

**Gonzales RM&S  
Research & Communications, Inc**

**Maryland Poll  
August 2000**

**Presidential Election  
Part 1**

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## Methodology

Patrick E. Gonzales and Carol A. Arscott, the former president and vice president of Mason-Dixon Campaign Polling & Strategy, Inc., formed Gonzales Research & Marketing Strategies, Inc. at the beginning of 1999.

Gonzales is a 1981 graduate of the University of Baltimore with deep roots in the Anne Arundel County Democratic Party who served as a principal advisor to Janet Owens' 1998 campaign for County Executive. Arscott is a 1977 graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and a former chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.

Gonzales and Arscott together have over 30 years of professional experience in politics. They have served as pollsters and consultants to dozens of political clients in Maryland since the mid-1980s, including County Executives Janet Owens, Doug Duncan, Jim Harkins, Chuck Ecker, Eileen Rehrmann, and Robert Neall; and State Senators Tom Bromwell, Marty Madden, John Astle, Chris McCabe, and Jean Roesser.

This survey was conducted by Gonzales Research & Marketing Strategies, Inc. from August 23<sup>rd</sup> through August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2000. A total of 649 registered voters in Maryland were interviewed by telephone. All stated they vote regularly in statewide general elections. A cross-section of calls was made into each jurisdiction within the state to reflect general election voting patterns.

The margin for error, according to customary statistical standards, is no more than plus or minus 4 percentage points. This means that there is a 95 percent probability that the "true" figures would fall within this range if the entire survey universe were sampled. The margin for error is higher for any demographic subgroup, such as gender, or race.

**Ó This survey is provided free of charge. However, we ask that Gonzales Research & Marketing Strategies, Inc. of Annapolis be credited if the survey is cited in a news story or column.**

## Maryland Statewide Poll Sample Demographics

<b><u>Gender</u></b>		<b><u>Party</u></b>
Male      323 (50%)		Democrat      371 (57%)
Female     326 (50%)		Republican     202 (31%)
		Independent    76 (12%)
<b><u>Race</u></b>		<b><u>Region</u></b>
White      490 (76%)		Eastern Shore/So. MD      78 (12%)
Black      153 (24%)		Baltimore City              65 (10%)
Other       6		Baltimore Suburbs         233 (36%)
		Washington Suburbs      201 (31%)
		Western MD                 72 (11%)

### Regional Groupings

#### **Eastern Shore/Southern Maryland**

- includes voters in these counties: Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester.

#### **Baltimore City**

- includes voters in the City of Baltimore.

#### **Baltimore Suburbs** Harford, and Howard.

- includes voters in these counties: Anne Arundel, Baltimore,

#### **Washington Suburbs** George's.

- includes voters in these counties: Montgomery, and Prince

#### **Western Maryland** Garrett, and Washington.

- includes voters in these counties: Allegany, Carroll, Frederick,

## General Summary & Analysis

### Name Recognition

In our February survey, Republican John McCain was the presidential candidate with the highest favorable name ID number in Maryland, at 53%. In this survey, that distinction belongs to Al Gore, who matches McCain's 53% favorable rating, up from the 48% the Vice President scored six months ago. Gore's unfavorable rating remains unchanged at 34%, and 13% view him neutrally.

The percentage of voters who view George W. Bush favorably is up slightly, from 42% in February to 44% in August, but Bush's unfavorables are higher as well, up from 33% to 39% in the last six months, an uncomfortably close ratio.

Neither Ralph Nader nor Pat Buchanan is held in high esteem by Maryland voters. Green Party candidate Nader is viewed favorably by 22%, unfavorably by 38%, and neutrally by 29%. The remaining 11% did not recognize Nader's name. Reform Party nominee Buchanan's numbers are even worse. Fifty-eight percent view him unfavorably, compared to just 17% who hold a favorable view. Twenty percent are neutral on Buchanan, and the remaining 5% did not recognize his name.

### Presidential Match-up

Democrat Al Gore has maintained the double-digit lead held over Republican George W. Bush in our February survey, with the gap between the two major parties' nominees at 15 points. Gore leads Bush 51% to 36%, with Green Party nominee Ralph Nader at 4%, and Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan bringing up the rear with 2%. The remaining 7% are undecided. Gore led Bush 54% to 37% with 9% undecided in a direct two-way match-up in February.

Bush has slipped significantly with independents since our last presidential poll, holding just 30% of independent voters to Gore's 41%, and with Nader picking 15% in this category. In February, Bush led Gore among independents, 41% to 39%.

