

September 2023

Gonzales Poll: Maryland Statewide



Gonzales Research
& Media Services

Gonzales Poll

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Background and Methodology

Patrick E. Gonzales graduated magna cum laude from the University of Baltimore with a degree in political science.

His career in the field of public opinion research began in the mid-1980s as an analyst with *Mason-Dixon Opinion Research*. During this time, Mr. Gonzales helped develop, craft and implement election surveys and exit polls for television and radio in the Baltimore-Washington D.C. metro area.

Mr. Gonzales has polled and analyzed well over a thousand elections in Maryland and across the country since that time. Furthermore, he and his associates have conducted numerous market research projects, crafting message development plans and generating strategy blueprints for businesses and organizations throughout the state.

Over his 35 years conducting public opinion polls, Patrick Gonzales has been widely recognized by his peers for his ability to conduct unbiased surveys, and analyze the results in an impartial, evenhanded manner.

Mr. Gonzales appears frequently on radio and television in the Baltimore-D.C. region as a guest commentator.

This poll was conducted by ***Gonzales Research & Media Services*** from September 18th through September 28th, 2023. A total of 818 registered voters in Maryland, who indicated they are likely to vote in the 2024 general election, were queried by live telephone interviews, utilizing both landline and cell phone numbers. A cross-section of interviews was conducted throughout the state, reflecting Maryland general election voting patterns.

The margin of error (MOE), per accepted statistical standards, is a range of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. If the entire population was surveyed, there is a 95% probability that the true numbers would fall within this range.

Gonzales Poll - Maryland Statewide Results

Medical Debt in Maryland

In Maryland today, 14% of voters say that they or someone in their household have medical bills or debt that they are not able to repay.

A demographic profile of those unable to repay their medical bills within the next 12 months:

Women	15%
Men	13%
18 to 39 yrs. old	13%
40 to 49 yrs. old	18%
50 to 59 yrs. old	16%
60 and older	10%
Democrat	14%
Republican	7%
Unaffiliated	25%
African American	23%
White	8%

Source of Medical Debt

Among those with medical bills and debt they are not able to repay in the next year, 44% say the debt comes from an outpatient visit, 23% say the bills result from a hospital stay, and 30% say it's both outpatient visits and hospital stays.

Medical Debt – Payment Source

We next asked, *“If you had a \$500 medical debt to pay today, where would the money come from: would you pay it from funds you have, would you put it on a credit card, would you borrow the money, or would you not pay it?”*

Statewide, 61% say they would pay the bill from existing funds they have, 24% say they would put it on a credit card, 4% would borrow the money, 5% say they would not pay the bill, with 6% offering no response.

Lien on Property

Level of awareness

Among Marylanders, 36% are aware that non-profit hospitals as well as doctors and dentists in private practice can place a lien against a person's home for medical debt, while 63% were not aware that non-profit hospitals, doctors and dentists can place a lien against a person's home for medical debt.

Lien Against Property	<u>Aware</u>	<u>Not Aware</u>
Statewide	36%	63%
Female	31%	68%
Male	43%	57%
Democrat	37%	63%
Republican	31%	68%
Independent	44%	55%
White	40%	59%
African-American	27%	72%

Legislation to Prohibit Lien for Medical Debt

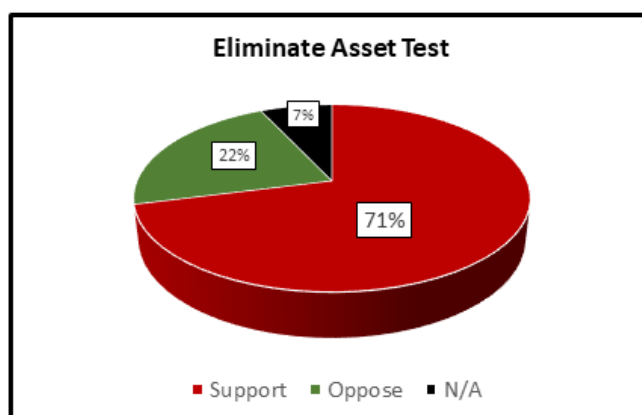
Fifty-seven percent would support legislation to prohibit hospitals and doctors from putting a lien on one's home for medical debt (46% "strongly" support and 11% "somewhat" support), while 41% would oppose such legislation (36% "strongly" oppose and 6% "somewhat" oppose).

