

Press Release: Oct. 28, 2009
 Center for the Study of Local Issues
 Anne Arundel Community College
 101 College Parkway, Arnold MD, 21012-1895
 Contact: Dan Nataf 410-777-2733

Anne Arundel County Survey Finds Residents Perceive Economy Improving

A survey of 577 Anne Arundel County residents conducted Oct. 19-22 by the students of the Center for the Study of Local Issues (CSLI) at Anne Arundel Community College found evidence that residents perceive the economic situation has improved somewhat from last spring.

The survey started with an open-ended question asking “What is the most important problem facing the residents of Anne Arundel County at the present time?”

Starting in March 2008, CSLI surveys first indicated an increasing level of concern for the economy, as the percentage citing it as the most important problem nearly tripled from 8 to 23 percent. By March 2009, the stock market was reaching its lowest point and public opinion duly reflected heightening concern as the economy was cited by nearly half (48 percent) of all respondents. This fall, the percentage citing the economy dropped considerably to 33 percent, below the figure reached one year ago (38 percent). Another indicator for economic concerns – taxes – rose slightly to 12 percent, the average for the period from October 2004 to the present.

Table 1: “Most Important Problem facing Residents” – Fall 2004 to Fall 2009¹

	Fall '04	Spring '05	Fall '05	Spring '06	Fall '06	Spring '07	Fall '07	Spring '08	Fall '08	Spring '09	Fall '09	Mean
Economy / lack of affordable housing	8	7	7	15	7	12	8	23	38	48	33	19
Taxes – too high	10	13	10	10	9	15	17	16	12	10	12	12
Growth / development	14	18	22	16	21	16	16	12	9	5	5	14
Education / school problems	12	16	12	13	16	12	12	12	10	8	7	12
Traffic congestion/ problems	17	9	14	9	12	11	12	7	6	4	5	10
Crime / drugs	6	5	6	11	11	9	10	6	4	6	8	7
Unsure/no answer	13	11	11	8	7	9	6	9	7	8	10	9
Other answer	20	21	18	18	17	16	19	15	14	11	21	17
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	101	100

Note: In this and other tables, totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

¹ Since spring 2007, surveys’ answer categories for “most important problem” have included “lack of affordable housing” for interviewers to check off. Previously, that answer to the open-ended question would have been categorized under “economy.” The running totals in Table 1 combine both answers into the single “economy” category. Similarly, crime includes those saying “crime” and “illegal drugs.”

Other Measures Confirm Perceptions of a Stabilizing Economy

Since March 2002, the CSLI semi-annual survey has asked a benchmark question about the economy: “How would you rate economic conditions in Anne Arundel County – ‘excellent,’ ‘good,’ ‘only fair’ or ‘poor?’ ”

As was the case last March, this October the question was extended and asked also about the state of Maryland and the country overall.

For Anne Arundel County, the historical percentage saying that the economy was a combined “excellent” or “good” has averaged 63 percent. As shown on Table 2 and Graph 1, there was a slight increase (2 percentage points) in the combined score for a total of 48 percent.

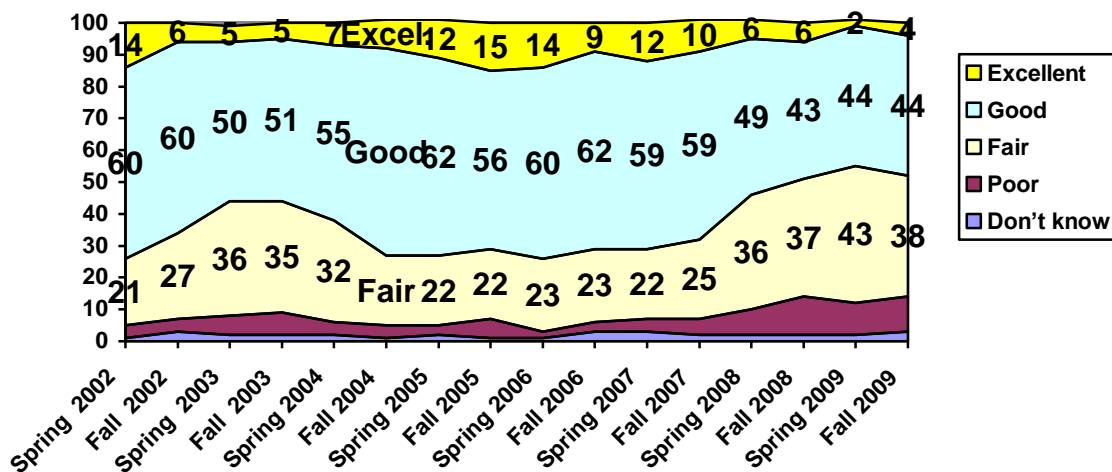
Dan Nataf, Ph.D., center director, noted that “this indicator has been declining since at least fall 2007. This October showed the first sign of stabilization and perhaps even a mild improvement in the public’s perception of the local economy.”