Bush has also lost ground with female voters, dropping five points with women since February. Gore leads Bush 59% to 25% with women, a ratio of more than 2-to-1. The one bright spot in the survey for Bush is among men. Gore led Bush among men in February, 49% to 44%. Today, Bush edges Gore with males, 47% to 43%.

Not surprisingly, Gore trounces Bush among African-American voters, 83% to 7%. Bush splits white voters with Gore, holding a narrow 45% to 41% edge.

Among the state's regions, Gore beats Bush handily in Baltimore City (77% to 16%) and in the Washington suburbs (59% to 27%), but Bush cannot match Gore's lopsided advantage in the areas he

carries, Western Maryland (52% to 34%), where Nader picks up 8% of the vote, and on the Eastern Shore and in Southern Maryland (46% to 42%). Gore leads Bush in the Baltimore suburbs, 45% to 41%.

## Issues

Saving Social Security or Medicare remains the Number One issue with Maryland voters, named by 25% of respondents in an open-ended question. The economy and, specifically, continuing our current level of economic prosperity, held second place with 18% of voters. Improving public education ranks third at 16%, health care and prescription drugs rank fourth at 15%, and tax cuts are fifth at 8%. Rounding out the list are character and values at 7%, campaign finance reform at 4%, and defense and foreign policy issues at 2%. The remaining 5% offered no answer.

In our February survey, the top three issues were saving Social Security or Medicare (33%), education (14%), and character (10%). The importance of tax cuts hasn't changed at all – it was cited by 8% of voters then and is named by 8% today.

Most significant are the changes regarding two issues, health care and the economy. Health care and prescription drugs were not even on the voters' radar screen at the time of our February survey. Maintaining our current economic condition was cited by 6% of voters surveyed in February, and holds second place at 18% today, a 300% increase. These responses illustrate better than any else in the survey the extent to which Al Gore has controlled the debate since the Democratic National Convention.

However, a question on the issue of the partial privatization of Social Security – loosely describing George W. Bush's plan, but omitting his name as the originator of the idea – generated a favorable response with many voters. Forty-nine percent of those surveyed said they would favor a plan that “would allow younger wage earners to direct a small percentage of their Social Security tax payments into some type of private investment accounts, while protecting the current system for retirees and older wage earners.” Thirty percent said they would oppose such a plan, while 21% were not sure.

The plan described found at least plurality support in every demographic subgroup in the survey except for African-Americans, who opposed it 45% to 28%. The plan was most popular with Republicans (66% to 24%), independents (61% to 26%), whites (56% to 25%), and men (54% to 29%). Women back the plan, 44% to 31%, but less enthusiastically than others. Even a slim plurality of Democrats are ready to give Social Security reform a look (37% to 34%).

## Bill Clinton

Is “Clinton fatigue” for real? You betcha it is. Fifty percent of Maryland voters surveyed said they would not have voted for Bill Clinton again this year had he been eligible to run for a third term.

Thirty-seven percent would have returned Clinton to office, and 13% said they weren't sure.

Republicans were the most aghast at the idea of an extended Clinton presidency, with 91% just saying no. Whites (63%) and men (58%) were also reluctant to take advantage of the opportunity to return Clinton to the White House.

Clinton might've won the Democratic primary, though. Eighty-five percent of African-Americans said they would jump at the chance for four more Clinton years – even more than are currently voting for Al Gore. More than half of Democrats (56%) would have given him the nod, as would a plurality of women (48% to 42%).

In the end, though, half the independents (50%) and a quarter of the Democrats (28%) said they would pass on a third Clinton term, enough to doom his chances, even in heavily-Democratic Maryland.

### **Senate Match-up**

Incumbent Senator Paul Sarbanes has no worries as he coasts to re-election in November. Sarbanes leads Republican Paul Rappaport, running his third statewide race, 61% to 27% with 12% undecided.

Rappaport leads Sarbanes in just two demographic categories in the survey – among Republicans (60% to 26%) and in Western Maryland (42% to 40%). Given that Rappaport is having trouble holding his Republican base, even a comeback by George W. Bush is unlikely to lift Rappaport out of the cellar.

### **Conclusion**

A week before Labor Day, Maryland voters seem to be playing their customary role – providing a reliably Democratic state for the electoral map. Only with a dramatic reversal of fortune here will George W. be able to duplicate his father's feat in 1988, winning Maryland in a startling upset.

