Maryland Policy Choices: 2005

Public Opinion and Policy Choices

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University *of* Baltimore

ABOUT THE SCHAEFER CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

The Schaefer Center for Public Policy was established in 1985 with a mission to bring the University of Baltimore's academic expertise to bear in solving problems faced by government and nonprofit organizations. The Center offers five primary services: strategic planning, performance measurement, program evaluation and analysis, opinion research, and management training. It is through the Schaefer Center that the University of Baltimore and the College of Liberal Arts meet one of the central components of the University's mission of applied research and public service to the Baltimore Metropolitan Area and the state of Maryland.

As a state supported higher education institution in a major urban area, the University of Baltimore and the School of Public Affairs faculty place strong emphasis on teaching, research, and public service. Faculty members in the School of Public Affairs are expected to contribute to the scholarly literature in the field of public administration and be involved in applied research activities.

The Schaefer Center is committed to serving its constituency - the public sector in the Maryland region. The values we espouse in our training, consulting, educational, and other activities are the values we live by: quality and efficiency. The result of this commitment can be seen in the quality of our work. Over the past twenty years, the Schaefer Center has been awarded hundreds of grants and contracts from various local, state, and federal agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations. The Center's staff has trained 4,600 State of Maryland public servants in the Maryland Managing for Results Program. Our service commitment is also indicated in the pro bono work we complete, including consulting services to nonprofit organizations, research and report writing on issues of interest to public officials, and conducting educational conferences.

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MARYLAND POLICY CHOICES: 2005

During the period from November 27 through December 16, 2004, the Schaefer Center for Public Policy at the University of Baltimore conducted a statewide public opinion survey to elicit public perceptions and opinions on a broad range of public policy topics including: state priorities, the economy, the state budget, education, and health care. These are issues public officials will likely be facing during the 2005 Legislative session.

SAMPLING

Surveyors telephoned and interviewed 811 randomly selected Maryland residents over the age of 21. Phone numbers were selected from a computer generated list of all possible phone numbers in Maryland. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.44% at the 95% confidence level.

REPORTING CONVENTIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

To simplify reporting, survey results described in this document have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage. In some cases, where missing data and refusals are not presented, the figures reported will not sum to 100. In effect, this creates relatively more conservative interpretation of the data.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION GROUPS

This report is designed to give Maryland legislators, policy makers and administrators a broad overview of how Marylanders view some of the issues our state faces. The Schaefer Center will be sponsoring and holding several roundtable discussion groups designed for a more in depth analysis of the issues contained in this report.

If you would like to a part of one of these public policy roundtables please call Pam Bishop at: 410.837.6188 or e-mail Ms. Bishop at: pbishop@ubalt.edu.

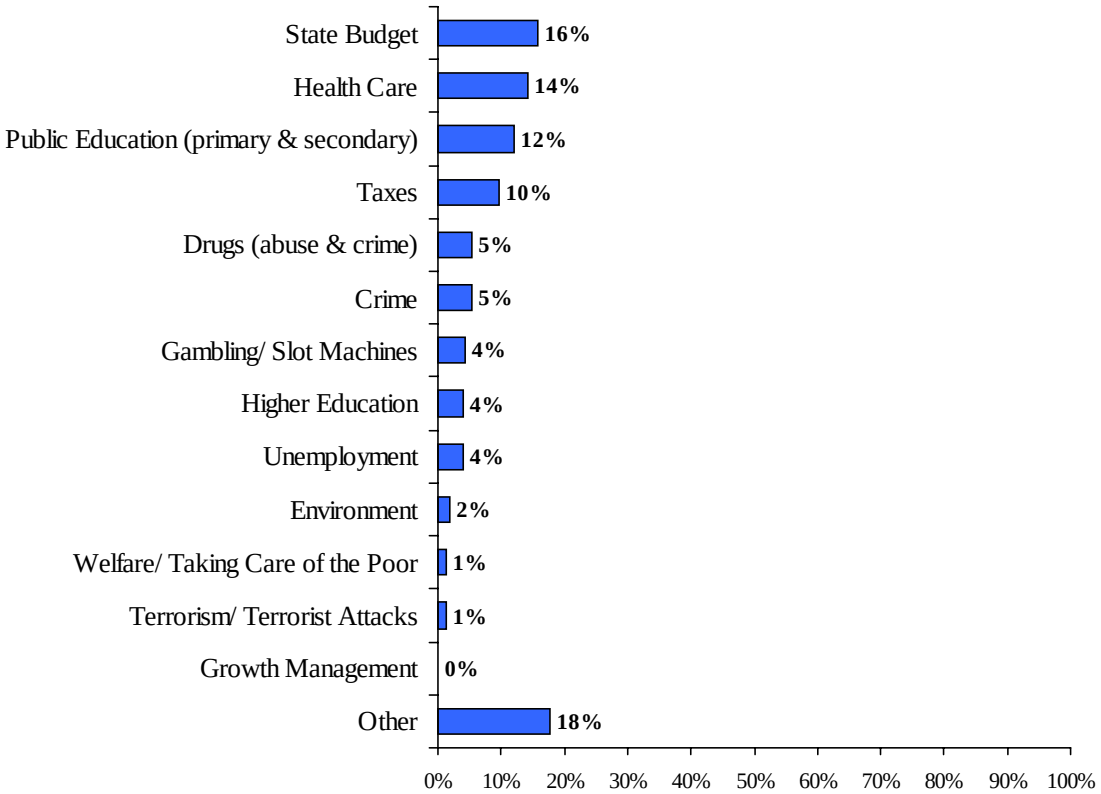
CONTRIBUTORS

The survey was designed and implemented by the staff at the Schaefer Center for Public Policy of the School of Public Affairs at the University of Baltimore. Principals include, Dr. Ann Cotten, Director of the Schaefer Center, Dr. Don Haynes, Director of Survey Research at the Schaefer Center, Dr. John Callahan, Director of the University of Baltimore's Health Systems Management Program, Ms. Shama Akhtar, Survey Research Project Manager, Mr. Christopher Scalchunes, Survey Lab Manager, the professional CATI Lab survey interviewers, and the Schaefer Center for Public Policy Graduate Fellows.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND PERFORMANCE

The first question asked the respondent to identify what they believed to be the single most important issue facing the Maryland State Legislature in 2005. Respondents were not prompted with a list of priorities, but were allowed to identify the issues on their own. Chart 1 displays the results for this first question.

Chart 1
Most Important Problems Facing the State Legislature This Year



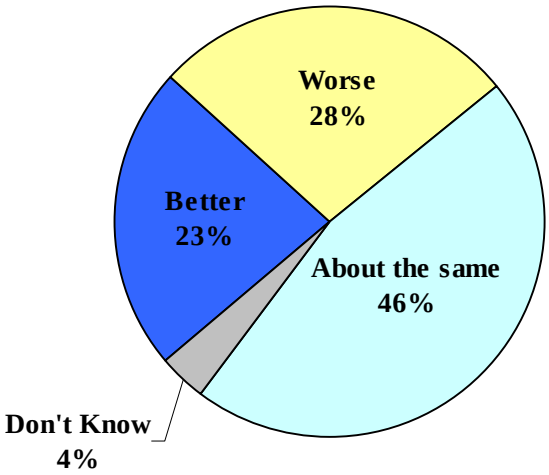
"What do you consider to be the most important problem facing the state legislature in the next year?"

The state budget (16%), health care (14%), public education (12%), and taxes (10%), accounted for over 52% of the responses. Growth management, welfare, drug abuse/ crime and terrorism were only mentioned by a few of the respondents as being the most important problem facing the Maryland Legislature. These issues accounted for about 12% of all responses.

Although the state budget ranked first in this year's and last year's surveys, there was greater concern last year about our state budget with 28% of the respondents of the opinion that the state budget was the most important issue. Additionally the importance of taxes has doubled from 5% last to 10% of the respondents mentioning taxes as the most important issue this year.

Respondents were asked if they thought the Maryland economy would get better, get worse, or stay about the same. Chart 2 shows that 69% of those surveyed believed the Maryland economy will either stay the same or improve over the next year. Only 28% of those surveyed believed the Maryland economy would be worse off in 2005 than it was in 2004.

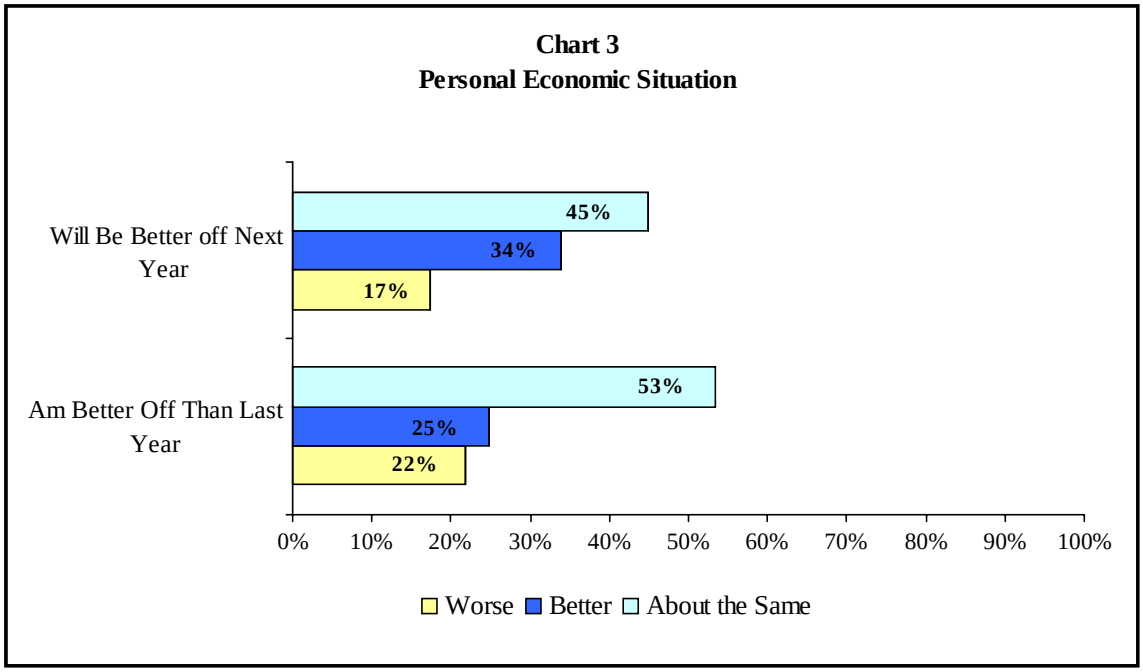
Chart 2
Expectations for the Maryland Economy



"In terms of the overall Maryland economy, do you think things in the next year will get better, will get worse, or do you think things will stay about the same?"