Table 2: Perceptions of County Economic Conditions

Condition	Spring 2004	Fall 2004	Spring 2005	Fall 2005	Spring 2006	Fall 2006	Spring 2007	Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Mean
Excellent + Good	62	74	74	71	74	71	71	69	55	49	46	48	63
Excellent	7	9	12	15	14	9	12	10	6	6	2	4	8
Good	55	65	62	56	60	62	59	59	49	43	44	44	55
Fair	32	22	22	22	23	23	22	25	36	37	43	38	29
Poor	4	4	3	6	2	3	4	5	8	12	10	11	6
Don't know	2	1	2	1	1	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
Total	100	101	101	100	100	100	100	101	101	100	101	100	100

Means were calculated using results starting from October 2002. Results prior to spring 2004 are not shown in the table above.

**Graph 1: Economic Conditions in Anne Arundel County
Spring 2002-Spring 2009**



Looking at the results for all three jurisdictions on Table 3, there were again signs of mild improvement or stabilization. As in spring, Maryland’s economy fared somewhere in between the county and nation, rising this fall from 27 to 30 percent (combined excellent/good). While the national combined score rose from 5 to 11, the most striking evidence of improving attitudes towards the economy was indicated in the sharp drop – from 63 to 48 percent – of those saying that the national economy was “poor.” “While there was no change in the hierarchy of positive attitudes, greatest toward the county and smallest regarding the country, there were some signs of improvement at all three levels,” Nataf commented.

Table 3: Perceptions of County, State and National Economies

Condition	County Spring '09	County Fall '09	State Spring '09	State Fall '09	Country Spring '09	Country Fall '09
Excellent+Good	46	48	27	30	5	11
Excellent	2	4	1	2	0	1
Good	44	44	26	28	5	10
Fair	43	38	49	45	30	39
Poor	10	11	22	21	63	48
Don't know	2	3	2	4	1	2
Total	101	100	100	100	99	100

Recent Gallup polling (Oct. 17-19) of national samples produced a positive (excellent plus good) rating of 10 percent and a “poor” score of 48 percent, virtually identical to the CSLI survey results for Oct. 19-22.

Nataf said that these results “show that perceptions of the country’s economy are nationalized and independent of perceptions of state and local economies. Residents perceive the Anne Arundel County economy to be four times healthier than that of the country overall and share perceptions of Americans nationwide of the state of the country’s economy.”

Since spring 2008, CSLI surveys have included a battery of questions focused on specific aspects of economic distress such as inflation, stock/retirement losses, unemployment, house foreclosure, housing affordability, the cost of transportation, and the like.

Respondents were asked: “Thinking about your personal circumstances, please tell me whether any of these economic conditions apply to you or your household.” Table 4 shows the results for the last four CSLI surveys.

Table 4: Economic Conditions Applying to Personal Circumstances (in percent)

Condition	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Fall 09-Spring '09
Significant losses in your stock or retirement accounts	n.a.	71	75	70	-5
Hard to afford cost of taxes*	47	58	59	59	0
Wages or salaries are not rising as fast as the cost of living	56	59	55	55	0
Hard to afford cost of utilities such as electricity or gas	61	50	53	42	-9
Delay in making a major purchase such as a home or car	n.a.	n.a.	51	46	-5
Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate	35	30	29	33	+4
Facing the possibility of unemployment	11	15	24	24	0
Hard to afford cost of transportation	40	32	21	17	-4
Unable to find affordable housing	21	11	12	13	+1
Facing the possibility of house foreclosure or loss	6	4	6	8	+2

* The exact wording of this item changed from spring 2008 to fall 2008, partly accounting for the change in percentages since that time.

