INSTITUTE OF POLITICS
UMBC Poll

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Part 3 Topics:

- Views on the direction of the state
- Governor Wes Moore's job approval
- Economic outlook and factors shaping economic evaluations
- Perceived impacts of data centers in Maryland
- Impact of artificial intelligence on society

Thursday, October 8, 2026 (Baltimore): The UMBC Poll surveyed **776 (MOE=±3.5%)** Maryland likely voters from **Tuesday, September 22 to Sunday, September 27, 2026**. Please refer to the methodology statement for information on data collection and sample demographics, and to the topline results for question wording.

Click here for results by demographics and question order.

This is the final part of the October pre-election UMBC Poll.

For previous UMBC Poll results and information about the UMBC Institute of Politics, visit https://politics.umbc.edu/.

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Direction of the state

Forty-nine percent of Maryland likely voters say the state is on the wrong track, while **37 percent** believe it is heading in the right direction.

Right direction or wrong track by party:

- Among Democrats: **50 percent** right direction, **30 percent** wrong track
- Among Republicans: **7 percent** right direction, **90 percent** wrong track
- Among Unaffiliated: **35 percent** right direction, **55 percent** wrong track

Right direction or wrong track in previous polls:
Note: The previous UMBC Poll results presented below are among all Maryland adults. Current results are among Maryland likely voters.

- March 2026: 59 percent wrong track / 30 percent right direction
- October 2025: 48 percent wrong track / 40 percent right direction
- February 2025: 49 percent wrong track / 42 percent right direction
- October 2024: 39 percent wrong track / 46 percent right direction

Opinions toward Gov. Wes Moore

Forty-nine percent of Maryland likely voters approve of the job Wes Moore is doing as governor, **42 percent** disapprove, and **8 percent** don't know.

As in previous polls, Gov. Wes Moore's current job approval rating remains sharply divided along party lines:

- Among Democrats: **70 percent** approve, **21 percent** disapprove
- Among Republicans: **7 percent** approve, **88 percent** disapprove
- Among Unaffiliated: **37 percent** approve, **49 percent** disapprove

Job approval rating in previous polls:
Note: The previous UMBC Poll results presented below are among all Maryland adults. Current results are among Maryland likely voters.

- March 2026: 48 percent approve / 42 percent disapprove
- October 2025: 52 percent approve / 44 percent disapprove
- February 2025: 52 percent approve / 40 percent disapprove
- October 2024: 54 percent approve / 32 percent disapprove

Economic conditions in Maryland

Economic conditions in Maryland continue to receive poor marks.

Eighty-one percent say economic conditions over the past year are poor or fair, while **17 percent** say they are excellent or good.

Rating of economic conditions in previous polls:
Note: The previous UMBC Poll results presented below are among all Maryland adults. Current results are among Maryland likely voters.

- March 2026: 76 percent poor or fair / 22 percent excellent or good
- October 2025: 69 percent poor or fair / 30 percent excellent or good
- February 2025: 67 percent poor or fair / 31 percent excellent or good
- October 2024: 66 percent poor or fair / 32 percent excellent or good

When asked about their expectations for economic conditions a year from now, **12 percent** think they will be better, **37 percent** think they will be about the same, and **43 percent** expect them to be worse.

Factors shaping economic evaluations

To better understand what factors are underlying views toward economic conditions, likely voters were asked which factors they typically think about when evaluating economic conditions in the state. Respondents could select all that apply.

Below are the percentages of likely voters who selected each factor:

- The prices of everyday goods and services you buy: **94 percent**
- Your personal finances: **90 percent**
- The cost of housing: **86 percent**
- The amount of state taxes and fees: **84 percent**
- Interest rates: **74 percent**
- The state unemployment rate and job reports: **67 percent**
- The stock market index: **41 percent**

Perceived impacts of data centers in Maryland

Maryland likely voters tend to see more negative than positive impacts from new data centers.

Below are the percentages of likely voters who say new data centers will have a mostly negative or mostly positive impact on each:

- Cost of household electricity: **80 percent** mostly negative / **6 percent** mostly positive
- Overall quality-of-life for residents living near data center sites: **75 percent** mostly negative / **7 percent** mostly positive
- Water quality: **68 percent** mostly negative / **7 percent** mostly positive
- Air quality: **60 percent** mostly negative / **7 percent** mostly positive
- The Maryland state economy: **49 percent** mostly negative / **19 percent** mostly positive
- Tax revenue for Maryland state and local communities: **48 percent** mostly negative / **20 percent** mostly positive
- Jobs and employment opportunities for residents: **37 percent** mostly negative / **26 percent** mostly positive

Support for new data centers in Maryland

More than three-quarters of Maryland likely voters oppose new data centers being built in Maryland or near their community.

