

In the fall general election, Maryland Democrats were sufficiently united to assure the state's return to the Democratic victory column. The statewide effort was also assisted by the candidacy of Congressman Paul S. Sarbanes who was successful in regaining for the Democrats the U.S. Senate seat occupied by Republican J. Glenn Beall. The former Georgia Governor's appeal as a Washington outsider and small town farmer aided him in carrying seven rural Maryland counties (Allegany, Calvert, Cecil, Charles, Kent, St. Mary's and Somerset). Traditionally Democratic Baltimore City delivered a better than two to one margin for Carter while the Washington suburban counties of Montgomery and Prince George's both favored the Democratic outsider over the troubled Republican administration and unelected incumbent.

1976 ELECTION SUMMARY

Candidate (Party)	Popular Vote		Electoral Vote	
	Md.	U.S.	Md.	U.S.
Jimmy Carter (D)	759,612	40,830,763	10	297
Gerald Ford (R)	672,661	39,147,793		240

1980

The presidential election of 1980 has not been favorably reviewed by its contemporary critics.⁴³ One observer cryptically stated, "The election of 1980 did not try our souls; it tried our patience."⁴⁴ During the campaign a record number of newspapers declined to endorse either of the major party candidates. *Time* magazine concluded its election coverage with the statement,

For more than a year, two flawed candidates have been floundering toward the final showdown, each unable to give any but his most unquestioning supporters much reason to vote for him except dislike of his opponent.⁴⁵

President Carter assumed office full of energy and promise for a fresh approach in the operation of the Federal government. But within months of his inauguration, the Carter administration had lost important congressional battles on budget cuts and energy issues and had alienated key legislative leaders.⁴⁶ From a favorable public opinion rating of almost 70 percent in early 1977 Carter had fallen to a low rating of 28 percent by June 1979, the lowest ratings for any President in Gallup poll history.⁴⁷ The Iranian hostage crises temporarily bolstered the President's ratings but that situation became an albatross with each passing day that failed to produce any resolution. Sensing a weakness in the Carter administration's popularity and in disagreement with its economic domestic policies, Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts challenged the incumbent for the Democratic nomination. Kennedy succeeded in capturing 37.1 percent of all primary