Table 4 shows the evolution of the public's responses to this set of questions. In keeping with the thrust of other economic results, there were few changes from six months ago. Several indicators showed a lessening of adverse economic circumstances as the costs of utilities and transportation were both down. Moreover, there was a five-point decline in the percentage of those delaying a major purchase, along with a four-point decline in those experiencing significant losses in stocks or retirement accounts. "Generally, with the possible exception of medical expenses and housing, there were signs of stabilization or improvement," Nataf said.

The fall survey added a set of new questions, which asked respondents when they thought certain economic conditions would improve. In three cases, majorities identified the year 2012 as the timeframe to expect the stabilization of housing values, major reductions in the unemployment rate and the return to steady economic growth (see Table 5).

Table 5: When will Economic Conditions Improve? (in percent)

Condition	This year	Next year	Future year	Median year	Not sure, no answer
A stabilization of housing values	8	35	51	2012	7
A return to steady growth of the economy	5	32	59	2012	5
A major reduction in the unemployment rate	4	31	61	2012	4
A return to a better balance between revenues and expenditures for state and local government budgets	3	16	68	2014	13
A return to a better balance between revenues and expenditures for the federal government's budget	3	10	73	2015	14

Respondents were less optimistic regarding the timeframe for expecting government revenues and expenditures to get into “better balance.” This would be attained one year sooner for state and local government (2014) than for the federal government (2015). Among those saying a year beyond 2010, 20 percent for state and local and 33 percent for the federal government said a “better balance” would not be found. “Respondents are expecting to wait between three to five years prior to seeing significant economic improvements,” Nataf suggested.

Since March 2009, CSLI surveys have asked about residents’ confidence in “moves taken by the federal government in response to the financial crisis.” As seen on Table 6, signs of stabilization of perceptions were visible: very little change in confidence levels from last spring.

“Given the improvement in other areas, it was a bit surprising not to see a higher level of confidence among respondents. Apparently, the lack of confidence tracks with the sense that budgets are seriously out of balance” Nataf said. “Of those saying they were very confident, 25 percent expected the federal government to have a better balance by next year; only 8 percent of those who were not very confident gave the same time frame.”

Table 6: Confidence in Moves taken by the Federal Government

Level of Confidence	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009
Very confident	5	12	11
Somewhat confident	40	40	39
Not very confident	53	46	48
Unsure	3	2	1
Don’t know	0	0	1
Total	101	100	100

There was also a political dimension to confidence levels. While 48 percent of the entire sample said that they were not very confident in the moves taken by the federal government, partisan differences were very prominent. Among Democrats, only 31 percent were not very confident compared to the 68 percent of Republicans. Democrats were three times more likely (18 percent) to say that the federal budget would find a better balance by 2010 than were Republicans (6 percent). Those who approved of the job President Barack Obama is doing were twice as likely (14 percent) to point to 2010 as those who disapproved (7 percent). “Clearly, people filter perceptions through the lens of partisanship,” Nataf said.

Summary of Other Findings

A summary of other issues covered by the CSLI survey is presented below.

Right direction/wrong direction: There was a noticeable increase in the percentage saying that the county was moving in the right direction – 52 percent – up from 47 percent last spring and regaining the percentage found one year ago.

Perceptions of the future: Questions about conditions in 2020 were asked, including taxes, the economy, health care and the environment.

State budget cuts: Respondents generally thought that budget cuts offered by Gov. Martin O’Malley were either “about right” or “too big.” Few said that the cuts were “too small.”

Other budget issues: Freezing tuition at the University of Maryland and maintaining spending on public schools were favored; requiring school employees to take furlough days and moving teachers' pension obligations from the state to the local level were not.

O'Malley and budget cuts: Respondents offered a mixed picture of the job the governor has done balancing the state budget, with a plurality (42 percent) saying "okay job."

Crab licenses: A plurality (49 percent) supported the licenses of part-time crabbers.