Legislation to Ban Property Lien	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Statewide	57%	41%
Female	59%	40%
Male	55%	43%
Democrat	58%	40%
Republican	55%	44%
Independent	56%	42%
White	58%	41%
African-American	57%	40%

Asset Test

We read the following to respondents: *“All nonprofit hospitals in Maryland are required by law to provide financial assistance to low income families. Some Maryland hospitals have rules, called an Asset Test, that allow them to deny financial assistance if a patient has assets outside of their income such as a first home worth more than \$150,000 or a college savings account that is above \$10,000. Would you support or oppose legislation that eliminated this Asset Test, so that every Maryland patient whose income qualifies them for financial assistance receives it?”*

Statewide, 71% support legislation that would eliminate the Asset Test (49% “strongly” support and 22% “somewhat” support), while 22% oppose legislation that would eliminate the Asset Test (13% “strongly” oppose and 9% “somewhat” oppose), with 7% offering no response.

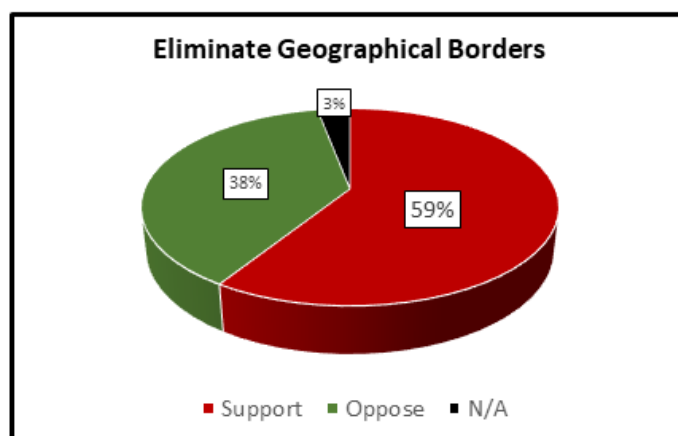


Eliminate Asset Test	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Statewide	71%	22%
Female	73%	21%
Male	68%	24%
Democrat	81%	14%
Republican	49%	38%
Independent	72%	24%
White	67%	24%
African-American	76%	18%

Geographic Borders

We also asked respondents: “All nonprofit hospitals in Maryland are required by law to provide financial assistance to low income families. Some Maryland hospitals have rules that allow them to deny financial assistance to a patient if the patient lives outside of the geographical area that the hospital serves. Would you support or oppose legislation to require nonprofit hospitals eliminate the use of geographic borders to any Maryland resident when determining financial assistance?”

Overall, 59% would support legislation that requires nonprofit hospitals to eliminate the use of geographic borders when determining financial assistance (43% “strongly” support and 16% “somewhat” support), while 38% would oppose legislation that eliminated the use of geographic borders (27% “strongly” oppose and 11% “somewhat” oppose).



Geographical Borders	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Statewide	59%	38%
Female	62%	35%
Male	56%	42%
Democrat	65%	33%
Republican	48%	48%
Independent	59%	39%
White	58%	39%
African-American	62%	37%

Appendix A: Data Tables – Frequencies and Crosstabs

QUESTION: Medical Bills Unable To Repay *Do you or someone in your household currently have medical bills or debt that you are unable to repay in the next 12 months?*

<u>UNABLE TO PAY MEDICAL BILLS</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	115	14.1 %
No	698	85.3 %
No answer	5	0.6 %
Total	818	100.0 %

N=818	<u>UNABLE TO PAY MEDICAL BILLS</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>

GENDER

Female	67 15.2%	372 84.4%	2 0.5%
Male	48 12.7%	326 86.5%	3 0.8%

N=818	<u>UNABLE TO PAY MEDICAL BILLS</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>

AGE

18 to 34	20 13.2%	132 86.8%	0 0.0%
35 to 49	37 18.1%	165 80.9%	2 1.0%
50 to 64	34 15.8%	179 83.3%	2 0.9%
65 and older	24 9.7%	222 89.9%	1 0.4%

