

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

**Maryland Poll  
State Issues**

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## Methodology

Patrick E. Gonzales and Carol A. Arscott 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 Anne Arundel County politics. Arscott is a 1977 graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and a former chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.

This survey was conducted by Gonzales Research & Marketing Strategies, Inc. from May 9<sup>th</sup> through May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2001. A total of 836 registered voters in Maryland who indicated they were likely to vote in next year's general election were interviewed by telephone. 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 3.5 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, party registration or race.

### Maryland Statewide Poll Sample Demographics

Gender		Race		Region	
Male	419 (46%)	White	628 (75%)	EastShore/So MD	100 (12%)
Female	417 (54%)	Black	199 (24%)	Baltimore City	85 (10%)
		Other	9	Baltimore Suburbs	291 (35%)
<b>Party Registration</b>				WashingtonSuburbs	267 (32%)
Democrat	481 (58%)			Western Maryland	93 (11%)
Republican	271 (32%)				
Independent	84 (10%)				

## General Summary & Analysis

### Maryland's Top Elected Officials

In our survey of general election voters, Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend had the highest favorable name identification numbers among the statewide officials tested, at 52%. Twenty percent of Maryland voters said they had an unfavorable opinion of Townsend, while 19% said they were neutral. The remaining 9% did not recognize her name.

Governor Parris Glendening's name was recognized favorably by 47% of Marylanders, unfavorably by 31%, and neutrally by 20%. Just 2% failed to recognize the Governor's name.

Current Comptroller, former Governor, and former Mayor of Baltimore William Donald Schaefer has favorables nearly as high as the current Governor's at 46%, but lower unfavorables at 22%. Twenty-five percent said they were neutral on Schaefer, and 7% did not recognize his name.

### Death Penalty

When the line of questioning on this issue was first being contemplated, it was in the context of the proposed moratorium on the death penalty in Maryland, which had passed the House of Delegates but was defeated in the final days of the legislative session in the Maryland Senate. We weren't thinking about Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh at the time, but the postponement of McVeigh's scheduled execution has certainly made this subject especially timely.

Sixty-two percent of Maryland voters surveyed said that they favor the death penalty in Maryland, while 33% said they opposed it. The remaining 5% offered no answer. A 16-point gender gap separates men (70% favor) and women (54%), but that is tiny compared to the 37-point gulf separating whites (71%) and African-Americans (34%). Democrats (47% each) are evenly split on the death penalty in Maryland, while Republicans (90%) support it in super-majority fashion, and independents (60%) support the death penalty in numbers close to the statewide average. It is hard to conceive of a more divisive issue.

When asked whether DNA testing should be made available "to people currently serving in prison if there is a possibility that the results of such testing could prove that they did not commit the crime for which they were convicted," an overwhelming 89% supported such testing. Seven percent said they were opposed, while 4% gave no answer. Interestingly, while 90% of Republicans said they supported the death penalty in Maryland, 91% backed the option of DNA testing, and only 4% opposed it. Among Democrats, 88% backed the testing option, with 9% opposed.

Our final question on the death penalty asked what penalty voters thought was "the most appropriate

sentence for someone convicted of first degree murder: The death penalty, or life with absolutely no possibility of parole.” When offered what many voters believed was a viable alternative, the Maryland electorate is nearly evenly divided, with a 45% plurality still favoring the death penalty, but 42% opting for life with absolutely no possibility of parole. The remaining 13% offered no answer.

The gender gap all but disappeared in the results to this question, with men (47% death penalty, 39% parole) backing the death penalty, and women (45% parole, 43% death penalty) narrowly favoring life without parole. A 30-point chasm remains, however, between whites (52% death penalty) and blacks (22%). A majority of Democrats (53%) chose the life without parole option, while a majority of Republicans (60%) adhered to the death penalty, albeit with a 30-point drop in support from the straight favor-or-oppose question. Independents are closely divided, 43% favoring the death penalty and 40% choosing life without the possibility of parole.

### **Medical Marijuana**

As with the questions above on the death penalty, the two questions we posed on the decriminalization of marijuana were asked in the context of the debate in the Maryland legislature, not in light of the Supreme Court’s recent ruling. We expect, though, that the Court’s ruling and this poll will provoke further debate on this subject in the Free State.