Economic optimism was most prevalent among those who identified themselves as Republicans with 47% expecting Maryland's economy to improve this year. This is compared to only 15% of Democrats and 16% of Independents feeling the same. Those who identified themselves as "Black-not Hispanic" were the most pessimistic about the possibility of the Maryland economy improving with only 13% expecting the economy to improve in 2005.

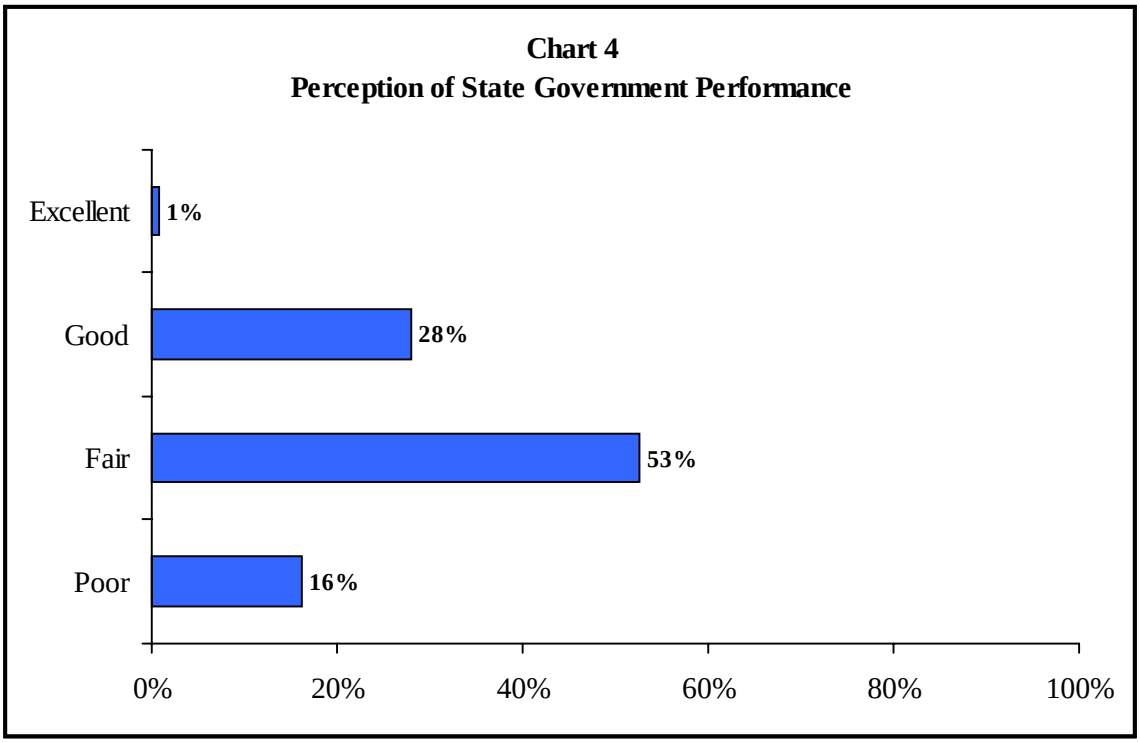
When asked about their personal economic situation this year and their expectations for their personal economic situation for the upcoming year, the results as displayed in Chart 3 are quite similar to those about the Maryland economy.



"What about your personal economic situation, are you better off, are you worse off, or do you think you are about the same as you were last year?"	*"Again, thinking about your personal economic situation, do you think you will be better off , worse off, or do you think you will be about the same a year from now?"*

A large majority of respondents (79%) feel that their own personal economic situation will either improve or remain the same next year, with only 17% dissenting and expressing the belief that their situation will get worse. Fifty-three percent (53%) of those surveyed say their economic situation has not changed from last year, while the remaining 47% are almost equally split, with 25% stating they are better off, and 22% stating they are worse this year than last.

Respondents were next asked to rate the performance of the Maryland State Government.



"In general, how would you rate the performance of state government in solving problems in Maryland? Would you say excellent, good, only fair, or poor?"

A majority of the people (53%) believe that Maryland's government is fair in its performance in solving the problems in our state. Almost 30% rate the government's performance as "good", while only 16% feel our government performance is "poor". A handful of the individuals surveyed believe the government does an excellent job of solving the problems in our state.

Results from last year's survey are almost identical to the results from this year's, with any minor differences within the margin of error.

Respondents were read a list of spending priorities that are funded by state or local government and asked whether they thought Maryland should spend more, less or the same amount of money in each program area. Respondents were reminded that spending increases would probably come out of tax money paid by the citizens. Interestingly enough, as Table 1 shows there are no cries for cuts in any single program, but there are program areas that appear to receive lower levels of support.

Table 1
Spending Priorities by Program Area

Program Area	*Spend More*	*Spend Less*	*Spend the Same*
Prescription benefits for elderly	73%	3%	19%
Elementary and secondary schools	74%	3%	20%
Medical assistance to the poor	64%	5%	28%
Police and public safety	58%	3%	37%
Programs for the elderly	55%	3%	38%
Public assistance to the poor	51%	8%	37%
State universities and colleges	49%	8%	38%
Protecting the environment	49%	6%	42%
Protection against terrorist attacks	40%	15%	40%
Public transportation	38%	8%	48%
Roads and highways	38%	9%	51%
Aid to Baltimore City	30%	15%	42%
Parks and recreation	27%	10%	61%
Aid to local governments	23%	18%	51%
Open space and parkland	24%	14%	56%
Prisons and corrections	20%	21%	50%
Arts and cultural activities	21%	18%	57%

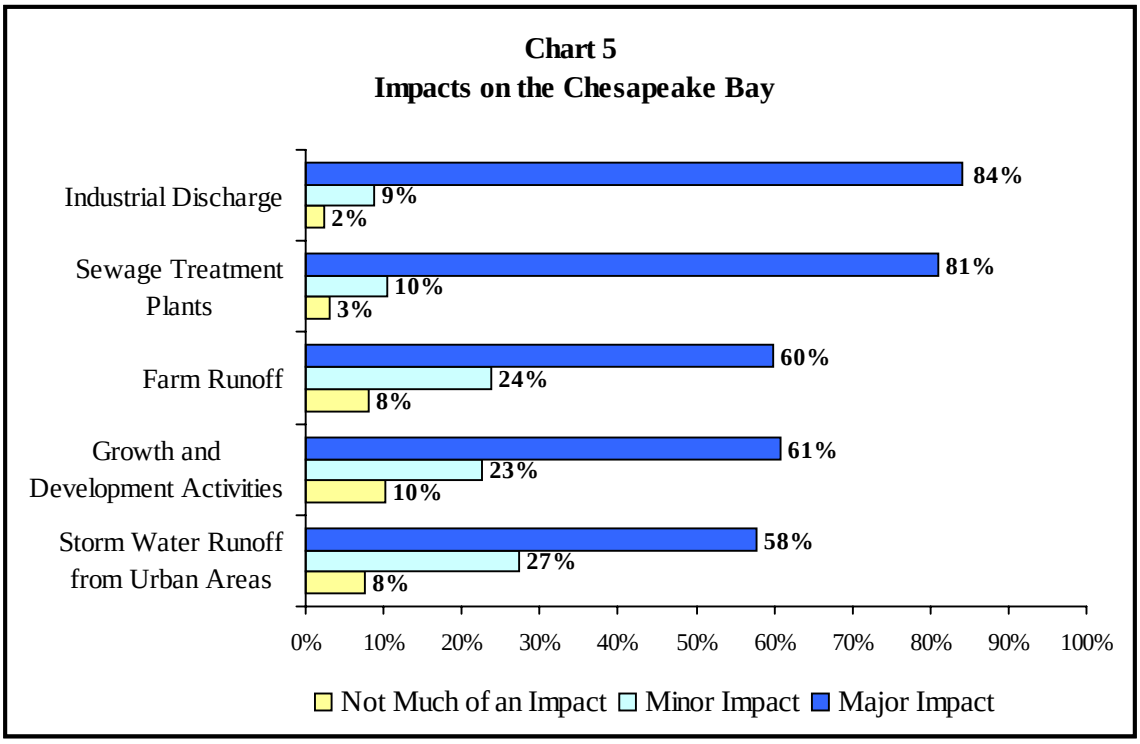
"I'd like to ask some questions about the government's spending priorities. For each of these services funded by state or local government, tell me whether you think we should spend more money, spend less money, or whether there should be no change in the amount of money spent. Please keep in mind that spending increases come out of tax money paid by you".

Prescription benefits for elderly, elementary and secondary school funding, medical assistance to the poor, police and public safety, programs for the elderly, public assistance to the poor received the strongest amount of budgetary support with the majority of respondents saying state and local government should spend more in these areas.

Arts and cultural activities, prisons and corrections, open space and parkland as well as aid to local governments received the least amount of support for spending increases. These program areas also generally received the highest percentage of respondents calling for spending reductions.

THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

The Chesapeake Bay plays an important part in the economic and recreational vitality of our state. Most Maryland residents realize this and are concerned about the health of this fragile resource. Surveyed participants were read a list of possible threats to the Chesapeake Bay and asked to classify their potential impact on the Bay.



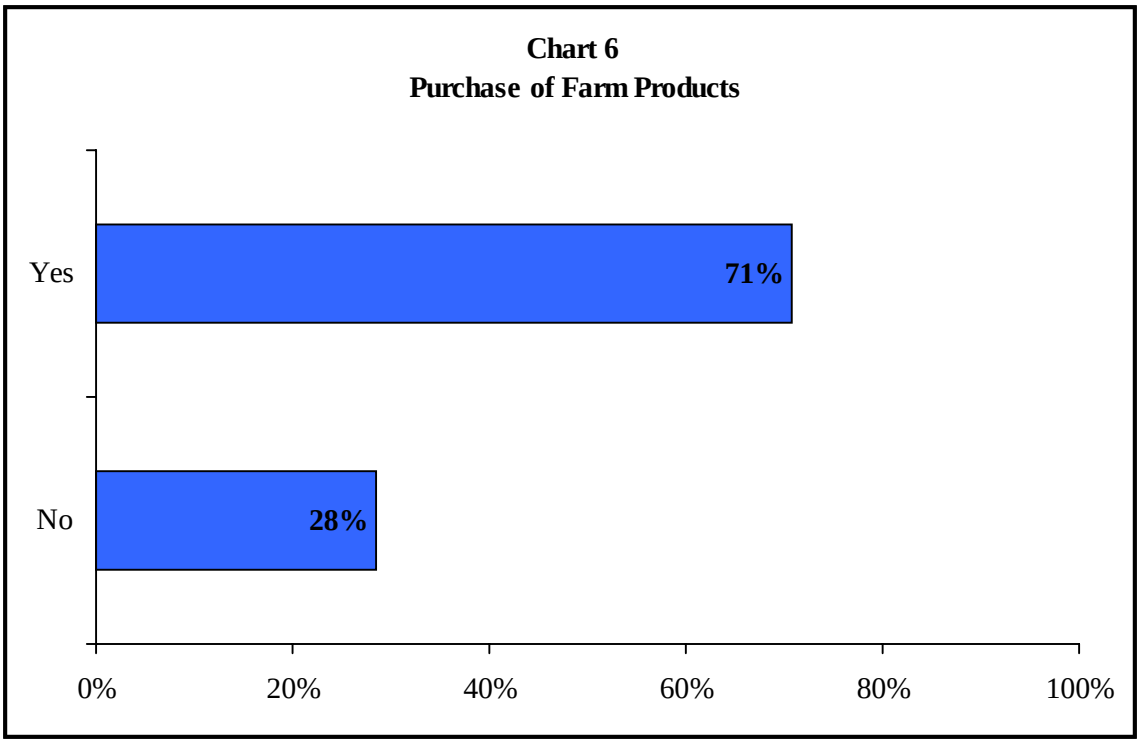
"Next, I'm going to read you a list of possible threats to the Chesapeake Bay. For each, please tell me if you think if it has a major impact, a minor impact, or not much of an impact at all on the health of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries."