N=818

	UNABLE TO PAY MEDICAL BILLS		
	Yes	No	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	61 13.8%	378 85.5%	3 0.7%
Republican	15 6.8%	204 92.7%	1 0.5%
Unaffiliated	39 25.0%	116 74.4%	1 0.6%

N=818

	UNABLE TO PAY MEDICAL BILLS		
	Yes	No	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	38 8.2%	424 91.0%	4 0.9%
African American	58 23.2%	191 76.4%	1 0.4%
Other/No answer	19 18.6%	83 81.4%	0 0.0%

N=818

	UNABLE TO PAY MEDICAL BILLS		
	Yes	No	No answer

REGION

Eastern Shore	10 10.6%	83 88.3%	1 1.1%
Baltimore City	8 12.1%	58 87.9%	0 0.0%
Baltimore Suburbs	38 13.6%	240 85.7%	2 0.7%
Washington Suburbs	49 17.6%	228 82.0%	1 0.4%
Western Maryland	10 10.0%	89 89.0%	1 1.0%

QUESTION: Source of Medical Bills *Are your medical bills from an outpatient visit or from a hospital stay?*

MEDICAL BILL SOURCE	Number	Percent
Outpatient visit	51	44.3 %
Hospital stay	26	22.6 %
Both	34	29.6 %
No answer	4	3.5 %
Total	115	100.0 %

N=115

MEDICAL BILL SOURCE

Outpatient visit	Hospital stay	Both	No answer
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GENDER

Female	31 46.3%	14 20.9%	20 29.9%	2 3.0%
Male	20 41.7%	12 25.0%	14 29.2%	2 4.2%

N=115

MEDICAL BILL SOURCE

Outpatient visit	Hospital stay	Both	No answer
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AGE

18 to 34	9 45.0%	2 10.0%	9 45.0%	0 0.0%
35 to 49	19 51.4%	3 8.1%	14 37.8%	1 2.7%
50 to 64	18 52.9%	8 23.5%	6 17.6%	2 5.9%
65 and older	5 20.8%	13 54.2%	5 20.8%	1 4.2%

N=115

MEDICAL BILL SOURCE

	Outpatient visit	Hospital stay	Both	No answer
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PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	25 41.0%	21 34.4%	14 23.0%	1 1.6%
Republican	6 40.0%	2 13.3%	6 40.0%	1 6.7%
Unaffiliated	20 51.3%	3 7.7%	14 35.9%	2 5.1%

N=115

MEDICAL BILL SOURCE

	Outpatient visit	Hospital stay	Both	No answer
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RACE/ETHNICITY

White	19 50.0%	5 13.2%	12 31.6%	2 5.3%
African American	26 44.8%	18 31.0%	12 20.7%	2 3.4%
Other/No answer	6 31.6%	3 15.8%	10 52.6%	0 0.0%

N=115

MEDICAL BILL SOURCE

	Outpatient visit	Hospital stay	Both	No answer
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REGION

Eastern Shore	2 20.0%	2 20.0%	5 50.0%	1 10.0%
Baltimore City	2 25.0%	5 62.5%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%
Baltimore Suburbs	18 47.4%	5 13.2%	14 36.8%	1 2.6%
Washington Suburbs	23 46.9%	14 28.6%	11 22.4%	1 2.0%
Western Maryland	6 60.0%	0 0.0%	3 30.0%	1 10.0%

QUESTION: Medical Debt – Method of Payment *If you had a \$500 medical debt to pay today, where would the money come from: would you pay it from funds you have, would you put it on a credit card, would you borrow the money, or would you not pay it?*

<u>PAY MEDICAL BILLS</u>	Number	Percent
Existing funds	501	61.2 %
Credit card	193	23.6 %
Borrow money	36	4.4 %
Not pay	42	5.1 %
No answer	46	5.6 %
Total	818	100.0 %

N=818

<u>PAY MEDICAL BILLS</u>				
Existing funds	Credit card	Borrow money	Not pay	No answer

GENDER

Female	245 55.6%	119 27.0%	21 4.8%	29 6.6%	27 6.1%
Male	256 67.9%	74 19.6%	15 4.0%	13 3.4%	19 5.0%

N=818

<u>PAY MEDICAL BILLS</u>				
Existing funds	Credit card	Borrow money	Not pay	No answer

