

# **Gonzales Research & Marketing Strategies**

**“Maryland’s leader in public opinion polling”**



## **Maryland Poll**

**Most Important Issue  
Governor O’Malley Job Approval  
General Election Match-ups**

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## Methodology

Patrick E. Gonzales graduated from the University of Baltimore in 1981 with a degree in political science. He began his career as an analyst with *Mason-Dixon Opinion Research* and is the former president of *Mason-Dixon Campaign Polling* and *Gonzales/Arscott Research & Communications, Inc.*

Since the mid 1980's, Mr. Gonzales has polled and analyzed hundreds of elections in Maryland. Additionally, he and his associates have conducted numerous market research projects and crafted message development programs for businesses and organizations throughout the state.

Laslo V. Boyd is a partner of *Gonzales Research & Marketing Strategies*. Dr. Boyd received his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and has over 30 years of experience in higher education, government, and public policy.

Hilary Duff Gonzales is Director of Sales and Marketing for *Gonzales Research & Marketing Strategies*. Mrs. Gonzales has over 20 years experience promoting the state of Maryland, particularly in the tour and travel industry.

This survey was conducted by *Gonzales Research & Marketing Strategies* from February 23<sup>rd</sup> through March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. A total of 807 registered voters in Maryland who vote regularly were interviewed by telephone. A cross-section of interviews was conducted in each jurisdiction within the state to reflect general election voting patterns.

The margin of error (MOE), according to customary statistical standards, is no more than plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. 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, age or race.

## Maryland Statewide Poll Sample Demographics

Gender		Race		Region	
Male	402 (50%)	White	602 (75%)	Eastern Shore/S Md	105 (13%)
Female	405 (50%)	Black	185 (23%)	Baltimore City	74 (9%)
		Other/Ref	20	Baltimore Suburbs	288 (36%)
				Washington Subs	245 (30%)
				Western Maryland	95 (12%)
Party Registration					
Democrat	451 (56%)				
Republican	256 (32%)				
Independent	100 (12%)				

### Regional Groupings are as follows:

Eastern Shore/ Southern Md	Baltimore City	Baltimore Suburbs	Washington Suburbs	Western Maryland
Calvert Co.	Baltimore City	Anne Arundel Co.	Montgomery Co.	Allegany Co.
Caroline Co.		Baltimore Co.	Prince George's Co.	Carroll Co.
Cecil Co.		Harford Co.		Frederick Co.
Charles Co.		Howard Co.		Garrett Co.
Dorchester Co.				Washington Co.
Kent Co.				
Queen Anne's Co.				
Somerset Co.				
St. Mary's Co.				
Talbot Co.				
Wicomico Co.				
Worcester Co.				

## Summary

### Most Important Issue

In the past 2 months there has been a significant shift in what voters perceive as the most important facing Maryland.

Statewide, 23% of voters say that the economy is the most important issue, which is more than double what it was in our last poll at the beginning of the year when 10% cited it. The next most frequently mentioned issues were taxes (20%), health care (13%), and education (10%).

A trend toward voters naming the economy as the most important issue is happening in other states across the country, and this will have important implications in this year's presidential election.

### Governor O'Malley Job Approval

Governor Martin O'Malley's job rating in the state continues to feel the effects of last fall's special session.

Statewide, 37% of Maryland voters say they approve of the job Martin O'Malley is doing as governor (down 2 points from January), while 48% disapprove, with 15% offering no opinion.

<b>O'Malley Job Approval</b>	<b>Approve</b>	<b>Disapprove</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
<b>March 2008</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>January 2008</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>October 2007</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>March 2007</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>27%</b>

Forty-eight percent of Democrats in the state approve of the job he's doing, while 35% disapprove. Among Republicans, only 17% approve and 69% disapprove, and with independents, 39% approve of the job O'Malley is doing as governor and 51% disapprove.

Dissatisfaction of the job the Governor is doing is particularly pronounced with men, among whom 53% disapprove and only 33% approve.

### Cameras in Courtrooms

Voters are split on allowing cameras in Maryland courtrooms.

Statewide, 46% say they'd favor a law permitting cameras in the courts, while 38% say they oppose cameras in courtrooms, and 16% gave no opinion.

A majority of men (52%) favor having cameras in court, while a plurality of women (42%) say they oppose it.

### President Bush Job Approval

Statewide, only 27% approve of the job George Bush is doing as president, while 64% disapprove of his performance as president. The President's rating has remained consistently bad for a long period of time.

Bush Job Rating	Approve	Disapprove	No answer
<b>March 2008</b>	27%	64%	9%
<b>January 2008</b>	28%	64%	8%
<b>January 2007</b>	25%	68%	7%
<b>August 2006</b>	36%	59%	5%
<b>April 2006</b>	29%	67%	4%
<b>October 2005</b>	33%	63%	4%
<b>October 2004</b>	44%	53%	3%
<b>August 2004</b>	43%	51%	6%
<b>June 2004</b>	39%	54%	7%
<b>March 2004</b>	45%	47%	8%
<b>February 2004</b>	41%	53%	6%
<b>December 2003</b>	47%	46%	7%
<b>August 2003</b>	43%	48%	9%
<b>April 2003</b>	62%	31%	7%
<b>September 2002</b>	63%	28%	9%
<b>January 2002</b>	74%	16%	10%
<b>May 2001</b>	48%	34%	18%
<b>February 2001</b>	47%	34%	19%

### Direction of Country

A mere 17% of Marylanders think that things in this country are moving in the right direction, while 69% think things are moving in the wrong direction.

Maryland Democrats (75%), Republicans (57%), and independents (73%) all think things in the United States are moving in the wrong direction. Coupled with the economy moving to the fore as the most important issue, this is as clear an indicator that there is that 2008 will be a "change" election.