Over 80% of the respondents identified industrial discharge and sewage treatment as having the biggest impact on the health of the Bay. Although farm runoff, growth and development and storm water runoff from urban areas also received a large percent of respondents (between 58-61%) identifying them as having a major impact on the Bay, this is still significantly lower than the results for industrial discharge and sewage treatment plants.

It is obvious that most Maryland residents are sensitive to the various ecological pressures that face the Chesapeake Bay. Whether or not Maryland citizens fully understand how these various aspects interact with each other and the environment is less clear.

MARYLAND AGRICULTURE

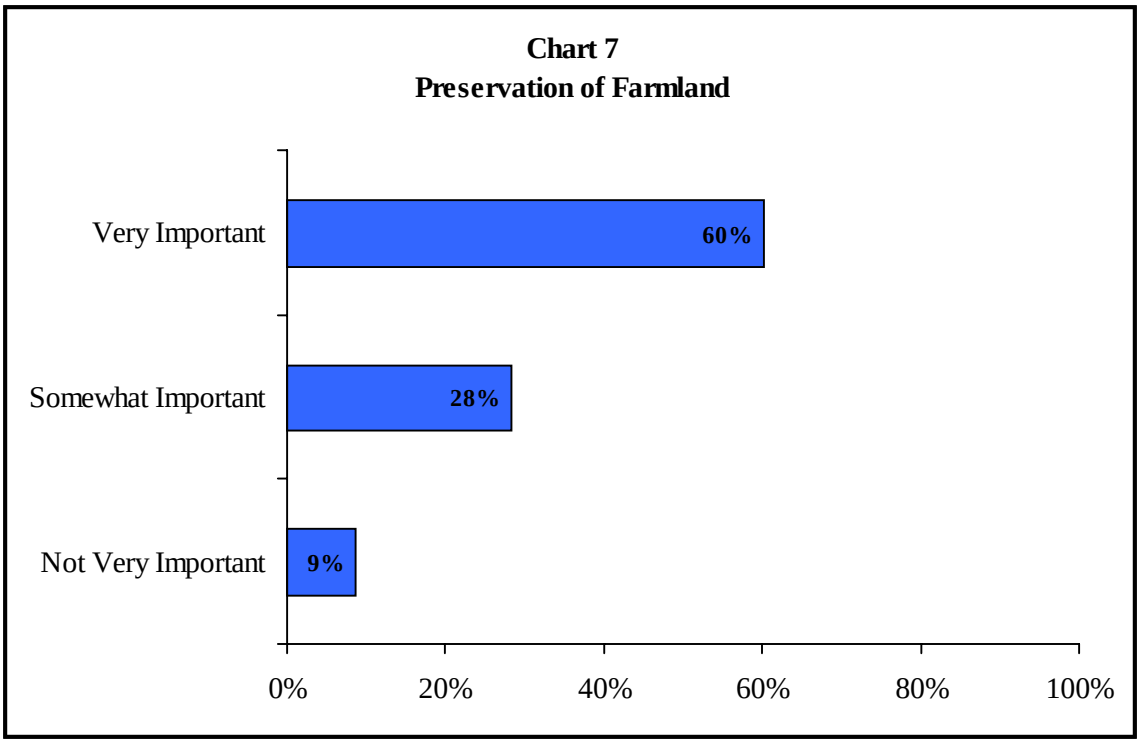
The role of the Maryland farmer in our economy and the importance of farmland preservation are reflected in the behavior and attitudes of most Marylanders.



"In the past year, have you or others in your household purchased agricultural products such as produce, ornamental plants ,hay and straw, meat, poultry, dairy products, or similar products directly from a farmer at a farmers' market, a roadside stand, or on a farm?"

It is obvious that Marylanders enjoy the fruits and labors of our farmers and support them by purchasing products directly from them. Farm stands and farms across the state, from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, are part of the character and charm of our lives here in Maryland.

Maryland farmland however is more than just fruits, corn, and other home grown products for us to enjoy. There appears to be an attitude among respondents that there is perhaps another dimension to the role of farmers and farmland in our state. Chart 7 on the following page touches on that dimension.



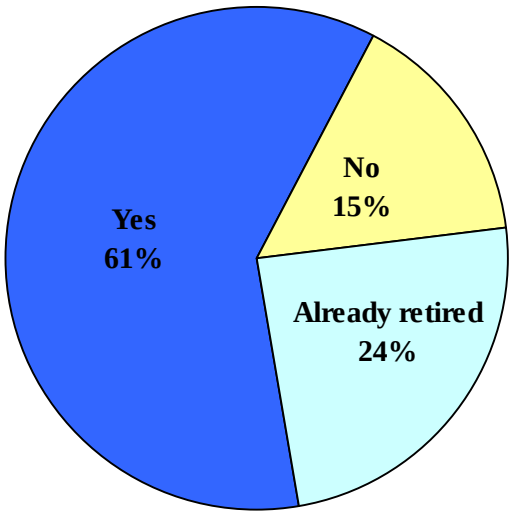
"How important do you think it is for the state to preserve land for farming?"

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of those surveyed believe it is at least "somewhat important" that the state preserve land for farming. A full 60% believe it is "very important" that we do so. The reasons behind these attitudes have not been measured. Maybe it is the beauty of the rolling farmland or the way farms seem to attenuate some of the rapid growth we have seen in the metro suburbs over the past few decades. Perhaps it is a realization that as many of our farms disappear, we are losing part of our heritage. Whatever the reasons are, we do know that Marylanders believe that farms and the products they produce should remain part of our culture and economy.

RETIREMENT PLANNING AND INCOME

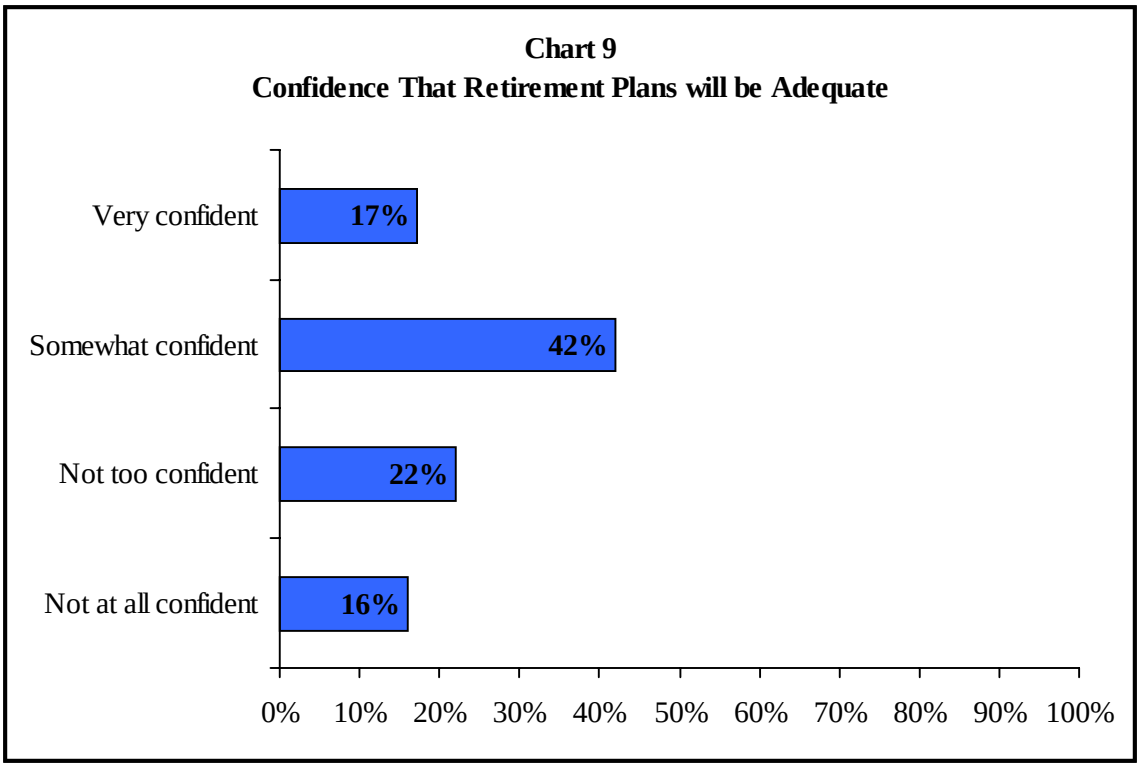
The issue of Social Security reform is a hotly contested and much debated policy area that has been forced into front page news with President Bush setting reform of the Social Security System at the top of his domestic policy agenda. This section of the survey examines how Maryland's citizens view both their options and their economic outlook for their retirement years.

Chart 8
Made Plans for Retirement



"Have you alone or you with your spouse done any planning for your retirement?"

Most Marylanders have made at least some plans for their retirement. However there remains a relatively sizeable minority who have not made any plans for their retirement, and as Chart 9 on the next page demonstrates, the degree to which Marylanders are confident in their plans is not very strong.