To test whether household proximity to a new data center would change attitudes, likely voters were randomly assigned to receive one of two questions:

- Half were asked whether they support or oppose new data centers being built in Maryland: **13 percent** support / **78 percent** oppose

- The other half were asked whether they would support or oppose a new data center being built near their community: **16 percent** support / **77 percent** oppose

Views on artificial intelligence

Likely voters were asked whether they think artificial intelligence (AI) will have a positive or negative impact on society:

Positive: **23 percent**
- Among Democrats: **18 percent**
- Among Republicans: **33 percent**
- Among Unaffiliated: **21 percent**

Negative: **67 percent**
- Among Democrats: **71 percent**
- Among Republicans: **57 percent**
- Among Unaffiliated: **70 percent**

Methodology Statement

The UMBC Poll is conducted under the auspices of the UMBC Institute of Politics (IoP) and is funded by the UMBC College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences.

The UMBC Poll surveyed **776** Maryland likely voters from **Tuesday, September 22 to Sunday, September 27, 2026**. The poll was conducted by live interviewers and text-to-web utilizing a dual-frame (landline and cell phone) random sample stratified by county.

Text-to-web: **65 percent**
Live-caller cell phone: **28 percent**
Live-caller landline: **7 percent**

Interviews were conducted from **12 p.m. to 8 p.m.**, and interviewers attempted to reach respondents with working phone numbers up to **3 times**. ReconMR provided the sample and data collection.

There is a 95 percent probability that the survey results have the following percentage point sampling error from the actual population distribution for any given survey question: **MOE=±3.5%** for the sample of **776** Maryland likely voters.

The margin of sampling error is higher for subgroups and is not adjusted for design effects. Like all public opinion polls, the UMBC Poll is also subject to non-sampling error, including non-response bias, question-order effects, and question-wording effects.

The topline tables include the questions as worded. The order in which the questions were administered to respondents can be found here.

Mileah Kromer, Director of the UMBC Institute of Politics (IoP), designs the survey questionnaires and analyzes the data collected by the UMBC Poll. Research assistants Trisha Sirsat, Audrey Grutzik, Sofia Cabrera, and Khizar Qazi assist with each stage of the process under her direction. Their involvement reflects the IoP's mission to facilitate student learning in applied politics and to produce public-facing research on political, policy, and social issues for the betterment of Maryland.

The UMBC Poll is committed to methodological transparency. If you have questions about the poll's methodology, contact Mileah Kromer, Director, UMBC Institute of Politics, at mkromer@umbc.edu.

Sample Demographics (in percent)

		Maryland Likely Voters n=776 (MOE=±3.5%)
Gender	Male	48
	Female	52
Age	18-24	6
	25-34	17
	35-44	18
	45-54	17
	55-64	18
	65+	24
Race	White	47
	Black	31
	Hispanic/Latino	12
	Asian	7
	All other	3
Education	High school diploma or less	30
	Some college or associate's degree	21
	Bachelor's degree	25
	Graduate or professional degree	24
Geography	Montgomery County	17
	Prince George's County	14
	Baltimore County	15
	Anne Arundel County	9
	Baltimore City	9
	Central Region	12
	Western Region	9
	Eastern Shore Region	8
	Southern Region	7

Central region: Carroll, Harford, and Howard Counties
Western region: Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington Counties
Eastern Shore region: Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties
Southern region: Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties

Weighting

The UMBC Poll data are weighted by gender, age, race, geography, and educational attainment to represent the Maryland voter targets established by the combination of sources from ReconMR including Maryland State Board of Elections (2026), Current Population Survey data (2024), and the American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates (2025) for the state of Maryland. Results are reported as column percentages and may not sum to exactly 100 due to weighting and rounding.

Other Sample Demographics (in percent)

		Maryland Likely Voters n=776 (MOE=±3.5%)
Party	Democrat	60
	Republican	25
	Unaffiliated	14
	Other party	1
Ideology	Conservative	22
	Moderate	37
	Progressive	41
Income	Under $40,000	14
	$40,000 to under $75,000	20
	$75,000 to under $125,000	29
	$125,000 or more	37

The UMBC Poll data are not weighted by these characteristics.

The UMBC Institute of Politics is a member of the Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations and the American Association for Public Opinion Research's Transparency Initiative.

Identifying Likely Voters

The UMBC Poll identified likely voters from a sample of registered voters using a standard screen based on self-reported likelihood of voting. Respondents who said they were "**absolutely certain**" or "**very likely**" to vote in the November 2026 general election were classified as likely voters.

