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Gonzales RM&S Research & Communications, Inc

Maryland Poll January 2000

Part I Statewide Issues

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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 January 7th through January 11th, 2000. A total of 826 registered voters in Maryland were interviewed by telephone. All stated they regularly vote 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 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, race, or region.

Maryland Statewide Poll Sample Demographics

<u>Gender</u>		<u>Party</u>
Male 409 (50%) Female 417 (50%)		Democrat 470 (57%) Republican 272 (33%) Independent 84 (10%)
<u>Race</u>		<u>Region</u>
White 628 (76%) Black 187 (23%) Other 11		Eastern Shore/So. MD 99 (12%) Baltimore City 86 (10%) Baltimore Suburbs 279 (34%) Washington Suburbs 269 (33%) Western MD 93 (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** - includes voters in these counties: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, and Howard.
- Washington Suburbs** - includes voters in these counties: Montgomery, and Prince George's.
- Western Maryland** - includes voters in these counties: Allegany, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington.

General Summary & Analysis

Two hardy perennials, education and crime, tops the list of concerns of Maryland voters at the start of the 2000 session of the General Assembly. Statewide, 26% named education as the most important issue facing Maryland today, followed by crime and drugs at 22%. Taxes and budget issues (11%), roads and traffic (8%), the environment (5%), growth and development (5%), and health care (4%) round out the responses to the open-ended question. Seven percent of respondents gave some other answer, and the remaining 12% offered no response.

Fifty-seven percent of women surveyed concentrated their responses in the top two concerns, and in both cases were more likely than men to offer that response. Women (32%) were more likely than men (20%) to name education as the top concern. Similarly, women (25%) were more likely than men (19%) to cite crime and drugs as the most important issue. On the flip, men (15%) were twice as likely as women (7%) to cite taxes and budget issues as their Number One concern.

Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening posts an impressive statewide job approval rating of 56% a year into his second term. Thirty-four percent of voters surveyed disapproved of the job he is doing as governor, while the remaining 10% offered no answer.

Glendening earns the enthusiastic support of African-American voters (86%), Baltimore City residents (76%), and his fellow Democrats (73%), and his job performance is warmly regarded by women (64%) and voters in the Washington suburbs (64%). Least pleased are Republicans (31%), voters on the Eastern Shore and in Southern Maryland (38%).

Glendening gets a plurality of support among men (48% to 42%) and whites (47% to 42%). Among independents (40% to 46%) and voters in Western Maryland (44% to 48%), his performance in office is narrowly disapproved.

Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend still has the Midas touch. Sixty-two percent of Maryland voters surveyed approve of the job she is doing, while 22% disapprove, close to a 3:1 ratio. Sixteen percent offered no answer.

Townsend posts enviable numbers in nearly every demographic subgroup in the survey – her approval numbers drop below 50% only among Republicans (36%) and among Western Maryland voters (47%) – and her job approval rating is downright stratospheric among African-Americans at 90%. Somewhat closer to Earth are Baltimore City residents (80%), Democrats (79%), and women (69%).

If any of Townsend's potential rivals in the 2002 gubernatorial election were hoping to see fallout from the Baltimore *Sun*'s series on the Juvenile Justice Administration in this survey, they will be disappointed: Her disapproval numbers are actually a little higher in the DC suburbs (21%) than in

the Baltimore area (16%), where the story ran.

With yet another session of the General Assembly opening amidst scandal, do Maryland voters feel that the level of corruption here is worse than in other states? Apparently not: Two-thirds (67%) of voters surveyed said they believe that the level of corruption in Maryland is about the same as in other states, while only 15% believe the level of corruption in Maryland politics is higher than elsewhere, and 6% think it is lower. The remaining 12% gave no answer.

Respondents answering “about the same” do so in big numbers across the board, with the tally never dropping below 56% in any of the survey’s demographic subgroups. Men (20%) are twice as likely as women (10%) to believe that corruption is worse in Maryland, whites (18%) more than four times as likely as blacks (4%), and Republicans (26%) three times more likely than Democrats (9%) to believe that the level of corruption is worse in Maryland than in other states.

So while it may sometimes seem that we here in Maryland have more than our share of scoundrels, the general opinion of state voters – informed by chronic reports of political shenanigans in Washington and across the country – is that we’re really no worse than anywhere else, however bad that is.

QUESTION: *What is the most important issue facing Maryland today?*

	Statewide	Men	Women
Education	26%	20%	32%
Crime/Drugs	22%	19%	25%
Taxes/Budget issues	11%	15%	7%
Roads/Traffic	8%	9%	7%
Environment	5%	6%	4%
Growth/Development	5%	7%	3%
Health Care	4%	4%	4%
Other	7%	9%	5%
No answer	12%	11%	13%

QUESTION: *Do you approve or disapprove of the job Parris Glendening is doing as governor?*

	Approve	Disapprove	No Answer
Statewide	56%	34%	10%
Eastern Shore/So. MD	38%	53%	9%
Baltimore City	76%	17%	7%
Baltimore Suburbs	52%	38%	10%
Washington Suburbs	64%	23%	13%
Western MD	44%	48%	8%
Male	48%	40%	12%
Female	64%	28%	8%
White	47%	42%	11%
Black	86%	6%	8%
Democrat	73%	19%	8%
Republican	31%	57%	12%
Independent	40%	46%	14%

QUESTION: *Do you approve or disapprove of the job Kathleen Kennedy Townsend is doing as lieutenant governor?*

	Approve	Disapprove	No Answer
Statewide	62%	22%	16%
Eastern Shore/So. MD	51%	34%	15%
Baltimore City	80%	12%	8%
Baltimore Suburbs	66%	16%	18%
Washington Suburbs	62%	21%	17%
Western MD	47%	39%	14%
Male	55%	31%	14%
Female	69%	13%	18%
White	54%	28%	18%
Black	90%	2%	8%
Democrat	79%	9%	12%
Republican	36%	41%	23%
Independent	50%	35%	15%

QUESTION: *How would you characterize the level of corruption in Maryland politics? Is it higher in Maryland than in other states; lower in Maryland than in other states; or is the level of corruption in Maryland about the same as it is in other states?*

	Higher	Lower	About the Same	No Answer
Statewide	15%	6%	67%	12%
Eastern Shore/So. MD	23%	1%	56%	20%
Baltimore City	11%	10%	58%	21%
Baltimore Suburbs	14%	6%	70%	10%
Washington Suburbs	13%	7%	71%	9%
Western MD	19%	5%	64%	12%
Male	20%	5%	63%	12%
Female	10%	7%	71%	12%
White	18%	4%	64%	14%
Black	4%	13%	77%	6%
Democrat	9%	8%	69%	14%
Republican	26%	2%	63%	9%
Independent	14%	7%	70%	9%

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