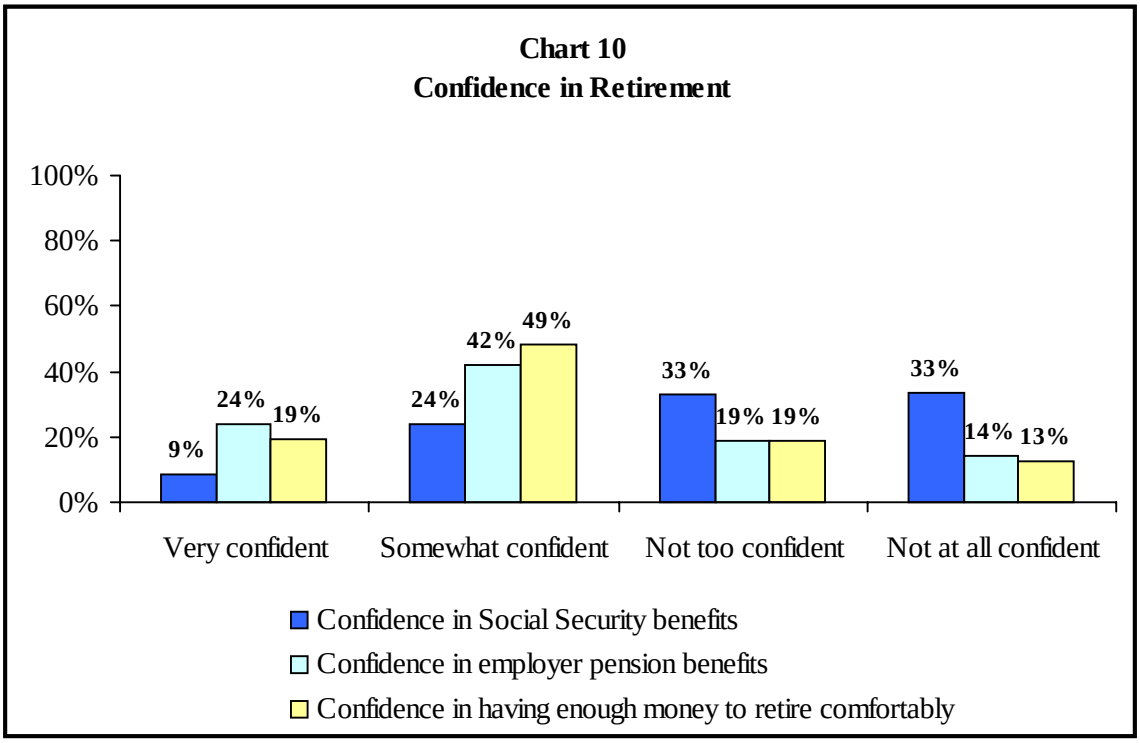


"How confident are you that your retirement plans will be adequate for your retirement?"

The views of Marylanders is somewhat mixed when it comes to their opinions on their own retirement plans. Although a majority of respondents (59%) are confident that their plans are adequate, the bulk of these individuals do not hold this opinion very strongly. Almost 40% have little or no confidence that their plans are adequate.

Most Marylanders (75%) do not expect to rely primarily on Social Security for their income when they retire. Only 18% thought Social Security would be their main source of retirement income and 4% stated that they would rely on "both".

Chart 10 compares the confidence respondents have with Social Security, an employer pension plan (if they are enrolled in one) and their overall confidence in having the money to retire "comfortably".



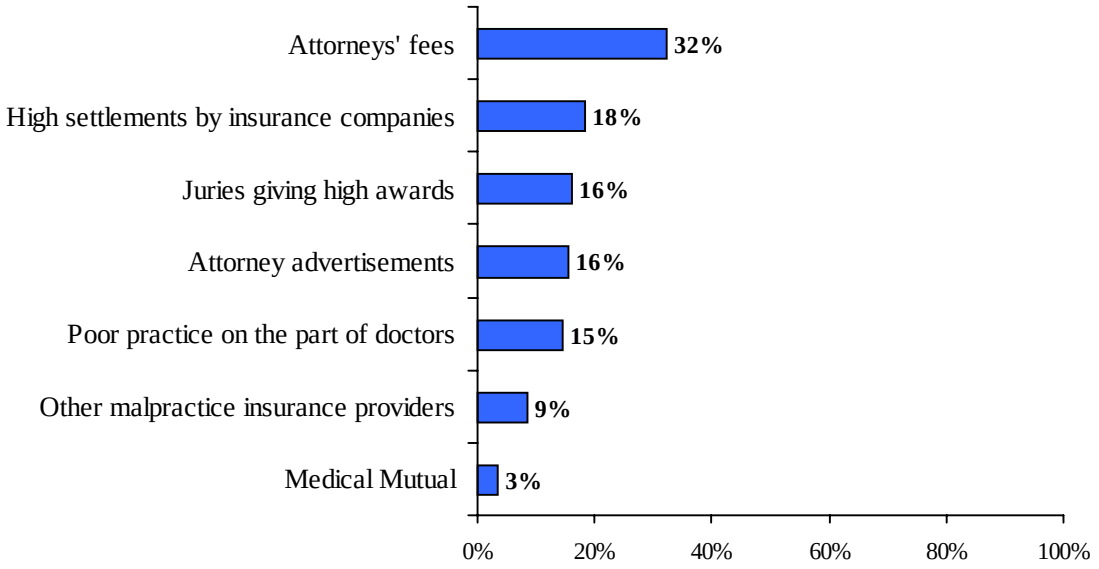
"With regard to social security, how confident are you that the system will be able to provide you with the level of benefits you expect?"	*"With regard to your employer sponsored pension(s), how confident are you that the system will be able to provide you with the level of benefits you expect?"*	*"With regard to your retirement, how confident are you that you will have enough money in retirement to live comfortably?"*

It is obvious that Marylanders have much more confidence in their employer pension plans than they do in Social Security. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of Marylanders are at least somewhat confident that they will have enough money in their retirement to live comfortably, while almost one-third (31%) have very little or no confidence in having enough money for their retirement.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE INSURANCE

Medical malpractice insurance has seized recent headlines in Maryland. Survey respondents were allowed to self-identify who or what is to blame for the crisis. Respondents were quite vocal on this subject which demonstrates that Marylanders have strong opinions on medical malpractice.

Chart 11
Responsibility for Rising Cost of Medical Malpractice Insurance



*Totals will exceed 100% as respondents were allowed to select more than one variable.

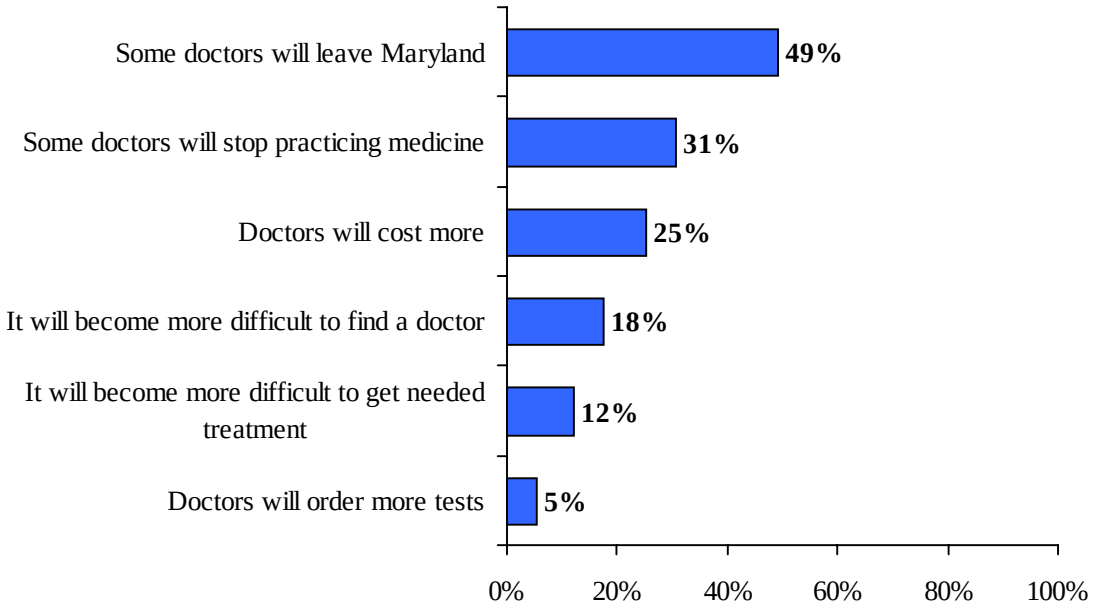
"Who or what do you think is responsible for the rising cost of medical malpractice insurance?"

The legal system related categories (attorneys' fees, juries giving high awards, attorney advertisements) account for 64% of the assigned responsibility by respondents. "Other" responses that did not fit neatly into any of the above categories compose a large portion of responses (41%). The most frequent of these "other" categories includes:

- People (patients) trying to make easy money through lawsuits
- Lawyers and lawsuits in general
- HMO/ insurance companies
- The government
- Fraud

The results of a follow-up question are displayed in Chart 12. Again, respondents were allowed to self-identify their responses.

Chart 12
Results of Increased Cost of Medical Malpractice Insurance



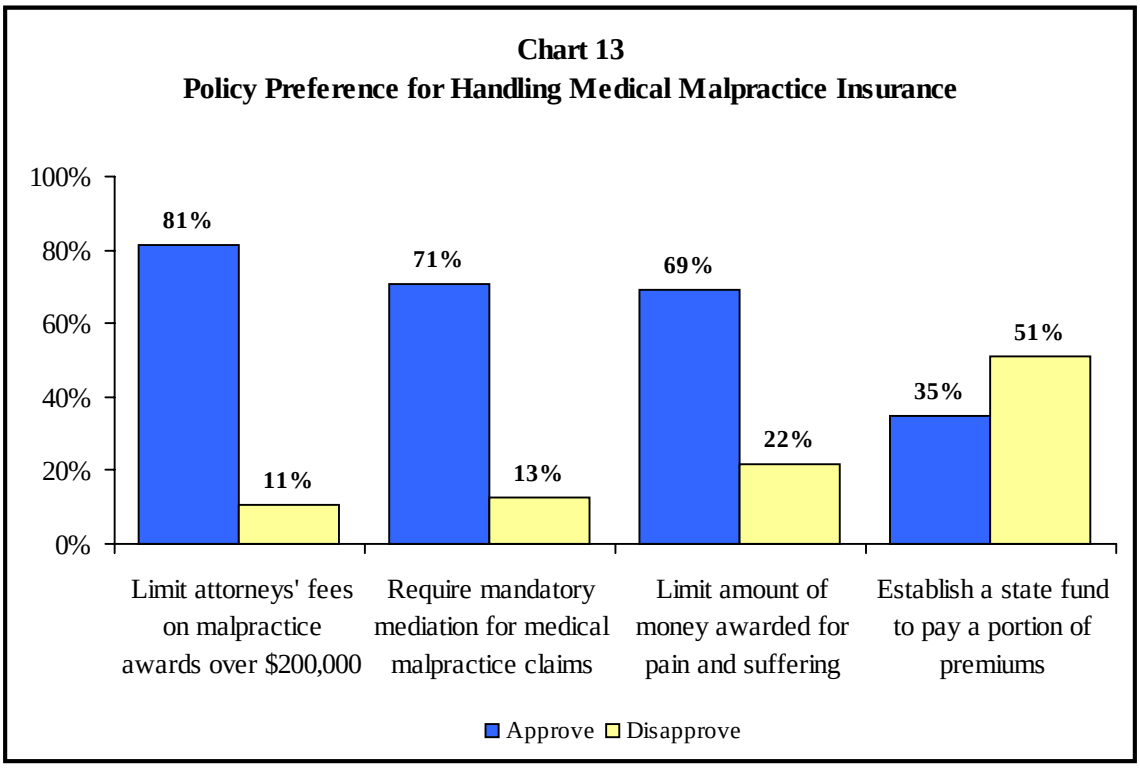
*Totals will exceed 100% as respondents were allowed to select more than one variable.