Q: LV	What are the chances that you will vote in the November 2026 general election for governor, Congress, and other state offices — are you absolutely certain to vote, very likely to vote, are the chances 50-50, or not at all likely to vote?	Count	Percent
	Not at all likely	17	2
	Chances are 50-50	40	5
LV	**Very likely**	**210**	**25**
LV	**Absolutely certain**	**566**	**67**
	Don't know	9	1
	Refused	0	0

Topline Results

The topline results below represent the sample of 776 likely voters**.** **Click here for results by demographics**. Results are reported as column percentages and may not sum to exactly 100 due to weighting and rounding.

The questionnaire below reflects the text-to-web version of the survey. Question wording and response options were the same across modes, with minor adaptations for live-caller vs. web-based administration. Items in brackets appeared in a randomized order.

Label	Question	**Maryland Likely Voters** n=776 (MOE=±3.5%)
Q: TRACK	Do you think that things in Maryland are:	**Percent**
	Off on the wrong track	49
	Headed in the right direction	37
	Don't know	13
	Refused	1
Q: MOOREJOB	Do you [approve or disapprove] of the way Wes Moore is handling his job as governor?	**Percent**
	Strongly disapprove	26
	Disapprove	16
	Approve	34
	Strongly approve	15
	Don't know	8
	Refused	1
Q: PAST	How would you rate the economic conditions in Maryland over the past year:	**Percent**
	Poor	42
	Fair	39
	Good	16
	Excellent	1
	Don't know	1
	Refused	0
Q: AHEAD	Do you expect economic conditions in Maryland to be worse, about the same, or better a year from now?	**Percent**
	Worse	43
	About the same	37
	Better	12
	Don't know	7
	Refused	0

Q: EVAL_WHY	When evaluating economic conditions in the state, which of the following do you typically think about: *Select all that apply*.

Q: GOODS to Q: HOUSING appeared in a randomized order.

Label	Question	No	Yes	Don't know	Refused
Q: GOODS	The prices of everyday goods and services you buy	4	94	1	0
Q: JOBS	The state unemployment rate and job reports	28	67	4	1
Q: FINANCES	Your personal finances	9	90	1	0
Q: STOCK	The stock market index	53	41	5	1
Q: INTEREST	Interest rates	22	74	3	0
Q: FEES	The amount of state taxes and fees	14	84	2	0
Q: HOUSING	The cost of housing	12	86	1	0

Q: DC_IMPACT	The next few questions are about data centers, the large facilities that house computer servers for storing and transmitting data. Do you think the construction of new data centers in Maryland will have a [mostly positive, mostly negative], or no real impact on each of the following:

Q: DC_ECON to Q: DC_TAX appeared in a randomized order.

Label	Question	Mostly negative	No real impact	Mostly positive	Don't know	Refused
Q: DC_ECON	The Maryland state economy	49	21	19	10	0
Q: DC_JOBS	Jobs and employment opportunities for residents	37	28	26	8	1
Q: DC_WATER	Water quality	68	15	7	10	0
Q: DC_AIR	Air quality	60	23	7	10	0
Q: DC_ELECTRIC	Cost of household electricity	80	9	6	5	0
Q: DC_LIFE	Overall quality-of-life for residents living near data center sites	75	11	7	7	0
Q: DC_TAX	Tax revenue for Maryland state and local communities	48	19	20	13	0

Split sample: Half of respondents received Q: DC_MD and half received Q: DC_COMM.

Q: DC_MD	In general, do you [support or oppose] new data centers being built in Maryland?	**Percent**
n=370	Strongly oppose	52
	Oppose	26
	Support	9
	Strongly support	4
	Don't know	8
	Refused	0

Q: DC_COMM	In general, would you [support or oppose] a new data center being built near your community?	**Percent**
n=406	Strongly oppose	63
	Oppose	14
	Support	13
	Strongly support	3
	Don't know	6
	Refused	1

Q: AI_VIEW	Do you think that artificial intelligence (AI) will have a [positive or negative] impact on society?	**Percent**
	Very negative	37
	Negative	30
	Positive	19
	Very positive	4
	Don't know	10
	Refused	0

University Mission

UMBC is a dynamic public research university integrating teaching, research and service to benefit the citizens of Maryland. As an Honors University, the campus offers academically talented students a strong undergraduate liberal arts foundation that prepares them for graduate and professional study, entry into the workforce, and community service and leadership.

UMBC emphasizes science, engineering, information technology, human services and public policy at the graduate level. UMBC contributes to the economic development of the State and the region through entrepreneurial initiatives, workforce training, K- 16 partnerships, and technology commercialization in collaboration with public agencies and the corporate community. UMBC is dedicated to cultural and ethnic diversity, social responsibility and lifelong learning.

INSTITUTE OF POLITICS
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Our Mission

The UMBC Institute of Politics (IoP) produces and supports public-facing and community-engaged research and events on political, policy, and social issues for the betterment of Maryland.

The IoP operates under the auspices of the UMBC College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences.