INSTITUTE OF POLITICS
# UMBC Poll

**Results embargoed until 12:01 a.m. on Wednesday, October 7, 2026**

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**Part 2 Topics:**

- Views on open and closed primary elections
- Perceived problems facing American democracy
- Attitudes toward Question 3

**Wednesday, October 7, 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.**

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

Part 3 of this poll will be released on Thursday, October 8 at 12:01 a.m.

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**Preference for primary elections: open or closed?**

Likely voters were asked which comes closer to their view on primary elections in Maryland:

**Sixty percent** think Maryland should switch to an open primary system, where all registered voters, including unaffiliated voters, can vote in either the Democratic or Republican primary.

- Among Democrats: **63 percent**
- Among Republicans: **44 percent**
- Among Unaffiliated: **74 percent**

**Thirty-two percent** think Maryland should keep its closed primary system, where only registered Democrats and Republicans can vote in their party's primary.

- Among Democrats: **30 percent**
- Among Republicans: **48 percent**
- Among Unaffiliated: **14 percent**

**Problems facing American democracy**

Likely voters were asked whether each of seven issues facing American democracy today is a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all. Below is the percentage of likely voters who say each issue is a major problem:

- The influence of money in politics: **88 percent**
- Declining trust in government: **88 percent**
- Misinformation spread on social media: **85 percent**
- Drawing district lines to favor one party over another: **83 percent**
- The feeling that ordinary people don't have a say: **79 percent**
- Low voter turnout or participation: **67 percent**
- The potential for political violence: **62 percent**

**Question 3: Congressional redistricting amendment**

Likely voters were asked two questions about Question 3 that used plain-language descriptions of the proposed change and what a vote for or against the amendment would do.[1]

Question wording: *This November, Maryland voters will also decide Question 3, a constitutional amendment on how lawmakers draw congressional district lines.*

*A vote FOR Question 3 eliminates the state's requirement that congressional districts be compact and connected, removing constraints on how state lawmakers can draw congressional district lines.*

*A vote AGAINST keeps those requirements in place.*[2]

*Do you plan to vote for or against Question 3 this November?*

For: **25 percent**
- Among Democrats: **35 percent**
- Among Republicans: **9 percent**
- Among Unaffiliated: **17 percent**

Against: **53 percent**
- Among Democrats: **42 percent**
- Among Republicans: **74 percent**
- Among Unaffiliated: **59 percent**

Don't know: **19 percent**
- Among Democrats: **20 percent**
- Among Republicans: **16 percent**
- Among Unaffiliated: **22 percent**

[1] A quick note on question wording / survey methodology: Pollsters must often choose between a concise, plain-language question that explains a For or Against vote and the exact language that will appear on the ballot. Official ballot language is often written to meet legal requirements, not readability. Complex or lengthy wording places a heavy cognitive burden on survey respondents, who may take mental shortcuts rather than carefully consider each part of the question (Krosnick 1991). These shortcuts appear across survey modes, but questions that are heard rather than read are harder for respondents to process (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian 2014; Tourangeau, Conrad, and Couper 2013), while online respondents without an interviewer may rush through questions without reading them carefully (Chang and Krosnick 2009; Zhang and Conrad 2014). Research on ballot measures shows how a measure is presented, not just what it does, shapes how voters respond. The wording and framing of a measure can shift support (Burnett and Kogan 2015; Hastings and Cann 2014; Rossier 2021), more complex ballot language leads more voters to skip the question entirely (Reilly and Richey 2011), and even a question's order on the ballot can affect the outcome (Bechard, Lang, and Pearson-Merkowitz 2024). That said, many voters read nothing beyond the ballot text itself, so using the exact wording in a poll captures how voters may react to the text they will see on their ballots.

[2] For comparison, two other recent polls, one sponsored by an organization supporting Question 3 and one by an organization opposing it, used the full ballot language. For media coverage of those results, see reporting by Bryan Sears in Maryland Matters and Pamela Wood in The Baltimore Banner.

**Political outcome of Question 3**

Likely voters were then asked to weigh in on the political outcome if Question 3 passes in November.

