

January 2026

Maryland Statewide, Part 1



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 thousands of elections in Maryland and across the country over the past forty years. Further, 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 decades of 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, Inc.*** from December 21st through January 6th, 2026. A total of 808 registered voters in Maryland, who indicated they are likely to vote in the 2026 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 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.

Synopsis

“Politics has become a show where the jokes write themselves and the punchlines land on all of us.”

There is a civic exhaustion in America today, a feeling that public life has drifted from deliberation into spectacle. What once resembled a shared effort to reason through our differences now often feels like a competition for attention, where volume substitutes for substance and performance eclipses problem-solving.

Citizens sense that the public square has become less a forum for collective judgment and more a stage on which outrage, provocation, and curated personas dominate the script. The result is a quiet fatigue - a sense that the work of democracy has been overshadowed by the theater surrounding it.

What feels different now compared to even a decade ago is the erosion of trust that meaningful dialogue will follow the noise. People witness debates that generate more heat than light, scroll through feeds designed to inflame rather than inform, and watch institutions respond to incentives that reward spectacle over stewardship. Negativity creates a spark, but it warms no one; voters gather around the fire of vision, not spite.

In Maryland, 52% of voters approve of the job Wes Moore is doing as governor, 41% disapprove, and 7% offer no opinion. Over the past couple of years, Governor Moore’s approval has slipped 12 points from a high of 64% to where it is today, while disapproval has surged from 25% to 41%. The lines are converging - and fast. What was once a comfortable margin is now a tightening squeeze.

Forty-seven percent of Marylanders say that things in the state are moving in the right direction, while 44% say that the state is headed in the wrong direction. These numbers suggest an electorate caught in a moment of collective ambivalence, where nearly equal shares of people see progress and decline in the very same landscape. Such a split reminds us that “direction” is never purely external - it’s filtered through experience, memory, and hope (or lack thereof).

Fifty-eight percent of Maryland voters think that they pay too much in taxes, a mere 1 percent say they pay too little, and 41% voice the belief that the amount they pay in taxes is about right. The sense that what we give up is always felt

more sharply than what we receive is a normal human tension. Much of the 58% majority saying they pay “too much” likely speaks less to arithmetic than to the deeper question for voters of whether the social contract in the Free State still feels reciprocal.

Fifty percent say they would vote to re-elect Democratic Governor Wes Moore *if the election were held today*, compared to 28% who say they’d vote for the Republican challenger, 6% claim they would vote for a third-party candidate, and 16% are undecided.

Among voters who think they pay too much in taxes, a hypothetical Republican candidate bests incumbent Moore by thirteen points, 47% to 34%.

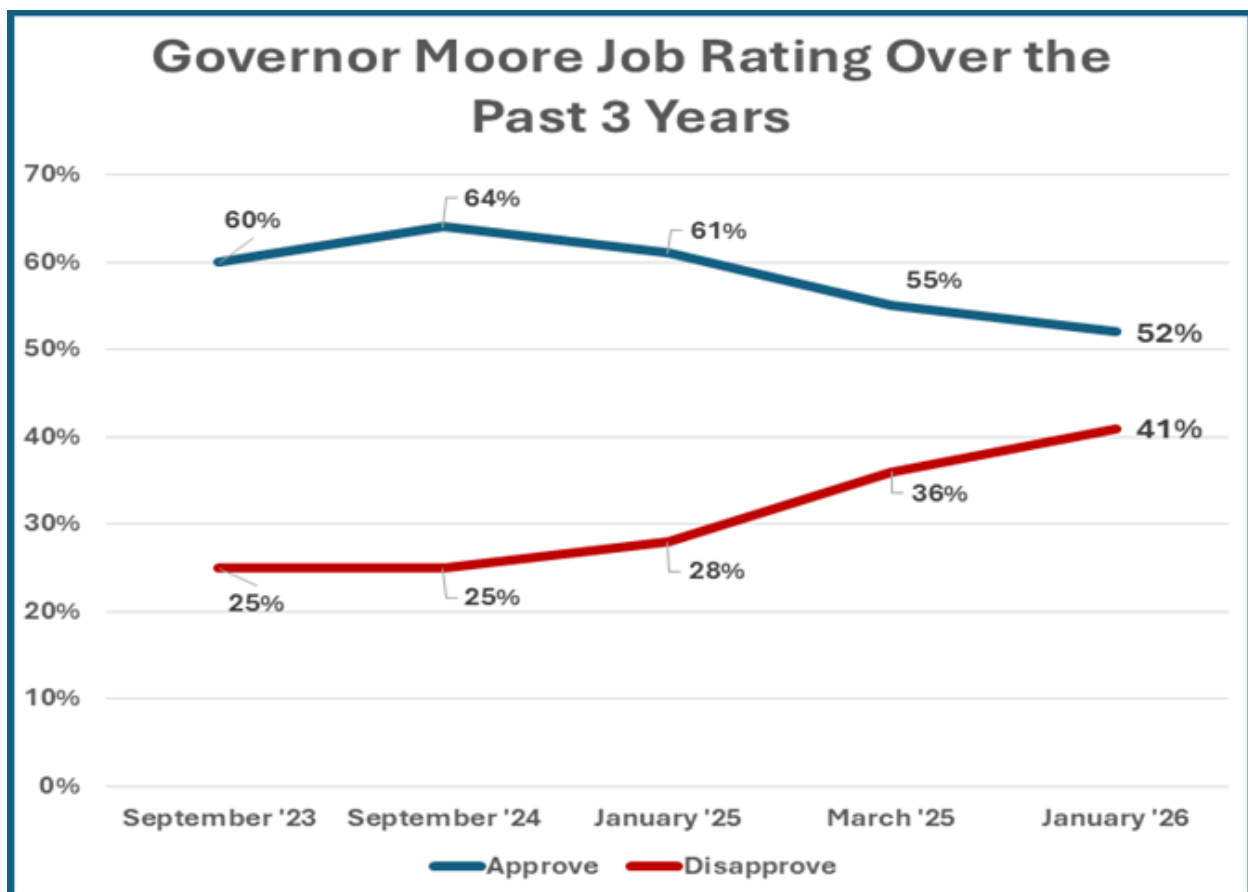
Gonzales Poll - Maryland Statewide Results Part 1

