

Maryland's Contemporary Political Demographics

What makes Maryland different in its presidential election history from its neighbors or other states? There have been numerous studies, articles and books on the American electorate and its behavior but none of these works has focused on Maryland or provides the data for a definitive analysis of the State's presidential election decision making.¹⁸

A review of information collected by the Bureau of the Census of the United States Department of Commerce shows Maryland to be significantly different from the national averages in several standards of measurement. According to the 1980 Census, Marylanders are more urban, more affluent and more educated than the residents of most other states.¹⁹

The 42nd state in size with a relatively small land area of 9,838 square miles, Maryland ranks 18th in population which creates a density of 428.7 persons per square mile, well above the national average of 63.9 and exceeded only by New Jersey, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut. The proportion of the State's residents living within a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) is 88.8 percent, significantly in excess of the national average of 74.8 percent. Although the median age of Marylanders is slightly above the national average (30.3 to 30.0) there is a lower percentage of citizens over 65 in the State (9.4 percent to 11.3 percent).

With a per capita income of \$12,238.00 Maryland ranks 9th among the states and \$1,137.00 per person above the national average. In the lowest income levels Maryland's proportion of residents is almost five percentage points lower than the nation's with a corresponding higher percentage in the upper income brackets.

Although only slightly higher than the national average in percentage of high school graduates, Marylanders significantly exceed the national proportion of college graduates, 20.4 percent to 16.3 percent.

There are two other factors which are striking in their potential impact on presidential election chemistry—the composition of the Maryland population and the relationship of the State's citizens with the Federal government. While in the United States the population is 83.1 percent white, 11.8 percent black and 6.4 percent Hispanic, the Maryland population is 74.9 percent white, 22.7 percent black and 1.5 percent Hispanic. The proportion of its black minority population ranks Maryland 6th among the states exceeded only by the deep southern states of Alabama (22.9 percent), Georgia (24.3 percent), Louisiana (26.6 percent), South Carolina (27.3 percent) and Mississippi (31.0 percent). Maryland ranks 5th among the states in per capita funds received from the Federal government with \$3,534 per person which is almost \$1,000 above the national average and exceeded by Alaska, Virginia, New Mexico and Connecticut.

Within Maryland there is again a great disparity among its 24 political subdivisions with respect to population characteristics and socio-economic factors (see Table 6). The percentage of minority population varies from 54.8 percent in Baltimore City, 37.3 percent in Prince George's County and 34.6 percent in Somerset County to 2.9 percent in Carroll, 1.6 percent in Allegany and a mere 0.2 percent in Garrett.

The proportion of high school graduates ranges from 87.3 percent in Montgomery and 83.1 percent in Howard to lows of 48.4 percent in Baltimore City, 47.0 percent in Caroline and 44.9 percent in Dorchester County.