## **General Election Match-ups**

In Maryland, Senator Barack Obama today runs stronger against John McCain than does Hillary Clinton.

Statewide, Obama leads McCain 51% to 37%, compared to Clinton's 47%-40% margin over the putative GOP nominee.

Obama's stronger showing rests primarily with his advantage among independents in Maryland, a group he beats McCain 45% to 28%, compared to Clinton, who is trailing McCain among independents, 33% to 35%.

## **Superdelegates**

If the nomination is still undecided going into the convention this summer, Democrats in the state are divided on whether Maryland's superdelegates should support the candidate who received the most votes in February's primary, or whether they should use their own judgment on whom to support.

Statewide, 48% of Democrats in Maryland think the superdelegates should support the candidate who received the most votes, while 43% think they should use their own judgment.

Men, by a 53%-39% margin, think they should support the candidate with the most votes, while women, 46%-44%, think the state's party leaders should exercise their own judgment.

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

Economy	23%
Taxes	20%
Health care	13%
Education	11%
Crime	8%
Illegal immigration	4%
Growth and development	4%
Environment and pollution	3%
Transportation/Roads	3%
Utility costs	3%
Affordable housing	3%
Moral issues	2%
No answer	3%

**QUESTION:** *Do you approve or disapprove of the job Martin O'Malley is doing as governor?*

**Statewide Results**

Response	Statewide
Approve	<b>37%</b>
Disapprove	<b>48%</b>
No answer	<b>15%</b>

**Party -** *Approve or disapprove of the job Martin O'Malley is doing as governor?*

Party	Approve	Disapprove	No Answer
Democrat	48%	35%	17%
Republican	17%	69%	14%
Independent	39%	51%	10%

**Gender –** *Approve or disapprove of the job Martin O'Malley is doing as governor?*

Gender	Approve	Disapprove	No Answer
Men	33%	53%	14%
Women	41%	43%	16%

**Race –** *Approve or disapprove of the job Martin O'Malley is doing as governor?*

Race	Approve	Disapprove	No Answer
White	33%	53%	14%
African-American	49%	33%	18%

**QUESTION:** *Currently the State of Maryland does not permit cameras in the courtroom. Would you favor or oppose a law that allowed cameras in Maryland's courtrooms?*

### Statewide Results

Response	Statewide
Favor	<b>46%</b>
Oppose	<b>38%</b>
No answer	<b>16%</b>

**Party -** *Favor or oppose a law that allowed cameras in Maryland's courtrooms?*

Party	Favor	Oppose	No Answer
Democrat	41%	44%	15%
Republican	53%	28%	19%
Independent	51%	37%	12%

**Gender –** *Favor or oppose a law that allowed cameras in Maryland's courtrooms?*

Gender	Favor	Oppose	No Answer
Men	52%	34%	14%
Women	40%	42%	18%

**QUESTION:** *Do you approve or disapprove of the job George Bush is doing as president?*

### Statewide Results

Response	Statewide
Approve	27%
Disapprove	64%
No Answer	9%

**Party** - *Approve or disapprove of the job George Bush is doing as president?*

Party	Approve	Disapprove	No Answer
Democrat	8%	88%	4%
Republican	64%	22%	14%
Independent	19%	64%	17%

**Race** – *Approve or disapprove of the job George Bush is doing as president?*

Race	Approve	Disapprove	No Answer
White	34%	56%	10%
African-American	5%	90%	5%

**QUESTION:** *Overall, do you think things in this country are moving in the right direction or do you think things are moving in the wrong direction?*

### Statewide Results

Response	Statewide
Right direction	17%
Wrong direction	69%
No Answer	14%

#### Party – Right direction or Wrong direction?

Party	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	No Answer
Democrat	11%	75%	14%
Republican	28%	57%	15%
Independent	16%	73%	11%

#### Gender – Right direction or Wrong direction?

Gender	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	No Answer
Men	20%	64%	16%
Women	14%	74%	12%

**QUESTION:** *If the November general election for president were held today for whom would you vote if the candidates were John McCain, the Republican, and Barack Obama, the Democrat?*

### Statewide Results

Response	Statewide
Obama	<b>51%</b>
McCain	<b>37%</b>
Undecided	<b>12%</b>

### Party – McCain vs. Obama?

Party	Obama	McCain	Undecided
Democrat	76%	13%	11%
Republican	9%	82%	9%
Independent	45%	28%	27%

**QUESTION:** *If the November general election for president were held today for whom would you vote if the candidates were John McCain, the Republican, and Hillary Clinton, the Democrat?*

### Statewide Results

Response	Statewide
Clinton	<b>47%</b>
McCain	<b>40%</b>
Undecided	<b>13%</b>

### Party – McCain vs. Clinton?

Party	Clinton	McCain	Undecided
Democrat	73%	15%	12%
Republican	6%	86%	8%
Independent	33%	35%	32%

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**Democratic Voters in Maryland**

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**QUESTION:** *As you may know, the Democratic nominee for president might end up being determined at the convention this summer by party leaders, known as superdelegates,. On what basis do you think Maryland's superdelegates should make their decision? (ORDER ROTATED)*

- *They should support the candidate who received the most votes in Maryland's primary earlier this month, or*
- *They should use their own independent judgment on whom to support*

### Statewide Results

Response	Statewide
Received most votes	<b>48%</b>
Use own judgment	<b>43%</b>
No answer	<b>9%</b>

### Gender – Received most votes or use own judgment?

Gender	Most Votes	Own Judgment	No Answer
Men	53%	39%	8%
Women	44%	46%	10%

### Race – Received most votes or use own judgment?

Race	Most Votes	Own Judgment	No Answer
White	47%	47%	6%
African-American	50%	36%	14%