Question wording: "*If Question 3 passes, Maryland's Democratic lawmakers will have more power to redraw congressional district lines in their favor, like Republicans in other states have done. Which comes closest to your opinion about drawing congressional district lines to favor one party over another?*"

Most Maryland likely voters say that they "don't like it" when congressional district lines are drawn to favor one party over another but are mixed over whether "it should not be done" or "sometimes it is necessary."

*I don't like it. . .*

. . .and it should not be done: **49 percent**
- Among Democrats: **32 percent**
- Among Republicans: **79 percent**
- Among Unaffiliated: **61 percent**

. . .but sometimes it is necessary: **30 percent**
- Among Democrats: **41 percent**
- Among Republicans: **9 percent**
- Among Unaffiliated: **25 percent**

*I like it. . .*

. . .but it's the wrong thing to do: **8 percent**
. . .and we should do it: **6 percent**

Another way to look at it:

- **Thirty-six percent of likely voters** either think that drawing district lines to favor one party over another is sometimes necessary (**30 percent**) or think we should do it **(6 percent**).

- **Fifty-seven percent of likely voters** either think that drawing district lines to favor one party over another shouldn't be done (**49 percent**) or that it's the wrong thing to do (**8 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%) |
|---|---|---|
| ***Questions released in Part 1 or held for future release.*** | | |
| **Q: PRIMARY** | Which comes closer to your view on primary elections in Maryland, even if neither is exactly right? | **Percent** |
| *Randomized order:* | Maryland should keep its closed primary system, where only registered Democrats and Republicans can vote in their party's primary. | 32 |
| *Randomized order:* | Maryland should switch to an open primary system, where all registered voters, including unaffiliated voters, can vote in either the Democratic or Republican primary. | 60 |
| | Some other opinion | 3 |
| | Don't know | 4 |
| | Refused | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Q: PROBLEM** | Next is a list of issues facing American democracy today.<br>For each one, indicate whether it's a [major problem, minor problem, or not a problem at all]: |

***Q: MONEY to Q: DISTRICT appeared in a randomized order.***

| Label | Question | Not a problem | Minor problem | Major problem | Don't know | Refused |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Q: MONEY** | The influence of money in politics | 2 | 8 | 88 | 2 | 0 |
| **Q: VIOLENCE** | The potential for political violence | 7 | 27 | 62 | 3 | 0 |
| **Q: TRUST** | Declining trust in government | 4 | 7 | 88 | 1 | 0 |
| **Q: SOCIAL** | Misinformation spread on social media | 5 | 8 | 85 | 2 | 0 |
| **Q: TURNOUT** | Low voter turnout or participation | 6 | 20 | 67 | 6 | 0 |
| **Q: FEELING** | The feeling that ordinary people don't have a say | 4 | 15 | 79 | 1 | 0 |
| **Q: DISTRICT** | Drawing district lines to favor one party over another | 3 | 9 | 83 | 4 | 1 |

n=776, MOE=±3.5%

*Questions released in Part 1.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Q: QUESTION3** | This November, Maryland voters will also decide Question 3, a constitutional amendment on how lawmakers draw congressional district lines.<br><br>A vote FOR Question 3 eliminates the state's requirement that congressional districts be compact and connected, removing constraints on how state lawmakers can draw congressional district lines.<br><br>A vote AGAINST keeps those requirements in place.<br><br>Do you plan to vote for or against Question 3 this November? | **Percent** |
| | For | 25 |
| | Against | 53 |
| | Don't know | 19 |
| | Refused | 3 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Q: LIKE** | If Question 3 passes, Maryland's Democratic lawmakers will have more power to redraw congressional district lines in their favor, like Republicans in other states have done.<br><br>Which comes closest to your opinion about drawing congressional district lines to favor one party over another? | **Percent** |
| | I don't like it, and it should not be done. | 49 |
| | I don't like it, but sometimes it is necessary. | 30 |
| | I like it, but it's the wrong thing to do. | 8 |
| | I like it, and we should do it. | 6 |
| | Don't know | 5 |
| | Refused | 2 |

**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.