Governor Wes Moore Job Approval

Governor Wes Moore's job approval among Maryland voters has ebbed over the past several years like the fading shoreline of the Chesapeake Bay at low tide.

In September 2023, his approval stood at a seaworthy 60%, rising a year later to an even more stout 64%, with just 25% disapproval.

Among voters today, approval of Gov. Moore's performance in office has receded to 52% (25% "strongly" approve and 27% "somewhat" approve), while disapproval has risen to an unsettling forty-one percent (30% "strongly" disapprove).



As expected, Democrats back Gov. Moore overwhelmingly, while Republicans line up against him with even greater certainty. Independents, 3 years into his term, aren't buying the pitch ... 41% approve of the job he's doing and 49% disapprove (36% "strongly").

Moore Job Approval	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Statewide	52%	41%
Democrat	73%	18%
Republican	13%	84%
Independent	41%	49%
Women	54%	39%
Men	49%	43%
White	34%	57%
African American	90%	9%
Other	40%	44%
Rural Maryland	31%	61%
Baltimore City	79%	18%
Baltimore Suburbs	45%	47%
Washington Suburbs	61%	32%

Direction of State

Maryland voters today are almost evenly split on the state's trajectory, with 47% saying things are moving in the right direction and 44% saying they're headed the wrong way - a narrow, uneasy balance that signals neither broad confidence nor outright pessimism.

Just under the surface, the numbers reveal deep partisan and demographic divides. Democrats are decidedly upbeat, while Republicans are overwhelmingly sour, and independents land solidly in the "wrong direction" column.

By race, 58% of whites say the state is moving in the "wrong direction," compared to 81% of African-American voters who say things are moving in the "right direction." The overall picture is a portrait of a state with a thin plurality feeling things are on course...but with that sentiment being carried by specific constituencies, rather than a broad, shared consensus.

Attitude Toward Taxes in Maryland

In a state split down the middle on whether Maryland is headed in the right or wrong direction, attitudes toward taxes are far less ambiguous.

A clear majority – 58% - say that they and their family pay **too much** in taxes, while virtually no one thinks they pay too little in taxes, with 41% of Marylanders believing their tax burden is about right. There is a broad, cross-cutting frustration that spans gender, race, and counties across the Free State.

The partisan lines, however, are drawn sharply: Democrats mostly say taxes are about right (57%), while Republicans and independents overwhelmingly insist they're paying too much in taxes, 88 percent and 68 percent, respectively. A majority of voters in all regions say their taxes are excessive, with Rural Maryland feeling the most aggrieved, at 72%. Men and women are aligned almost perfectly, marching lockstep attitudinally on their way to the state tax collection office.

Amount Paid in Taxes	<u>Too Much</u>	<u>About Right</u>
Statewide	58%	41%
Democrat	41%	57%
Republican	88%	12%
Independent	68%	32%
Women	58%	41%
Men	59%	41%
White	58%	41%
African American	60%	40%
Other	57%	42%
Rural Maryland	72%	28%
Baltimore City	53%	44%
Baltimore Suburbs	62%	38%
Washington Suburbs	51%	48%

Governor Moore Re-elect

“If the November 2026 election for governor were held today,” 50% of Maryland voters say they’d vote to re-elect Democrat Wes Moore, 28% say they would vote for a Republican challenger, 6% opt for a third-party candidate, with 16% undecided. Fifty percent is enough to win, but it’s a long drop from the 64% he captured four years ago to become governor, signaling that some of his broad first-time coalition has softened.

Partisanship, predictably, defines the contest. Democrats back Moore zealously – 76% say they would vote to re-elect him, with barely a blink’s worth 2 percent crossing over for a GOP challenger. Republicans show the mirror image: 81% support their party’s nominee, and just 6 percent say they would go with Moore. Unaffiliated voters are split almost evenly between Moore (35 percent) and a generic Republican challenger (32 percent), with 19% undecided. Independents, at 14%, are the most inclined to drift toward a third-party option.

Gender splits the electorate along its usual lines. Women favor Democrat Moore by a wide margin, 56% to 22%. Men tilt more toward the Republican challenger (35%), but a plurality (42%) say they’d vote for Moore.

African-American voters in Maryland remain Moore’s strongest base of support, with 86% saying they would vote to re-elect him and only 4% choosing a Republican challenger.

To reiterate, Moore’s current 50 percent re-elect number is enough to win, but the results of this survey suggest he’s no longer operating with the vast goodwill that powered his initial victory. A majority is still a majority...but it’s a slimmer one, and it leaves far less room for error as we’ve already crossed into 2026, with the June primary and November election approaching quicker than may appear at first blush to all of us who have more to do than hours to do it.

Appendix A: Data Tables – Frequencies & Crosstabs

QUESTION: Governor Moore Job Approval *Do you approve or disapprove of the job Wes Moore is doing as Governor?*

JOB APPROVAL: WES MOORE	Number	Percent
Approve	418	51.7 %
Disapprove	331	41.0 %
No answer	59	7.3 %
Total	808	100.0 %

N=808

JOB APPROVAL: WES MOORE		
Approve	Disapprove	No answer

RESULTS

Statewide	418 51.7%	331 41.0%	59 7.3%
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N=808

JOB APPROVAL: WES MOORE		
Approve	Disapprove	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	324 73.3%	81 18.3%	37 8.4%
Republican	27 13.2%	171 83.8%	6 2.9%
Unaffiliated	67 41.4%	79 48.8%	16 9.9%

N=808

JOB APPROVAL: WES MOORE		
Approve	Disapprove	No answer

GENDER

Female	235 54.1%	170 39.2%	29 6.7%
Male	183 48.9%	161 43.0%	30 8.0%

N=808

JOB APPROVAL: WES MOORE

Approve	Disapprove	No answer
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RACE/ETHNICITY

White	160 34.2%	266 56.8%	42 9.0%
African American	218 90.5%	21 8.7%	2 0.8%
Other/No answer	40 40.4%	44 44.4%	15 15.2%

N=808

JOB APPROVAL: WES MOORE

Approve	Disapprove	No answer
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REGION

Rural Maryland	40 31.5%	77 60.6%	10 7.9%
Baltimore City	49 79.0%	11 17.7%	2 3.2%
Baltimore Suburbs	141 45.0%	146 46.6%	26 8.3%
Washington Suburbs	188 61.4%	97 31.7%	21 6.9%

Is that strongly or somewhat approve/disapprove?

<u>MOORE APPROVAL - INTENSITY</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Strongly approve	204	25.2 %
Somewhat approve	214	26.5 %
Somewhat disapprove	87	10.8 %
Strongly disapprove	244	30.2 %
No answer	59	7.3 %
Total	808	100.0 %

N=808

<u>MOORE APPROVAL - INTENSITY</u>				
Strongly approve	Somewhat approve	Somewhat disapprove	Strongly disapprove	No answer

RESULTS

Statewide	204 25.2%	214 26.5%	87 10.8%	244 30.2%	59 7.3%
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N=808

<u>MOORE APPROVAL - INTENSITY</u>				
Strongly approve	Somewhat approve	Somewhat disapprove	Strongly disapprove	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	173 39.1%	151 34.2%	38 8.6%	43 9.7%	37 8.4%
Republican	10 4.9%	17 8.3%	28 13.7%	143 70.1%	6 2.9%
Unaffiliated	21 13.0%	46 28.4%	21 13.0%	58 35.8%	16 9.9%