AGE

18 to 34	120 78.9%	16 10.5%	1 0.7%	2 1.3%	13 8.6%
35 to 49	120 58.8%	52 25.5%	10 4.9%	12 5.9%	10 4.9%
50 to 64	132 61.4%	51 23.7%	11 5.1%	14 6.5%	7 3.3%
65 and older	129 52.2%	74 30.0%	14 5.7%	14 5.7%	16 6.5%

N=818

	PAY MEDICAL BILLS				
	Existing funds	Credit card	Borrow money	Not pay	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	259 58.6%	110 24.9%	18 4.1%	29 6.6%	26 5.9%
Republican	140 63.6%	55 25.0%	13 5.9%	6 2.7%	6 2.7%
Unaffiliated	102 65.4%	28 17.9%	5 3.2%	7 4.5%	14 9.0%

N=818

	PAY MEDICAL BILLS				
	Existing funds	Credit card	Borrow money	Not pay	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	301 64.6%	109 23.4%	19 4.1%	15 3.2%	22 4.7%
African American	139 55.6%	58 23.2%	13 5.2%	25 10.0%	15 6.0%
Other/No answer	61 59.8%	26 25.5%	4 3.9%	2 2.0%	9 8.8%

N=818

	PAY MEDICAL BILLS				
	Existing funds	Credit card	Borrow money	Not pay	No answer

REGION

Eastern Shore	56 59.6%	26 27.7%	1 1.1%	4 4.3%	7 7.4%
Baltimore City	45 68.2%	8 12.1%	4 6.1%	3 4.5%	6 9.1%
Baltimore Suburbs	167 59.6%	74 26.4%	13 4.6%	14 5.0%	12 4.3%
Washington Suburbs	167 60.1%	63 22.7%	15 5.4%	18 6.5%	15 5.4%
Western Maryland	66 66.0%	22 22.0%	3 3.0%	3 3.0%	6 6.0%

QUESTION: Lien on Property – Awareness *Are you aware that non-profit hospitals as well as doctors and dentists in private practice can place a lien against a person's home for medical debt, or did you not know this?*

<u>AWARE MEDICAL DEBT LIEN</u>	Number	Percent
Yes	298	36.4 %
No	514	62.8 %
No answer	6	0.7 %
Total	818	100.0 %

N=818

	<u>AWARE MEDICAL DEBT LIEN</u>		
	Yes	No	No answer
<u>GENDER</u>			
Female	137 31.1%	299 67.8%	5 1.1%
Male	161 42.7%	215 57.0%	1 0.3%

N=818

	<u>AWARE MEDICAL DEBT LIEN</u>		
	Yes	No	No answer
<u>AGE</u>			
18 to 34	56 36.8%	96 63.2%	0 0.0%
35 to 49	72 35.3%	130 63.7%	2 1.0%
50 to 64	88 40.9%	125 58.1%	2 0.9%
65 and older	82 33.2%	163 66.0%	2 0.8%

N=818

	AWARE MEDICAL DEBT LIEN		
	Yes	No	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	162 36.7%	279 63.1%	1 0.2%
Republican	68 30.9%	149 67.7%	3 1.4%
Unaffiliated	68 43.6%	86 55.1%	2 1.3%

N=818

	AWARE MEDICAL DEBT LIEN		
	Yes	No	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	188 40.3%	275 59.0%	3 0.6%
African American	68 27.2%	180 72.0%	2 0.8%
Other/No answer	42 41.2%	59 57.8%	1 1.0%

N=818

	AWARE MEDICAL DEBT LIEN		
	Yes	No	No answer

REGION

Eastern Shore	32 34.0%	61 64.9%	1 1.1%
Baltimore City	23 34.8%	42 63.6%	1 1.5%
Baltimore Suburbs	101 36.1%	177 63.2%	2 0.7%
Washington Suburbs	105 37.8%	172 61.9%	1 0.4%
Western Maryland	37 37.0%	62 62.0%	1 1.0%

QUESTION: Ban Lien for Medical Debt *Would you support or oppose legislation to prohibit hospitals and doctors from putting a lien on your home for medical debt?*

BAN PUTTING LIEN ON PROPERTY	Number	Percent
Support	466	57.0 %
Oppose	339	41.4 %
No answer	13	1.6 %
Total	818	100.0 %

Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose?

