Education	10.8
Crime/criminal justice	6.7
Environmental issues/concerns	6.3
Drugs	4.9
Government corruption/dislike of government officials or candidates	4.5
Health care/health-related issues	3.5
Budget deficit/budget issues	2.8
Transportation/infrastructure	2.5
Social issues	1.3
Immigration	1.3
Other	4.9
Don't know/refused (v)	7.9
Total=	100.0 708 +/-3.7

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



**Q: OBAMAJOB**

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

**PROBE**

	<b>MAR 13</b>	<b>OCT 13</b>	<b>MAR 14</b>	<b>SEPT 14</b>
Strongly disapprove (p)	23.3	22.1	25.4	23.8
Disapprove	14.4	17.0	14.8	13.3
Approve	34.6	32.4	31.2	30.9
Strongly approve (p)	22.8	22.1	20.9	22.7
Don't know (v)	4.6	5.3	7.0	7.4
Refused (v)	0.4	1.0	0.6	1.8
Total=	100.0 791 +/-3.4	100.0 665 +/-3.8	100.0 861 +/-3.3	100.0 708 +/-3.7

**Q: CONGJOB**

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

**PROBE**

	<b>MAR 13</b>	<b>OCT 13</b>	<b>MAR 14</b>	<b>SEPT 14</b>
Strongly disapprove (p)	57.3	62.3	51.5	45.9
Disapprove	26.6	29.1	31.4	33.4
Approve	9.1	4.2	10.0	10.5
Strongly approve (p)	0.9	0.5	2.1	3.0
Don't know (v)	5.5	3.6	4.5	6.9
Refused (v)	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.4
Total=	100.0 791 +/-3.4	100.0 665 +/-3.8	100.0 861 +/-3.3	100.0 708 +/-3.7

**Q: CONGJOB2**

What about the representative in Congress from your district? Do you **[approve or disapprove]** of the way your representative is handling his or her job?

**PROBE**

	<b>MAR 14</b>	<b>SEPT 14</b>
Strongly disapprove (p)	13.0	12.9
Disapprove	18.0	16.4
Approve	34.2	36.4
Strongly approve (p)	11.4	12.4
Don't know (v)	23.2	21.6
Refused (v)	0.2	0.3
Total=	100.0 861 +/-3.3	100.0 708 +/-3.7

**Q: OMALLFAV**

Do you have a **[favorable or unfavorable]** opinion of Governor Martin O'Malley?

**PROBE**

	<b>OCT 12</b>	<b>MAR 13</b>	<b>OCT 13</b>	<b>SEPT 14</b>
Very unfavorable (p)	18.9	26.1	21.2	24.0
Unfavorable	16.9	19.2	19.2	19.4
Favorable	34.3	34.6	31.5	31.5
Very favorable (p)	10.8	11.2	9.9	8.1
Don't know (v)	18.3	8.4	17.6	16.5
Refused (v)	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.6
Total=	100.0 667 +/-3.7	100.0 791 +/-3.4	100.0 665 +/-3.8	100.0 708 +/-3.7

**Q: OMALLPREZ**

In your opinion, should Governor O'Malley run for president in 2016?

	Percent
No	65.2
Yes	19.2
It depends (v)	6.7
Don't know (v)	8.6
Refused (v)	0.4
Total=	100.0 708 +/-3.7

Next, I'd like to get your opinion on two candidates campaigning to be the next governor of Maryland.

[HOGANFAV and BROWNFAV Rotated]

**Q: HOGANFAV**

Do you have a [favorable or unfavorable] opinion of candidate Larry Hogan?

PROBE

	Percent
Very unfavorable (p)	8.3
Unfavorable	18.4
Favorable	19.2
Very favorable (p)	8.7
Don't know (v)	44.7
Refused (v)	0.8
Total=	100.0 708 +/-3.7

**Q: BROWNFAV**

Do you have a [favorable or unfavorable] opinion of candidate Anthony Brown?

PROBE

	Percent
Very unfavorable (p)	15.4
Unfavorable	20.0
Favorable	25.5
Very favorable (p)	6.6
Don't know (v)	31.8
Refused (v)	0.8
Total=	100.0 708 +/-3.7

**Q: TRACK**

In general, do you think things in the state are [headed in the right direction, or have they gotten off on the wrong track]?

	OCT 12	MAR 13	OCT 13	MAR 14	SEPT 14
Wrong track	40.3	46.8	45.6	51.7	52.0
Right direction	55.8	43.6	44.7	41.0	37.7
Don't know/refused (v)	4.0	9.7	9.7	7.2	10.2
Total=	100.0 667 +/- 3.79	100.0 791 +/-3.48	100.0 665 +/-3.8	100.0 861 +/-3.3	100.0 708 +/-3.7

**Q: ECONPAST**

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

	<b>OCT 12</b>	<b>OCT 13</b>	<b>SEPT 14</b>
Worse	23.9	27.9	30.8
About the same	41.0	44.7	41.0
Better	34.1	26.5	26.4
Don't know (v)	0.4	0.2	0.5
Refused (v)	0.6	0.7	1.3
Total=	100.0 667 +/-3.7	100.0 665 +/-3.8	100.0 708 +/-3.7

**Q: ECONFUT**

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

	<b>OCT 12</b>	<b>OCT 13</b>	<b>SEPT 14</b>
Worse	10.9	18.2	14.1
About the same	31.3	30.5	34.5
Better	49.6	46.8	46.8
Don't know (v)	7.8	4.4	3.9
Refused (v)	0.4	0.1	0.8
Total=	100.0 667 +/-3.7	100.0 665 +/-3.8	100.0 708 +/-3.7

**Q: PTYISSUE**

Next, I want you to tell me which party—[the Democratic Party or the Republican Party]—you have most confidence in to address each of the following issues in Maryland:

[ITEMS ROTATED]

	Dem	Rep	Neither (v)	Both (v)	DK/Ref (v)
Environmental issues	57.4	22.5	10.8	1.8	7.5
Economic development	42.8	37.8	9.9	3.7	5.7
Social issues	60.9	20.5	10.5	2.4	5.7
Transportation issues	47.6	24.3	12.2	4.9	11.1
Job creation	44.4	34.1	14.4	2.2	4.9
Taxes	40.5	40.0	13.1	1.4	5.0
Education	52.2	25.4	11.7	4.6	6.1
Crime and criminal justice	39.2	36.1	12.8	3.1	8.9
Total=708, +/-3.7					

**Q: START**

Next, as you may have heard, there is a proposal to move the official start date of Maryland public schools to after Labor Day Weekend. Do you [support or oppose] this proposal?

**PROBE**

	Percent
Strongly oppose (p)	8.4
Oppose	8.6
Support	30.3
Strongly support (p)	41.0
Don't know (v)	11.2
Refused (v)	0.4
Total=	100.0 708 +/-3.7

**Q: OUTBREAK1**

Changing subjects, is the outbreak of a disease—like Ebola—in the United States something you are **[very, somewhat, a little, or not at all]** concerned about?

	Percent
Not at all concerned	14.5
A little concerned	18.0
Somewhat concerned	25.8
Very concerned	40.2
Don't know (v)	1.4
Refused (v)	0.0
Total=	100.0 708 +/-3.7

**Q: OUTBREAK2**

Is the health care system in Maryland **[prepared or unprepared]** to handle an outbreak of a disease like Ebola?

**PROBE**

	Percent
Very unprepared (p)	17.2
Unprepared	26.9
Prepared	26.1
Very prepared (p)	11.7
Don't know (v)	18.1
Refused (v)	0.0
Total=	100.0 708 +/-3.7