"What do you think will happen in Maryland as a result of the increase in medical malpractice insurance?"

Most of these issues revolve around increased difficulty finding medical care, or issues that would raise the cost of medical care. Doctors leaving Maryland and doctors leaving their practice were cited most often. "Other" responses that did not fit neatly into any of the above categories centered on more specific possible results due to an increase in medical malpractice insurance:

- Increased health care costs for the consumer
- The loss of medical specialists
- The poor suffering the most due to increased cost to them

The legislature in Annapolis devised a solution to the medical malpractice insurance crisis. Survey respondents were afforded the same opportunity.



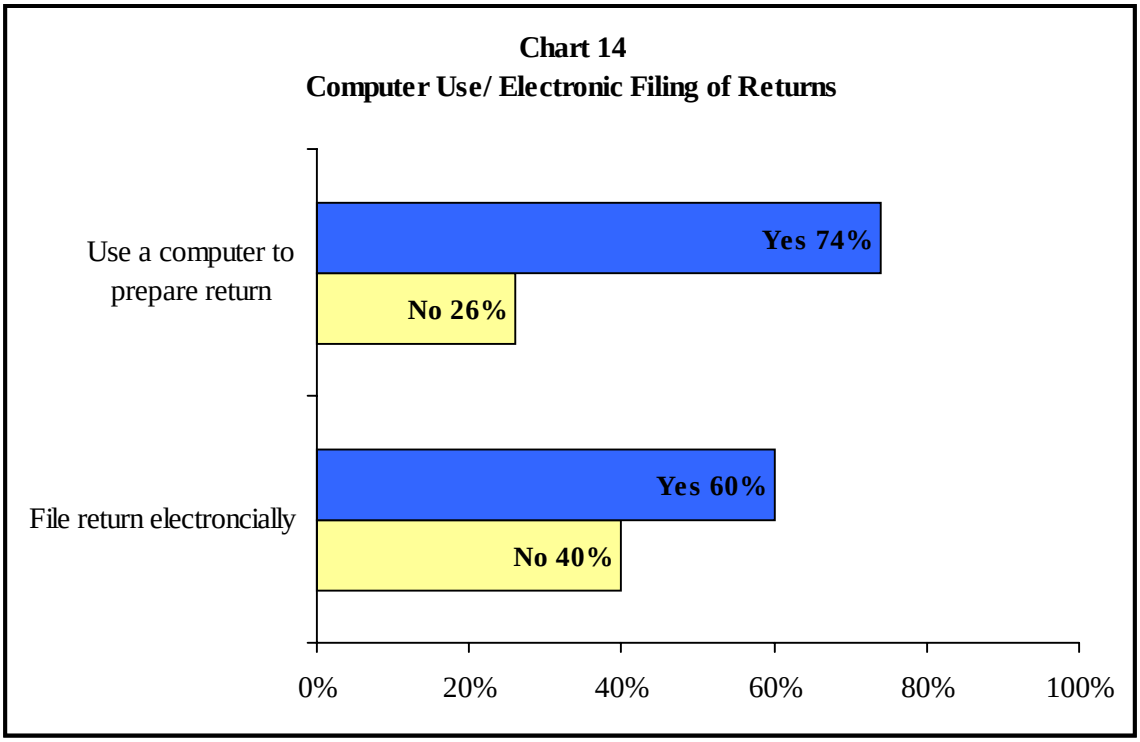
"There are several proposals being suggested to deal with the rising cost of medical malpractice insurance in Maryland. For each of the following options, please tell me if you favor or oppose the state of Maryland implementing any of the following policies."

High attorney fees were identified earlier (Chart 11, page 12) as being the largest cause for an increase in medical malpractice costs. It therefore comes as no surprise that "limit attorney fees on malpractice awards" received the highest amount of support from the policy choices given to the survey participants. Mandatory mediation and limiting the amount of awards for pain and suffering also received a great deal of support.

The establishment of a state fund in order to pay a portion of doctor's insurance premiums was the only policy that did not receive approval from a majority of the survey respondents.

ELECTRONIC FILING OF TAX RETURNS

The prevalence of computers and the increasing growth of Internet connectivity/ access have been changing how we do business for over a decade. This section examines the impact the two have on how Marylanders handle their tax returns.



"The last time you filed income tax returns, did you or the person preparing your tax return, use a computer to prepare either your federal or state return?"	*"Did you or others in your household or your tax preparer file either your federal of state return electronically?"*

There is a significant difference in the percentage of respondents who report using a computer to prepare their returns (74%), and the percent who report filing electronically (60%). Of those who did file electronically, 90% reported filing both state and federal returns electronically, 6% filed only the federal return in this manner, and 3% filed only the state return electronically.

Those respondents who did not file their forms electronically were asked why. Table 2 on the following page lists the main reasons respondents chose not to file electronically.

Table 2 Reasons For Not Filing Tax Returns Electronically	
Reason	*Percent*
Prefer to do it by paper and via mail	24%
Don't know enough about it	16%
Don't have software	12%
Distrust of technology	11%
Not offered by tax preparer/service	10%
Additional cost	8%
Process is too complicated	7%
Filing by paper seems just as fast	4%
Unaware of the option	4%
Don't need it as my returns are simple	3%
No Internet access	2%
Tax software costs too much	2%
Concern for security of financial information	2%

* Totals will exceed 100% as respondents were allowed to select more than one variable.

"What would you say were the main reasons you didn't file state/ federal tax return electronically."

Although no single reason for not filing electronically dominates the categories, lack of, or incorrect knowledge about the possibility of electronic filing may be the single reason more Marylanders do not file electronically. This "lack of knowledge" category includes:

- Don't know enough about it
- Don't have software/ software costs too much
- Distrust of technology/ concern for financial information
- Additional cost
- Process is too complicated
- Filing by paper seems just as fast
- Unaware of option

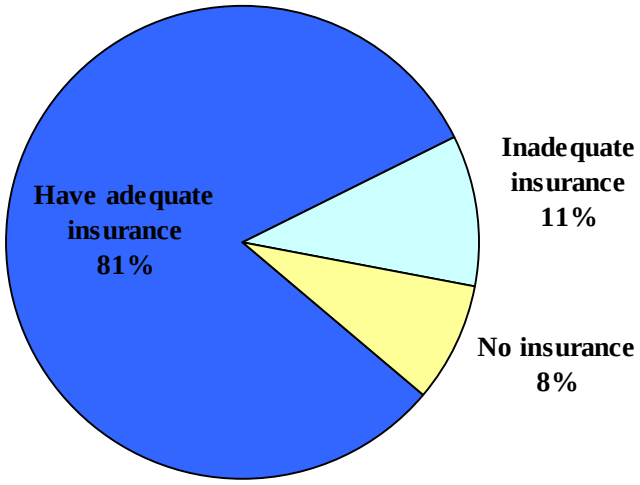
All of these categories account for 66% of the reasons why individuals did not file returns electronically. Awareness and education in these areas may help increase the number of Marylanders who file their tax returns electronically.

Additionally, only 32% of the survey respondents were aware that Maryland income tax payers could elect to have their payments debited directly from their checking accounts on a date they select.

HEALTH INSURANCE IN MARYLAND

Health care is very much on the minds of Marylanders, with survey respondents placing it just behind the state budget in terms of importance. This rating of concern was higher than any other domestic spending issue facing the legislature. There was considerable sentiment for higher spending for health care related services in the next year. As stated earlier in the report, 64% felt the need for higher spending on medical assistance to the poor, with the largest amount of support for spending increases (73%) going to prescription benefits for the elderly.

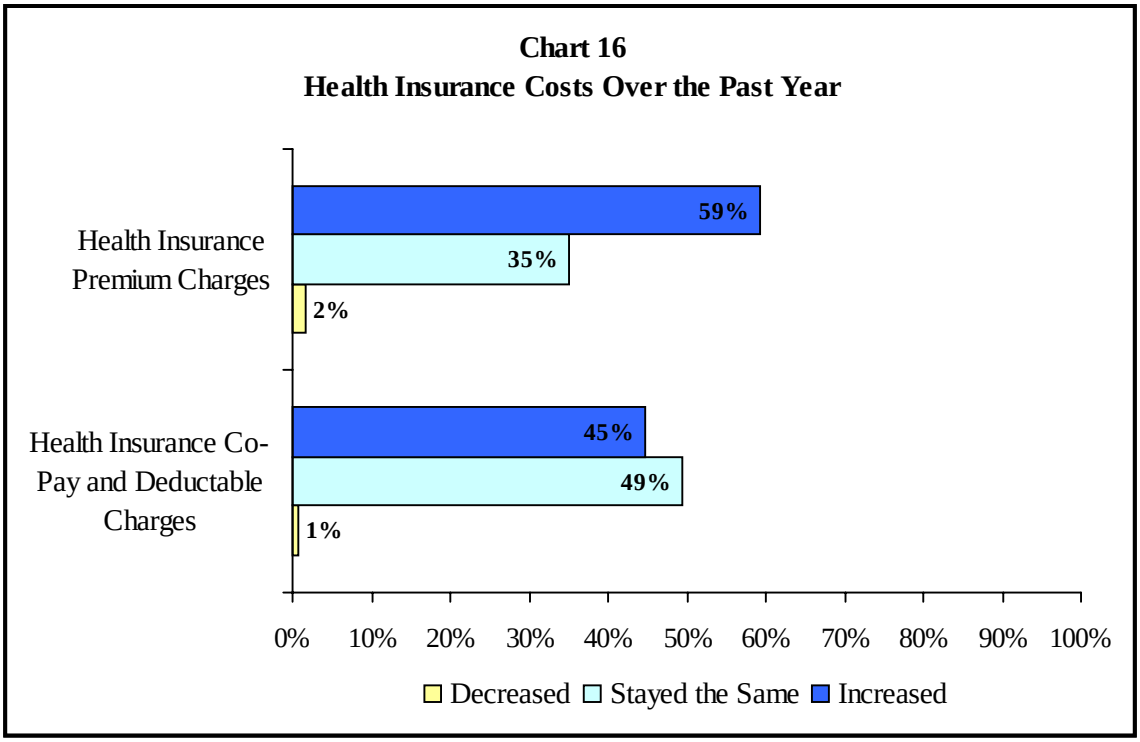
Chart 15
Current Health Insurance Situation



"Which of the following best describes your current health insurance situation?"