BAN LIEN - INTENSITY	Number	Percent
Strongly support	378	46.2 %
Somewhat support	88	10.8 %
Somewhat oppose	45	5.5 %
Strongly oppose	294	35.9 %
No answer	13	1.6 %
Total	818	100.0 %

N=818

BAN PUTTING LIEN ON PROPERTY

	Support	Oppose	No answer
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GENDER

Female	259 58.7%	175 39.7%	7 1.6%
Male	207 54.9%	164 43.5%	6 1.6%

N=818

BAN PUTTING LIEN ON PROPERTY

	Support	Oppose	No answer
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AGE

18 to 34	109 71.7%	40 26.3%	3 2.0%
35 to 49	112 54.9%	89 43.6%	3 1.5%
50 to 64	117 54.4%	94 43.7%	4 1.9%
65 and older	128 51.8%	116 47.0%	3 1.2%

N=818

	BAN PUTTING LIEN ON PROPERTY		
	Support	Oppose	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	258 58.4%	177 40.0%	7 1.6%
Republican	121 55.0%	97 44.1%	2 0.9%
Unaffiliated	87 55.8%	65 41.7%	4 2.6%

N=818

	BAN PUTTING LIEN ON PROPERTY		
	Support	Oppose	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	269 57.7%	192 41.2%	5 1.1%
African American	144 57.6%	101 40.4%	5 2.0%
Other/No answer	53 52.0%	46 45.1%	3 2.9%

N=818

	BAN PUTTING LIEN ON PROPERTY		
	Support	Oppose	No answer

REGION

Eastern Shore	45 47.9%	46 48.9%	3 3.2%
Baltimore City	31 47.0%	34 51.5%	1 1.5%
Baltimore Suburbs	170 60.7%	107 38.2%	3 1.1%
Washington Suburbs	165 59.4%	109 39.2%	4 1.4%
Western Maryland	55 55.0%	43 43.0%	2 2.0%

QUESTION: Eliminate Asset Test *All nonprofit hospitals in Maryland are required by law to provide financial assistance to low income families. Some Maryland hospitals have rules, called an “Asset Test”, that allow them to deny financial assistance if a patient has assets outside of their income such as a first home worth more than \$150,000 or a college savings account that is above \$10,000. Would you support or oppose legislation that eliminated this “Asset Test”, so that every Maryland patient whose income qualifies them for financial assistance receives it?*

<u>ELIMINATE ASSET TEST</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Support	578	70.7 %
Oppose	182	22.2 %
No answer	58	7.1 %
Total	818	100.0 %

Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose?

<u>ELIMINATE ASSET TEST - INTENSITY</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Strongly support	401	49.0 %
Somewhat support	177	21.6 %
Somewhat oppose	73	8.9 %
Strongly oppose	109	13.3 %
No answer	58	7.1 %
Total	818	100.0 %

N=818

ELIMINATE ASSET TEST

	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>No answer</u>
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GENDER

Female	320 72.6%	92 20.9%	29 6.6%
Male	258 68.4%	90 23.9%	29 7.7%

N=818

ELIMINATE ASSET TEST

	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>No answer</u>
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AGE

18 to 34	129 84.9%	19 12.5%	4 2.6%
35 to 49	142 69.6%	46 22.5%	16 7.8%
50 to 64	142 66.0%	59 27.4%	14 6.5%
65 and older	165 66.8%	58 23.5%	24 9.7%

N=818	ELIMINATE ASSET TEST		
	Support	Oppose	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	359 81.2%	61 13.8%	22 5.0%
Republican	107 48.6%	84 38.2%	29 13.2%
Unaffiliated	112 71.8%	37 23.7%	7 4.5%

N=818	ELIMINATE ASSET TEST		
	Support	Oppose	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	314 67.4%	113 24.2%	39 8.4%
African American	191 76.4%	46 18.4%	13 5.2%
Other/No answer	73 71.6%	23 22.5%	6 5.9%