When asked whether they favored or opposed “decriminalizing the possession of marijuana, or [whether] possession of marijuana should remain a criminal offense,” a majority of Maryland voters (54%) said that possession should remain a crime, while 34% favored decriminalization. Men were nearly evenly split on the subject, with 42% favoring decriminalization and 41% feeling that possession should remain a criminal offense. Women were far more likely to favor retention of criminal penalties for possession (67%), and far less likely to back decriminalization (26%).

A plurality of African-American voters (47%) favored decriminalization, while a majority of white voters believe that possession of marijuana should remain a crime. A majority of both Democrats (52%) and Republicans (62%) backed continuing criminal status, while a majority of Independents (54%) favored decriminalization. Interestingly, 26% of Republicans exhibited the same libertarian tendencies.

The introduction of information about the medical use of marijuana, however, moved a significant number of voters of all stripes. Sixty-six percent of Maryland voters statewide agreed that “doctors should be able to prescribe marijuana to AIDS and cancer patients,” while 28% believed that “possession of marijuana remain a criminal offense in all cases” because “legalization of marijuana for any purpose would undermine the war on drugs and send a mixed message on drugs to children.” The remaining 6% offered no answer.

A majority favored a physician’s ability to prescribe marijuana in every demographic subgroup in the survey, ranging from 73% among Democrats and Independents to 52% among Republicans. No more than 40% -- that among Republicans -- felt that marijuana possession should remain a criminal offense with no exceptions.

## 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>
Kathleen Kennedy Townsend	52%	20%	19%	9%
Parris Glendening	47%	31%	20%	2%
William Donald Schaefer	46%	22%	25%	7%

**QUESTION:** *Do you favor or oppose the death penalty in Maryland?*

	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>No answer</b>
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Men	70%	28%	2%
Women	54%	38%	8%
White	71%	25%	4%
African-American	34%	58%	8%
Democrat	47%	47%	6%
Republican	90%	6%	4%
Independent	60%	37%	3%

**QUESTION:** *Do you favor making DNA testing available to people currently serving in prison if there is a possibility that the results of such testing could prove that they did not commit the crime for which they were convicted, or do you oppose making DNA testing available to convicted criminals?*

	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>No answer</b>
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>4%</b>
Men	88%	9%	3%
Women	90%	5%	5%
White	89%	6%	5%
African-American	89%	9%	2%
Democrat	88%	9%	3%
Republican	91%	4%	5%
Independent	89%	5%	6%

**QUESTION:** *What penalty do you think is the most appropriate sentence for someone convicted of first degree murder: The death penalty, or life with absolutely no possibility of parole?*

	<b>Death Penalty</b>	<b>Life w/o Parole</b>	<b>No answer</b>
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>13%</b>
Men	47%	39%	14%
Women	43%	45%	12%
White	52%	34%	14%
African-American	22%	67%	11%
Democrat	37%	53%	10%
Republican	60%	23%	17%
Independent	43%	40%	17%

**QUESTION:** *Do you favor decriminalizing the possession of marijuana, or should the possession of marijuana remain a criminal offense?*

	<b>Favor Decriminalization</b>	<b>Possession Remain Crime</b>	<b>No answer</b>
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>12%</b>
Men	42%	41%	17%
Women	26%	67%	7%
White	30%	59%	11%
African-American	47%	39%	14%
Democrat	35%	52%	13%
Republican	26%	62%	12%
Independent	54%	42%	4%

**QUESTION:** *Some people feel that doctors should be able to prescribe marijuana to patients suffering with AIDS and cancer to treat nausea and stimulate the appetite. Others feel that the legalization of marijuana for any purpose would undermine the war on drugs and send a mixed message on drugs to children. Do you believe that doctors should be able to prescribe marijuana to AIDS and cancer patients, or should possession of marijuana remain a criminal offense in all cases?*

	<b>Prescribe for AIDS/Cancer</b>	<b>Possession Remain Crime</b>	<b>No answer</b>
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>6%</b>
Men	70%	25%	5%
Women	62%	31%	7%
White	66%	29%	5%
African-American	67%	24%	9%
Democrat	73%	22%	5%
Republican	52%	40%	8%
Independent	73%	25%	2%