Lack of adequate health insurance continues to be a problem in Maryland, with 19% of the respondents indicating that they had inadequate or no health insurance. Less educated and low income respondents were 2 to 2 ½ times more likely to have no or inadequate health insurance.

Over the past 18 months, 7% of the respondents have lost health care insurance, 6% had their coverage reduced, and 1% stating their coverage was reduced and then lost. This additional 14% loss is still not quite the full picture. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the respondents indicated they, not their employer, paid the full cost of their health care insurance



"Has your share of the premiums for your insurance increased, decreased or stayed the same over the past 12 months?"	*"What about your co-payments and deductibles, have they increased, decreased or stayed the same over the past 12 months?"*

The survey reflects the continuing concern of the rising cost of health insurance with 59% of the respondents reporting increases in their health insurance premiums, and 45% indicating that their health insurance co-payments and deductibles increased.

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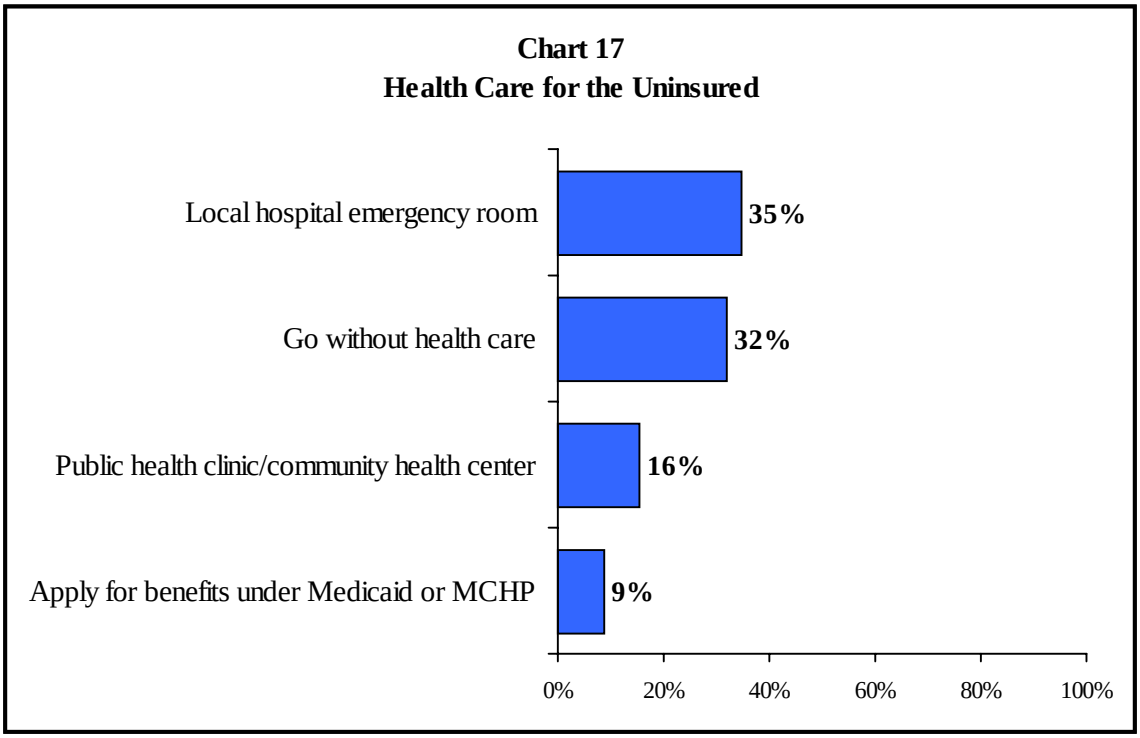
The health insurance environment in Maryland was believed to be adverse for families that do not have health insurance.



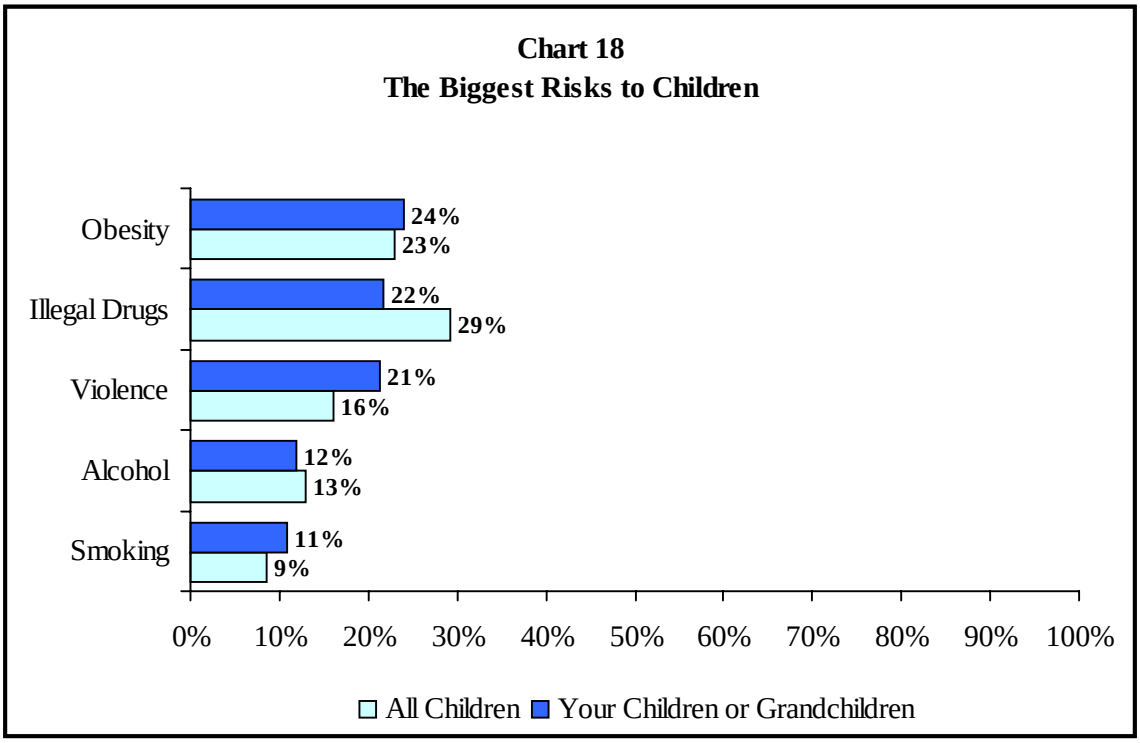
"How do you think that families without health insurance receive health care?"

When this question was asked of those respondents who stated they had no health insurance, surprisingly their responses were quite similar. Thirty-five percent (35%) said that the uninsured would use the local hospital emergency room, 32% stated the uninsured would go without health care at all, 16% stated the uninsured would go to a public health clinic, and 9% stated the uninsured would apply for Medicaid or MCHP benefits.

Attention should be given to the problem of people not seeking health care when losing insurance or not being able to afford health care. These families and individuals place themselves at great risk when they forego health care. Moreover, overcrowding at hospital emergency rooms poses further strain on the health care system.

OBESITY IN OUR CHILDREN

Obesity in children has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. Sixteen percent (16%) of children and teens ages 6 – 19 are overweight and an additional 15% are at risk of becoming overweight according the 1999-2002 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) data. This represents a threefold increase since 1980.[1] Among children ages 6 -11, the problem of obesity is most acute among Mexican-Americans (22% are obese) and Non-Hispanic Blacks (20% are obese). These compare to a 14% obesity rate among Non-Hispanic White children. Among adolescents ages 12 -19, Mexican-Americans (23% obesity rate) and Non-Hispanic Blacks (21% obesity rate) have the highest obesity rates.[2] Among Non-Hispanic White adolescents the obesity rate is 14%. [3]



"From the following list, which do you think is the biggest risk to the long-term health and quality of life for all the children in your community?"

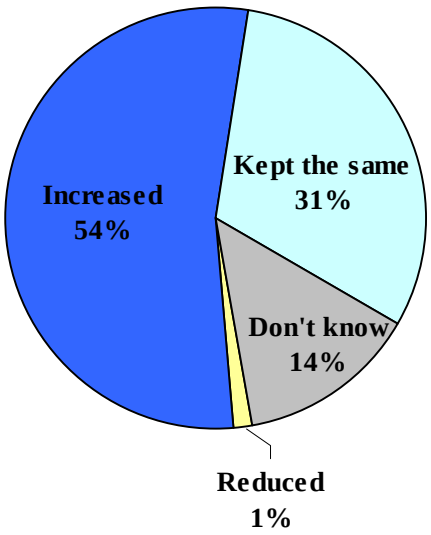
As shown in Chart 18, just under one-third (29%) of all respondents viewed illegal drugs as the most significant perceived risk to the long term health of children. Obesity followed close behind, with 23% of respondents selecting it as the biggest risk factor to the long term well being of children. Violence, alcohol, and smoking were identified as significant risks by 9 – 16% of respondents.

Perceptions of risk changed somewhat when people were asked to assess long-term health risks for their own children or grandchildren. Twenty-four percent (24%) of respondents with children or grandchildren under age 18 said obesity was the greatest long term risk to their children or grandchildren's health. Obesity was followed closely by illegal drugs (22%) and violence (21%). Alcohol ranked fourth with 16% saying it was the biggest risk to their children and grandchildren. Reflecting the overall decline in smoking, only 9% identified it as a risk for their children or grandchildren.

The results from this year closely mirror the results for this same question from last year. Any differences that do exist between the two surveys fall within the margin of error, the exception, however, is illegal drugs. Last year 40% of those with children believed illegal drugs were the biggest risk to their children or grandchildren, this year that number is down 18 points to 22%. There was also a smaller but significant change when asked about the risk of illegal drugs for children overall with 37% compared to 29% this year.

A decline in opportunities for physical activity for children has been partially blamed for the obesity crisis in children. As shown in Chart 19, a majority of respondents (54%) favor increasing the amount of physical education offered in schools.