N=818	ELIMINATE ASSET TEST		
	Support	Oppose	No answer

REGION

Eastern Shore	60 63.8%	24 25.5%	10 10.6%
Baltimore City	47 71.2%	14 21.2%	5 7.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	199 71.1%	59 21.1%	22 7.9%
Washington Suburbs	209 75.2%	52 18.7%	17 6.1%
Western Maryland	63 63.0%	33 33.0%	4 4.0%

QUESTION: Eliminate Geographic Borders *All nonprofit hospitals in Maryland are required by law to provide financial assistance to low income families. Some Maryland hospitals have rules that allow them to deny financial assistance to a patient if the patient lives outside of the geographical area that the hospital serves. Would you support or oppose legislation to require nonprofit hospitals eliminate the use of geographic borders to any Maryland resident when determining financial assistance?*

<u>ELIMINATE GEOGRAPHICAL BORDERS</u>	Number	Percent
Support	483	59.0 %
Oppose	314	38.4 %
No answer	21	2.6 %
Total	818	100.0 %

Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose?

<u>ELIMINATE BORDERS - INTENSITY</u>	Number	Percent
Strongly support	352	43.0 %
Somewhat support	131	16.0 %
Somewhat oppose	93	11.4 %
Strongly oppose	221	27.0 %
No answer	21	2.6 %
Total	818	100.0 %

N=818

<u>ELIMINATE GEOGRAPHICAL BORDERS</u>		
Support	Oppose	No answer

GENDER

Female	273 61.9%	154 34.9%	14 3.2%
Male	210 55.7%	160 42.4%	7 1.9%

N=818

<u>ELIMINATE GEOGRAPHICAL BORDERS</u>		
Support	Oppose	No answer

AGE

18 to 34	114 75.0%	35 23.0%	3 2.0%
35 to 49	118 57.8%	79 38.7%	7 3.4%
50 to 64	124 57.7%	88 40.9%	3 1.4%
65 and older	127 51.4%	112 45.3%	8 3.2%

N=818

ELIMINATE GEOGRAPHICAL BORDERS			
	Support	Oppose	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	285 64.5%	148 33.5%	9 2.0%
Republican	106 48.2%	105 47.7%	9 4.1%
Unaffiliated	92 59.0%	61 39.1%	3 1.9%

N=818

ELIMINATE GEOGRAPHICAL BORDERS			
	Support	Oppose	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	270 57.9%	181 38.8%	15 3.2%
African American	155 62.0%	93 37.2%	2 0.8%
Other/No answer	58 56.9%	40 39.2%	4 3.9%

N=818

ELIMINATE GEOGRAPHICAL BORDERS			
	Support	Oppose	No answer

REGION

Eastern Shore	54 57.4%	36 38.3%	4 4.3%
Baltimore City	44 66.7%	22 33.3%	0 0.0%
Baltimore Suburbs	160 57.1%	115 41.1%	5 1.8%
Washington Suburbs	164 59.0%	107 38.5%	7 2.5%
Western Maryland	61 61.0%	34 34.0%	5 5.0%

Appendix B: Maryland Poll Sample Demographics

<u>RESULTS</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Statewide	818	100.0 %
Total	818	100.0 %

<u>PARTY REGISTRATION</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Democrat	442	54.0 %
Republican	220	26.9 %
Unaffiliated	156	19.1 %
Total	818	100.0 %

<u>RACE/ETHNICITY</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
White	466	57.0 %
African American	250	30.6 %
Other/No answer	102	12.5 %
Total	818	100.0 %

<u>GENDER</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Female	441	53.9 %
Male	377	46.1 %
Total	818	100.0 %

<u>AGE</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
18 to 34	152	18.6 %
35 to 49	204	24.9 %
50 to 64	215	26.3 %
65 and older	247	30.2 %
Total	818	100.0 %

<u>REGION</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Eastern Shore	94	11.5 %
Baltimore City	66	8.1 %
Baltimore Suburbs	280	34.2 %
Washington Suburbs	278	34.0 %
Western Maryland	100	12.2 %
Total	818	100.0 %

Regional Groupings

Eastern Shore/Southern MD – includes Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s, St. Mary’s, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties.

Baltimore City – includes Baltimore City.

Baltimore Suburbs – includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, and Howard counties.

Washington Suburbs – includes Charles, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties.

Western Maryland – includes Allegany, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington counties.