N=808

<u>MOORE APPROVAL - INTENSITY</u>				
Strongly approve	Somewhat approve	Somewhat disapprove	Strongly disapprove	No answer

GENDER

Female	126 29.0%	109 25.1%	49 11.3%	121 27.9%	29 6.7%
Male	78 20.9%	105 28.1%	38 10.2%	123 32.9%	30 8.0%

N=808

MOORE APPROVAL - INTENSITY

Strongly approve	Somewhat approve	Somewhat disapprove	Strongly disapprove	No answer
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RACE/ETHNICITY

White	74 15.8%	86 18.4%	64 13.7%	202 43.2%	42 9.0%
African American	117 48.5%	101 41.9%	12 5.0%	9 3.7%	2 0.8%
Other/No answer	13 13.1%	27 27.3%	11 11.1%	33 33.3%	15 15.2%

N=808

MOORE APPROVAL - INTENSITY

Strongly approve	Somewhat approve	Somewhat disapprove	Strongly disapprove	No answer
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REGION

Rural Maryland	12 9.4%	28 22.0%	14 11.0%	63 49.6%	10 7.9%
Baltimore City	17 27.4%	32 51.6%	3 4.8%	8 12.9%	2 3.2%
Baltimore Suburbs	78 24.9%	63 20.1%	42 13.4%	104 33.2%	26 8.3%
Washington Suburbs	97 31.7%	91 29.7%	28 9.2%	69 22.5%	21 6.9%

QUESTION: Direction of State *Overall, would you say things in the state of Maryland are moving in the right direction or moving in the wrong direction?*

<u>DIRECTION OF STATE</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Right direction	379	46.9 %
Wrong direction	356	44.1 %
<u>No answer</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>9.0 %</u>
Total	808	100.0 %

N=808

<u>DIRECTION OF STATE</u>		
<u>Right direction</u>	<u>Wrong direction</u>	<u>No answer</u>

RESULTS

Statewide	379 46.9%	356 44.1%	73 9.0%
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N=808

<u>DIRECTION OF STATE</u>		
<u>Right direction</u>	<u>Wrong direction</u>	<u>No answer</u>

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	309 69.9%	86 19.5%	47 10.6%
Republican	29 14.2%	165 80.9%	10 4.9%
Unaffiliated	41 25.3%	105 64.8%	16 9.9%

N=808

<u>DIRECTION OF STATE</u>		
<u>Right direction</u>	<u>Wrong direction</u>	<u>No answer</u>

GENDER

Female	217 50.0%	171 39.4%	46 10.6%
Male	162 43.3%	185 49.5%	27 7.2%

N=808

DIRECTION OF STATE

Right direction	Wrong direction	No answer
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RACE/ETHNICITY

White	148 31.6%	270 57.7%	50 10.7%
African American	195 80.9%	41 17.0%	5 2.1%
Other/No answer	36 36.4%	45 45.5%	18 18.2%

N=808

DIRECTION OF STATE

Right direction	Wrong direction	No answer
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REGION

Rural Maryland	36 28.3%	77 60.6%	14 11.0%
Baltimore City	39 62.9%	19 30.6%	4 6.5%
Baltimore Suburbs	137 43.8%	145 46.3%	31 9.9%
Washington Suburbs	167 54.6%	115 37.6%	24 7.8%

QUESTION: Amount of Taxes Marylanders Pay Here in Maryland, do you think that you and your family pay too much in taxes, too little in taxes, or about the right amount?

AMOUNT OF TAXES IN MARYLAND	Number	Percent
Too much	472	58.4 %
Too little	8	1.0 %
About right	328	40.6 %
Total	808	100.0 %

N=808

AMOUNT OF TAXES IN MARYLAND		
Too much	Too little	About right

RESULTS

Statewide	472 58.4%	8 1.0%	328 40.6%
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N=808

AMOUNT OF TAXES IN MARYLAND		
Too much	Too little	About right

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	182 41.2%	8 1.8%	252 57.0%
Republican	180 88.2%	0 0.0%	24 11.8%
Unaffiliated	110 67.9%	0 0.0%	52 32.1%

N=808

AMOUNT OF TAXES IN MARYLAND		
Too much	Too little	About right

GENDER

Female	253 58.3%	5 1.2%	176 40.6%
Male	219 58.6%	3 0.8%	152 40.6%

N=808

AMOUNT OF TAXES IN MARYLAND

Too much	Too little	About right
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RACE/ETHNICITY