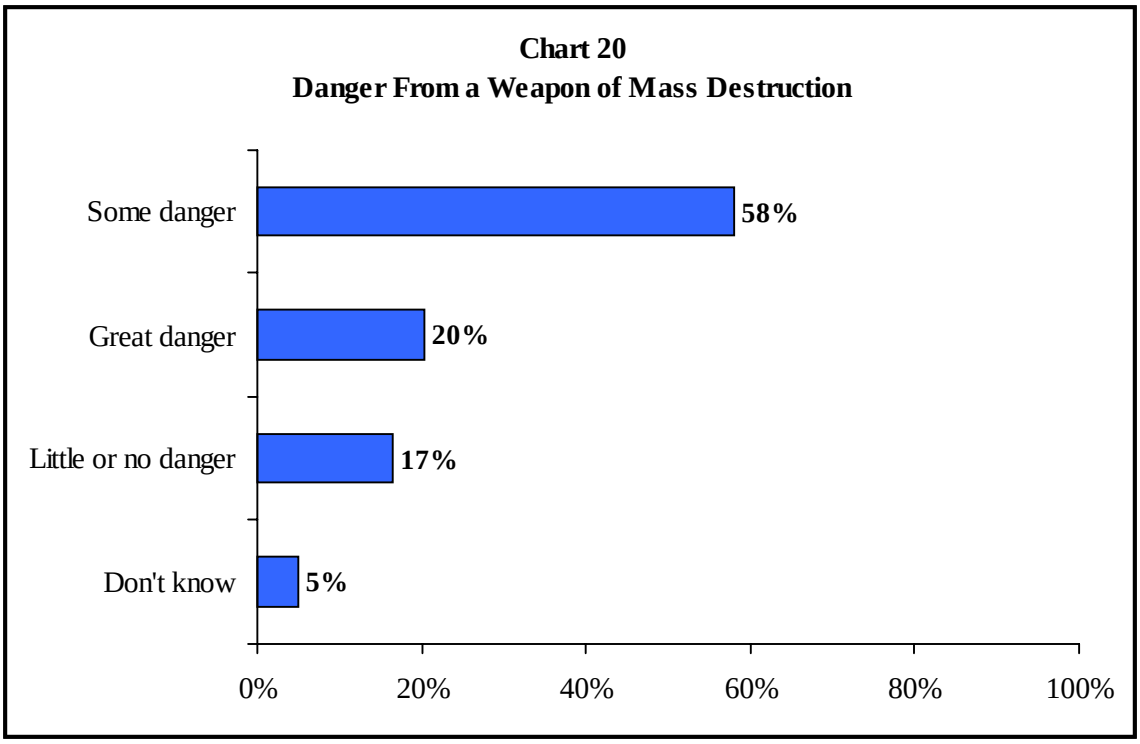
Chart 19
Time Allotted for Physical Education or Recess in Public Schools



"Do you think the amount of time allotted for physical education or recess in public schools in your community should be reduced, increased, or kept the same?"

TERRORISM

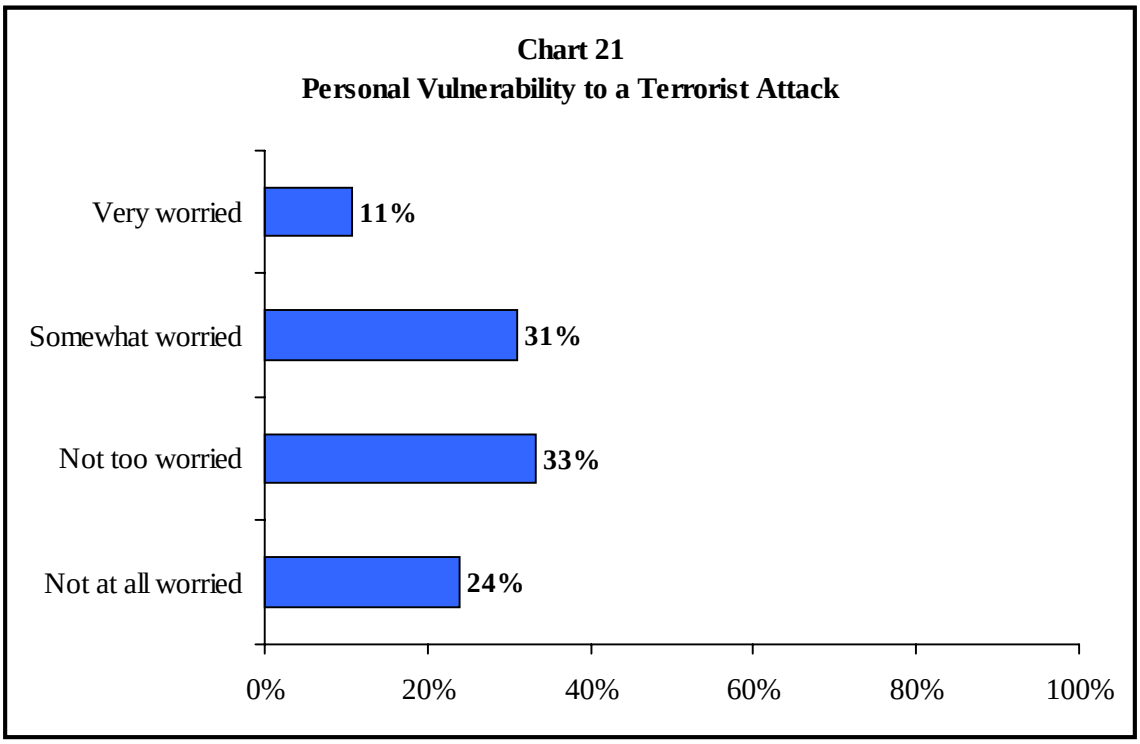
More than three years after September 11th there is a continued sense of vulnerability from terrorists attacking the United States using a weapon of mass destruction (WMD).



"There is growing public concern about the use of a weapon of mass destruction being used by terrorists in attacking this country. Which of the following comes closest to your view of the threat."

Seventy-eight percent (78%) of respondents believe that we are in at least some danger of a WMD attack. Fully one-fifth of those surveyed believe we are in "great" danger from such an attack

This highly generalized concern for a terrorist attack did not extend to a feeling of individual or personal vulnerability.

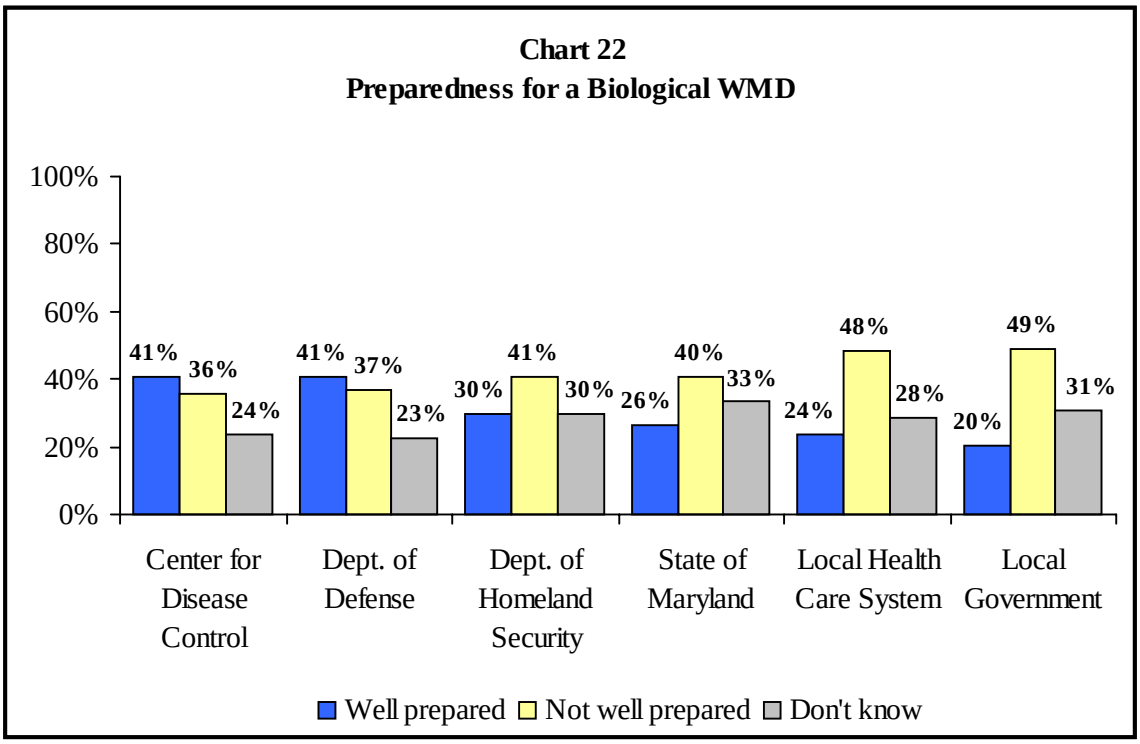


"All in all, how worried are you that you or someone in your family might become a victim of a terrorist attack?"

Whereas 78% of the respondents were worried that we are in danger of a WMD, only 42% of the respondents were either very worried, or somewhat worried that they or someone in their family might become a victim of a terrorist attack.

Despite this seeming respondent ambivalence, 42% of the respondents believe that Maryland should spend more for protection against terrorist attacks. Of those surveyed, 30% suggest that operationally, the Maryland State government should do more to prevent terrorist attacks.

Perhaps the most disturbing survey finding was public opinion about governmental preparedness in the event of a biological weapons attack.



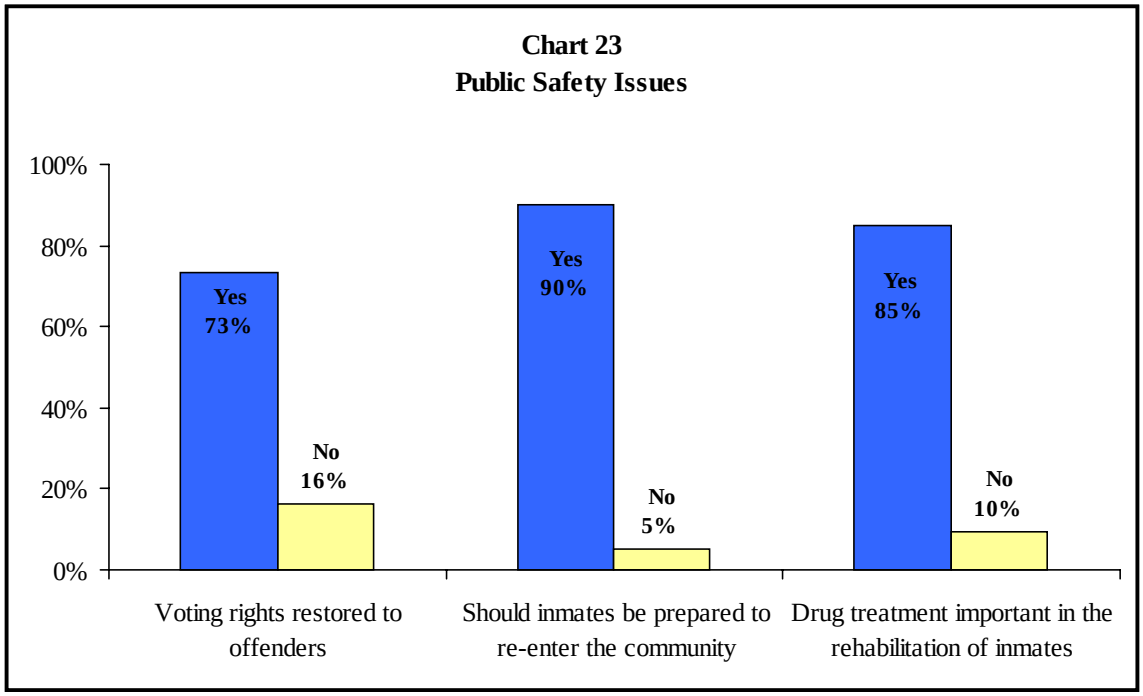
"If we were to experience a release of a biological weapon of mass destruction who would be prepared to protect us from the damage caused. From the following, tell me whether you think each is well prepared to deal with the damage or not well prepared."