Traffic cameras: A plurality (49 percent) favored the use of cameras both to catch and ticket those running red lights and those who are speeding near schools and construction sites.

Nonprofit organizations: Questions about name recognition, impressions and contributions to local nonprofit organizations were asked, with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Providence Center having the highest name recognition.

H1N1 flu: A small majority (52 percent) said that they would be "very likely" to get vaccinated again this illness if they knew they were eligible.

Most important problem faced by federal government: The economy, health care, war/defense and government budgets/spending were the most important problems cited.

Obama's job approval: 47 percent approved.

Which party do you trust? Democrats were somewhat more likely to be trusted (37 percent) "to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years" than the Republicans (28 percent) or neither party (27 percent).

Methodology: The survey polled a random sample of 577 county residents who were at least 18 years old. It was conducted Oct. 19-22, 2009, during evening hours. Phone numbers were derived from a database of listed numbers as well as computer chosen, randomly assigned numbers. There was about a 4 percent statistical margin of error for the overall sample; the error rate was higher for subgroups such as "Democrats." The dataset was weighted by gender and party to better represent the general population. College students were trained and used as telephone interviewers.

Contact Dan Nataf, Ph.D., center director, for additional comments or questions at 410-777-2733 and ddnataf@aacc.edu. Check the CSLI Web site for results from previous surveys: www2.aacc.edu/csli.

Other Findings

County – Right or Wrong Direction?

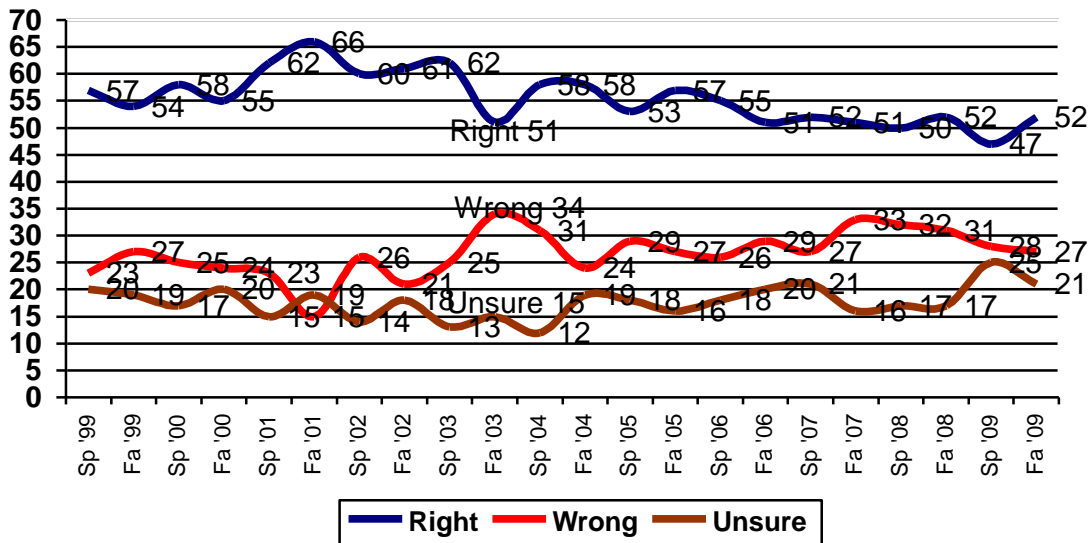
The survey included a CSLI benchmark question whose results are seen on Table 7: “Overall, would you say that the county is headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction?”

Graph 2 shows there was an increase in the percentage of those saying “right direction,” rising from 47 percent to 52 percent, the same level as one year ago. “This may be indicative that the bottoming out and possibly growing confidence in the economy has spurred some movement in these scores. The value for the wrong direction is basically unchanged, but the percentage of those unsure dropped,” said Nataf. “Sixty-six percent of those who rated the local economy as being excellent or good felt that the county was going in the right direction, while only 40 percent of those rating the economy as fair or poor agreed.”

Table 7: Anne Arundel County - Right vs. Wrong Direction

Response	Percent
Right direction	52
Wrong direction	27
Unsure	21
Total	100

Graph 2: County – Right or Wrong Direction?