The Senior Bush was the last Republican to have won a statewide election in Maryland, by a slim 40,000. Others have tried to reassemble that coalition, and all have failed, though Ellen Sauerbrey – now George W. Bush's Maryland campaign chairman – came tantalizingly close in 1994. With a Democratic Governor, two Democratic U.S.

Senators, and Democrats in control of both houses of the General Assembly, Maryland is a national anomaly, but with the Senate seat all but certain to remain in Democratic hands, this set of facts is unlikely to change. A 2-to-1 ratio of Democrats to Republicans makes any statewide run uphill for a Republican candidate.



## Name Recognition

*I am going to read you the names of several individuals. After I mention each name, I would like you to tell me if you recognize that person. If you do, I would then like you to tell me whether you have a favorable, unfavorable, or neutral opinion of that individual.*

	<b>Favorable</b>	<b>Unfavorable</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Don't Recognize</b>
Al Gore	53%	34%	13%	-
George W. Bush	44%	39%	17%	-
Ralph Nader	22%	38%	29%	11%
Pat Buchanan	17%	58%	20%	5%

## Most Important Issue

QUESTION: *In your opinion, what is the most important issue in the upcoming Presidential election?*

<b>Saving Social Security/Medicare</b>	25%
<b>The economy/continuing prosperity</b>	18%
<b>Improving public education</b>	16%
<b>Health care/HMOs/prescription drugs</b>	15%
<b>Tax cuts</b>	8%
<b>Character of candidate/values/morals</b>	7%
<b>Campaign Finance reform</b>	4%
<b>National defense/foreign policy issues</b>	2%
<b>No answer</b>	5%

## Presidential Match-up

QUESTION: *If the November general election were held today, for whom would you vote for president: Al Gore, the Democrat, George W. Bush, the Republican, Patrick Buchanan, the Reform Party candidate, or Ralph Nader, the Green Party candidate?*

	<b>Gore</b>	<b>Bush</b>	<b>Nader</b>	<b>Buchanan</b>	<b>Undecided</b>
<b>Statewide</b>	51%	36%	4%	2%	7%
Eastern Shore/ Southern MD	42%	46%	5%	1%	6%
Baltimore City	77%	16%	1%	0%	6%
Baltimore Suburbs	45%	41%	5%	1%	8%
Washington Suburbs	59%	27%	3%	4%	7%
Western MD	34%	52%	8%	2%	5%
White	41%	45%	4%	3%	7%
African-American	83%	7%	2%	0%	8%
Men	43%	47%	2%	3%	5%
Women	59%	25%	6%	1%	9%
Democrat	78%	13%	3%	1%	5%
Republican	6%	81%	1%	4%	8%
Independent	41%	30%	15%	1%	13%

QUESTION: *If Bill Clinton were allowed to run for a third term as president, would you vote for him this year?*

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
<b>Statewide</b>	37%	50%	13%
Men	26%	58%	16%
Women	48%	42%	10%
White	22%	63%	15%
African-American	85%	8%	7%
Democrat	56%	28%	16%
Republican	6%	91%	3%
Independent	28%	50%	22%

QUESTION: *There is a proposed being discussed that would allow younger wage earners to direct a small percentage of their Social Security tax payments into some type of private investment account, while protecting the current system for retirees and older wage earners. Do you favor or oppose a proposal to partially privatize Social Security?*

	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
<b>Statewide</b>	49%	30%	21%
Men	54%	29%	17%
Women	44%	31%	25%
White	56%	25%	19%
African-American	28%	45%	27%
Democrat	37%	34%	29%
Republican	66%	24%	10%
Independent	61%	26%	13%

## Senate Match-up

QUESTION: *If the November general election were held today, for whom would you vote for U.S. Senate: Paul Sarbanes, the Democrat or Paul Rappaport, the Republican?*

	<b>Sarbanes</b>	<b>Rappaport</b>	<b>Undecided</b>
<b>Statewide</b>	61%	27%	12%
Eastern Shore/ Southern MD	57%	24%	19%
Baltimore City	82%	11%	7%
Baltimore Suburbs	60%	31%	9%
Washington Suburbs	64%	23%	13%
Western MD	40%	42%	18%
White	54%	34%	12%
African-American	84%	5%	11%
Men	50%	36%	14%
Women	72%	18%	10%
Democrat	81%	9%	10%
Republican	26%	60%	14%
Independent	57%	28%	16%