Between 36% and 49% of the survey respondents did not feel various governmental agencies were well prepared to defend against or mitigate a bio-terrorist attack. No governmental agency received a majority of respondents feeling that they were well prepared for a biological attack. At the same time, the respondents also indicated a considerable lack of knowledge about bio-preparedness with between 23-33% of respondents indicating they did not know whether the various agencies were prepared to defend against a bio-terrorist attack.

The general population feels that Maryland should spend more and do more to prevent terrorist attacks. People generally do not have great confidence or a good understanding of how the federal, state, and local governments are going to protect them in the event of an attack, especially a bio-terrorist attack. Clearly there is a "communication gap" between Maryland citizens and their government about how a terrorist attack will be handled.

PUBLIC SAFETY (CORRECTIONS)

Although most Marylanders did not mention public safety, crime or corrections as one of their top concerns or policy issues, this does not mean that the citizens of Maryland do not hold strong opinions on subjects related to these issues.



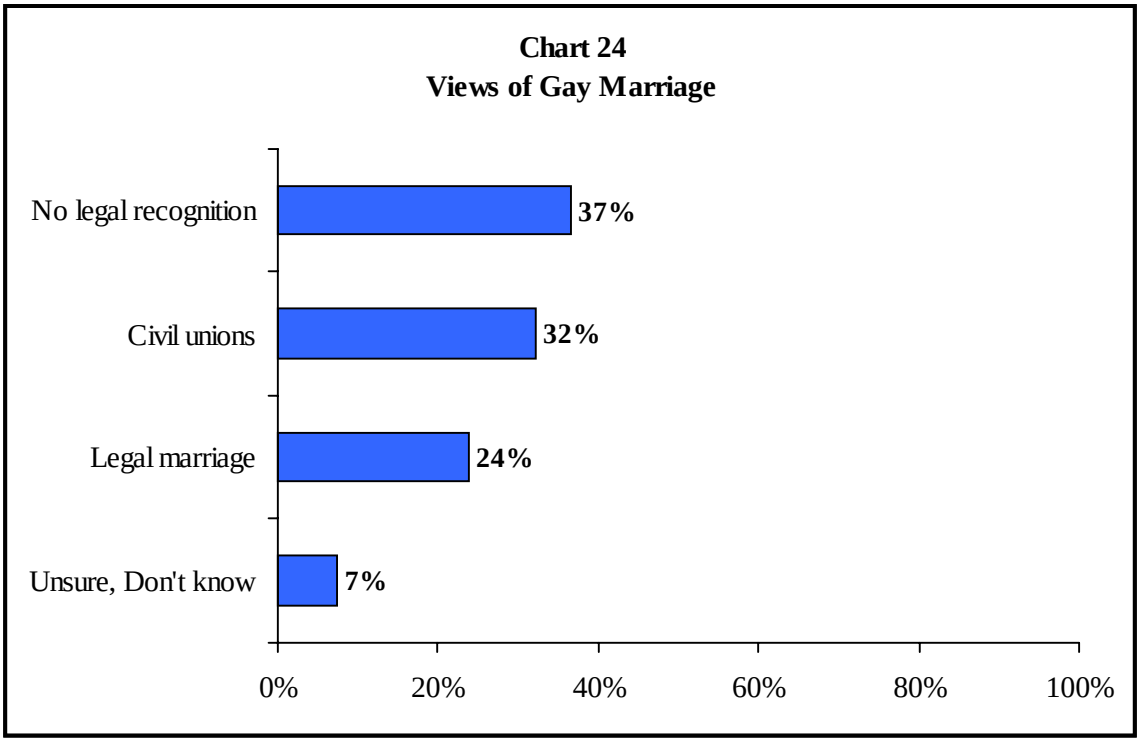
"Should voting rights be restored to those offenders who have completed their sentences"?	*"Do you believe that inmates who will eventually be released from prison should be prepared to re-enter the community?"*	*"Do you believe that drug treatment is an important component in the rehabilitation of inmates?"*

A rather large proportion of those surveyed felt that prison is an opportunity to improve the lives of and rehabilitate individuals who have been incarcerated. There is also very strong support for returning suffrage rights to offenders who have completed their sentence.

Interestingly enough when asked about spending priorities in Maryland (Table 1, page 5) these same respondents placed prisons and corrections at the bottom of the program areas listed. Among those surveyed there appears to be a disconnect between desired programmatic outcomes and budgetary priorities.

GAY MARRIAGE

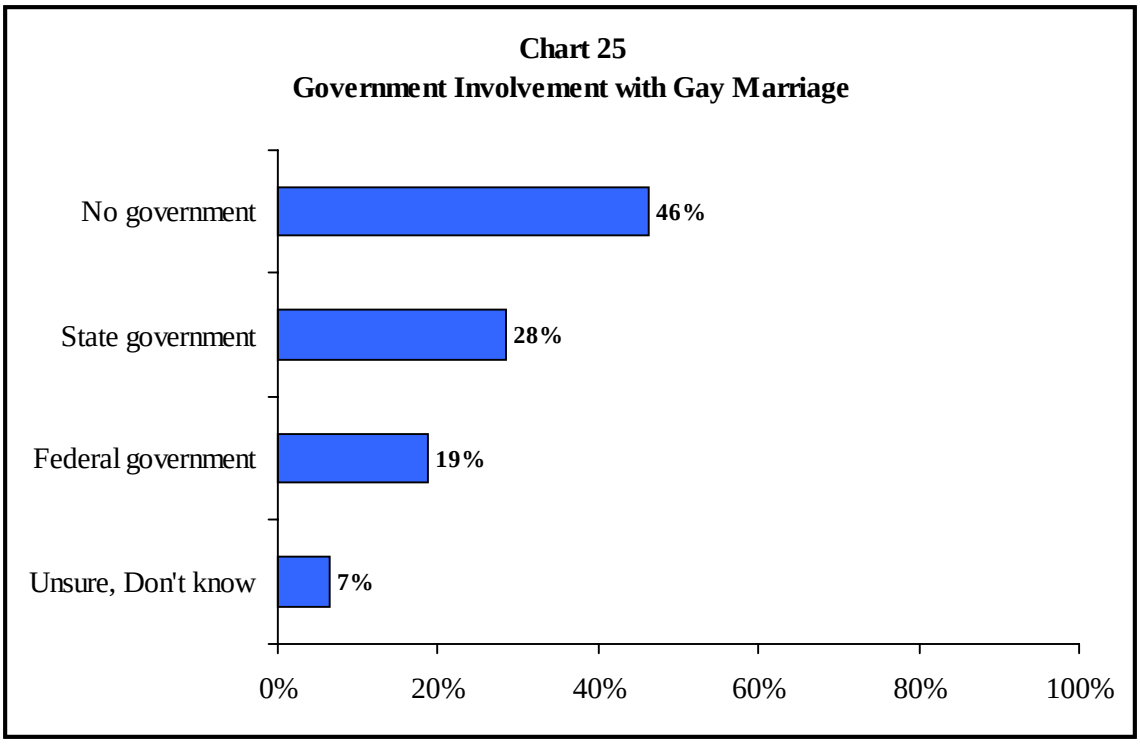
During the election in November 2004, a number of states placed (and the voters passed) referendums on the ballot on the issue of "Gay Marriage". This section tackles this issue as it was posed to Maryland citizens.



"Which of the following statements comes closest to your view on the issue of gay marriage…Gay couples should be allowed to legally marry. or, Gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not legally marry. or There should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship."

Although the largest percentage of respondents (37%) did not want any legal recognition of gay marriage, a majority of respondents (56%) held the view that some sort of recognized union would be permissible.

Survey participants were then asked if they thought the Federal or State government should address the issue by creating laws regarding gay marriage or civil unions. Respondents were also given the choice of selecting "no government at all". Chart 25 illustrates these results.



"Do you think any laws regarding marriages or civil unions between gay people should be determined by the federal government, by each state government, or not be addressed by any government at all?"

Somewhat surprisingly not quite 50% of the surveyed respondents felt that there should be "no government" involvement in this issue.

What makes this result even more interesting is the fact that when these same respondents were asked: "Would you support or oppose a referendum in Maryland that would legally define marriage as being between a man and a woman only?", 57% responded that they would support a referendum legally defining marriage as being between a man and a woman. Only 34% would oppose such a referendum, with 7% not being sure. Sensitivity around the issue of gay marriage and gay rights may have something to do with what appears to be mixed and conflicted data.

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 3 Survey Demographics			
Gender	Male	391	48%
	Female	418	52%
Race	White	560	69%
	Black	184	23%
	Hispanic	17	2%
	Other	38	5%
	Refused	10	1%
Education	< than High School	40	5%
	High School Grad/GED	211	26%
	Some College/Tech School	219	27%
	College Graduate	181	22%
	Graduate or Professional School	155	19%
Party	Democrat	379	47%
	Republican	219	27%
	Independent	99	12%
	Not Registered	70	9%
	Other	6	1%
Ideology	Liberal	155	19%
	Moderate	180	22%
	Conservative	159	20%
	Don't think in those terms	291	36%
Income	<$25K annual	137	17%
	$25K to $50K	163	20%
	$50K to $100K	255	32%
	>$100K	142	6%
Region	Baltimore City	95	12%
	Baltimore Metro	298	37%
	DC Metro	204	25%
	Western MD	82	10%
	Southern MD	62	8%
	Eastern Shore	71	9%
Age	21 years to 30 years	67	8%
	31 years to 45 years	215	27%
	46 years to 64 years	345	43%
	65 years and older	181	22%

ENDNOTES

[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Prevalence of Overweight Among Children and Adolescents: United States, 1999-2002. Retrieved January 14, 2005, from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/overwght99.htm

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

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