Perceptions of the Future

The survey asked, “Thinking about this county’s future, please tell me whether you think the following things will be better, about the same or worse in 2020.”

As seen on Table 8, the greatest area of optimism lay with economic conditions, for which a plurality (47 percent) felt improvement was likely over the next decade. Fifty-four percent of this group perceived economic conditions in Anne Arundel County today as “good” or “excellent;” among those who felt that economic conditions would be worse in 2020, only 38 percent agreed conditions in the county today were “good” or “excellent.”

“Optimism about the future was clearly related to current income since 60 percent of those with incomes over \$75,000 felt that economic conditions would be better in 2020, while only 33 percent of those making under that amount concurred,” Nataf commented.

Table 8: Perceptions of Various Items in 2020 – Better, Same or Worse

	Better	About the same	Worse	Unsure (vol.)	No answer
Economic conditions	47	20	26	6	2
Growth and development	35	29	31	5	1
Access to health care	32	23	34	9	1
Public schools	29	29	37	4	1
Health care quality	29	32	32	6	1
Water quality of the Bay and tributaries	29	23	44	4	1
Air quality	24	32	40	3	1
Availability of fresh water	17	43	32	5	2
Crime	11	30	54	5	1
Local taxes	8	21	66	4	1

There was less optimism about some environmental issues such as the availability of fresh water and air quality. However, the least optimism was reserved for crime and local taxes, with majorities saying that conditions would be worse by 2020.

Currently subject to national debate, health care divided the public into nearly equal camps saying better, the same or worse. The question of access to health care polarized respondents to a greater degree than health care quality, since for the former only 23 percent said “the same” compared to 32 percent for the latter.

Perceptions of both health care quality and access were subject to ideological and partisan divisions. As seen on Table 9, the percentages of liberals projecting improvements in both aspects of health care were well over twice as large as the percentage of conservatives. While the differences between Democrats and Republicans were not nearly as large, they went in the same direction and were statistically significant.

Table 9: Health Care Issues by Ideology and Party

	Ideology			Party		
	Conservatives	Moderates	Liberals	Dem	Rep	Indep.
Health care quality – percent saying better	18	31	47	35	23	22
Health care access – percent saying better	21	35	56	41	24	30

“These ideological and partisan divisions show that perceptions of the future on this issue are sharply affected by the national dialog over health care reform. Liberals and Democrats are driving the reform movement at the national level and remain optimistic that their efforts will result in better outcomes over the long run,” Nataf observed.

State and County Budget Issues

The survey attempted to capture the public’s sentiments about budget cuts and priorities for state and local government. Last March, the CSLI survey found respondents favoring the same or more spending when individual areas of services were mentioned, but large majorities also favored cutting programs and not raising taxes. “Those results highlighted the conundrum of governing, as citizens typically favor more and better services, but tend to be highly resistant to tax increases to pay for them,” Nataf said.

This fall, the survey asked about a series of proposed budget cuts offered by Governor O’Malley. The public was asked whether the proposed cut was “about right, too big a cut or too small a cut.” The results are found on Table 10.

Table 10: Proposals to cut the State Budget

	About right	Too big	Too small	No answer
The proposal to cut \$210 million in state aid to localities in Maryland	32	41	8	19
The proposal to cut \$15 million in local aid to Anne Arundel County	31	47	9	13
The governor’s policy of making state employees take three to 10 days of unpaid leave	51	37	7	6
Laying off 200 state employees	38	45	7	9
Cutting a combined \$30 million in health-related funding	23	60	6	11

In four of five cases, the plurality answer was that a cut was “too big.” In the case of cuts to health-related funding, well over a majority (60 percent) said the cut was excessive. The governor’s furlough policy was the only item to see a majority saying the size of the cut was “about right.” In no case did the percentage saying “too small” rise above single digits.

“These results were not surprising since the public often disfavors specified cuts in services, even when it is against tax increases,” Nataf said. “The public tends to be parochial as well, since generalized cuts of state aid to localities are only seen as too big by 41 percent, while cuts to Anne Arundel County were seen as too big by 47 percent.”

Another section followed up on these budget-related items by asking respondents whether they supported or opposed various measures shown on Table 11.