White	271 57.9%	7 1.5%	190 40.6%
African American	145 60.2%	0 0.0%	96 39.8%
Other/No answer	56 56.6%	1 1.0%	42 42.4%

N=808

AMOUNT OF TAXES IN MARYLAND

Too much	Too little	About right
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REGION

Rural Maryland	91 71.7%	1 0.8%	35 27.6%
Baltimore City	33 53.2%	2 3.2%	27 43.5%
Baltimore Suburbs	193 61.7%	1 0.3%	119 38.0%
Washington Suburbs	155 50.7%	4 1.3%	147 48.0%

QUESTION: Governor Wes Moore Re-elect If the November 2026 election for governor were held today, would you vote to re-elect Democrat Wes Moore, would you vote for the Republican challenger, or would you vote for a third-party candidate?

GOVERNOR WES MOORE RE-ELECT	Number	Percent
Re-elect Moore	403	49.9 %
Republican Challenger	226	28.0 %
Third-Party Candidate	47	5.8 %
Undecided	132	16.3 %
Total	808	100.0 %

N=808

GOVERNOR WES MOORE RE-ELECT			
Re-elect Moore	Republican Challenger	Third-Party Candidate	Undecided

RESULTS

Statewide	403 49.9%	226 28.0%	47 5.8%	132 16.3%
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N=808

GOVERNOR WES MOORE RE-ELECT			
Re-elect Moore	Republican Challenger	Third-Party Candidate	Undecided

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	334 75.6%	9 2.0%	18 4.1%	81 18.3%
Republican	12 5.9%	165 80.9%	7 3.4%	20 9.8%
Unaffiliated	57 35.2%	52 32.1%	22 13.6%	31 19.1%

N=808

GOVERNOR WES MOORE RE-ELECT			
Re-elect Moore	Republican Challenger	Third-Party Candidate	Undecided

GENDER

Female	244 56.2%	96 22.1%	29 6.7%	65 15.0%
Male	159 42.5%	130 34.8%	18 4.8%	67 17.9%

N=808

GOVERNOR WES MOORE RE-ELECT

Re-elect Moore	Republican Challenger	Third-Party Candidate	Undecided
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RACE/ETHNICITY

White	150 32.1%	186 39.7%	37 7.9%	95 20.3%
African American	208 86.3%	10 4.1%	6 2.5%	17 7.1%
Other/No answer	45 45.5%	30 30.3%	4 4.0%	20 20.2%

N=808

GOVERNOR WES MOORE RE-ELECT

Re-elect Moore	Republican Challenger	Third-Party Candidate	Undecided
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REGION

Rural Maryland	37 29.1%	62 48.8%	8 6.3%	20 15.7%
Baltimore City	47 75.8%	8 12.9%	4 6.5%	3 4.8%
Baltimore Suburbs	136 43.5%	98 31.3%	25 8.0%	54 17.3%
Washington Suburbs	183 59.8%	58 19.0%	10 3.3%	55 18.0%

Gov. Moore Re-elect by Maryland Taxes

N=808

GOVERNOR WES MOORE RE-ELECT

Re-elect Moore	Republican Challenger	Third-Party Candidate	Undecided
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AMOUNT OF TAXES IN MARYLAND

Too much	162 34.3%	221 46.8%	35 7.4%	54 11.4%
Too little	8 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
About right	233 71.0%	5 1.5%	12 3.7%	78 23.8%

Among Marylanders who believe they're overtaxed, Moore trails a hypothetical Republican challenger by 13 points, 47%-34%.

Appendix B: Maryland Poll Sample Demographics

<u>PARTY REGISTRATION</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Democrat	442	54.7 %
Republican	204	25.2 %
Unaffiliated	162	20.0 %
Total	808	100.0 %

<u>AGE</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
18 to 34	159	19.7 %
35 to 49	194	24.0 %
50 to 64	218	27.0 %
65 and older	237	29.3 %
Total	808	100.0 %

<u>RACE/ETHNICITY</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
White	468	57.9 %
African American	241	29.8 %
Other/No answer	99	12.3 %
Total	808	100.0 %

<u>GENDER</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Female	434	53.7 %
Male	374	46.3 %
Total	808	100.0 %

<u>REGION</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Rural Maryland	127	15.7 %
Baltimore City	62	7.7 %
Baltimore Suburbs	313	38.7 %
Washington Suburbs	306	37.9 %
Total	808	100.0 %

Regional Groupings

Rural Maryland – includes Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Garrett, Kent, Queen Anne’s, St. Mary’s, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester counties.

Baltimore City – includes Baltimore City.

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

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