Table 11: Economic Issues

Do you support or oppose the following related ideas?	Support	Oppose	Unsure	No answer
Maintaining the tuition freeze at the University of Maryland	79	15	5	1
Shifting the cost of teachers’ pensions to local governments	24	58	15	4
Maintaining the level of state funding for public schools	78	17	4	1
Requiring school employees to take several unpaid days off	36	59	4	1

Again the results were consistent with previous polling: items maintaining higher levels of spending were favored while cuts were opposed. This was especially the case for education-related funding, as over three-quarters of respondents favored maintaining a tuition freeze or maintaining the level of funding for public schools. Measures that might reduce the fiscal burden on the state by shifting the cost of teachers’ pensions to localities (supported by only 24 percent) or requiring school employees to take unpaid days off (supported by 36 percent) were not favored.

When asked whether Governor O’Malley was doing a “good,” “okay” or “poor” job in balancing the state budget, the public was mixed. While nearly three times as many respondents felt that he was doing a “poor” job rather than a “good” job (38 vs. 13 percent), the plurality felt he was doing an “okay” job (42 percent).

Looking only at those who felt the governor was doing a “poor” job, clearly ideological and partisan factors were influential. While a majority of conservatives felt the governor was doing a “poor” job, only 10 percent of liberals agreed. About one-fifth (21 percent) of Democrats felt the governor was doing a poor job, yet nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of Republicans concurred (see Table 12).

Table 12: Residents Rate Governor O’Malley’s Budget-Balancing Job

	O’Malley doing poor job %
Ideology	
Conservative	55
Moderate	33
Liberal	10
Party	
Democrat	21
Republican	62
Independent	38

“The average difference between conservatives and liberals on the various specific budget items focused on the size of cuts was only 6 percent. There was a 45 percentage point difference about whether O’Malley was doing a “poor” job. The average difference between Republicans and Democrats on whether certain actions were supported was only 7 percent; there was a 41 percentage point difference among the two groups about whether O’Malley was doing a “poor job.” It seems reasonable to say that perceptions of O’Malley were driven less by policy differences, but by competitive ideological and partisan differences,” Nataf observed.

Crabbing Licenses

A question asked, “Do you support or oppose revoking part-time crabbing licenses for those who don’t use them in order to allow state government to better manage the crab harvest?” The respondents were divided on the issue, with a plurality (49 percent) supporting revocation of licenses, 33 percent opposing and 19 percent saying unsure or not providing an answer.

Using Cameras to Ticket Drivers

With a growing legislative desire to permit local jurisdictions to use cameras to identify traffic offenders, the CSLI survey asked about the use of such cameras both for catching those who run red lights and also those who speed in construction and school zones (see Table 13). Respondents favored the use of cameras in both contexts, although no stance received a majority. Using cameras to catch red-light violations was more favorable to the sample than the use of cameras only for catching speeders.

Table 13: Using Cameras to Catch Red Light Offenders and Speeders

Position	Percentage
Favor the use of cameras in all cases	49
Favor the use of cameras only for red lights	16
Favor the use of cameras only for speeding	6
Oppose the use of cameras in general	28
No opinion/no answer	2
Total	101

Nonprofit Organizations

A section of the questionnaire asked whether individuals had heard of various local nonprofit organizations. If an affirmative answer was received, respondents were then asked to offer impressions of the organization (positive/neutral/negative) and whether they had contributed to the organization at any time over the last two years. Table 14 shows the results.

Table 14: Nonprofit Organizations: Name Recognition, Impression and Contributions

Organization	Heard of it		Positive/Negative/Neutral			Contributed over 2 years		
	Yes	No	1	2	3	Yes	No	Unsure
Opportunity Builders/OBI	11	88	44	10	46	13	85	2
The Providence Center	55	45	60	5	35	23	75	2
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	88	12	68	11	20	45	51	4
The Chrysalis House	25	75	63	4	33	16	81	3
Bello Machre	20	80	59	4	37	19	76	5
The “Riverkeeper” program	31	69	66	5	29	15	82	3

Only two organizations, Chesapeake Bay Foundation (88 percent) and Providence Center (55 percent) were known by majorities of respondents. In most cases, between one third and one fifth of the public had heard of these entities; while in the case of Opportunity Builders/OBI, only 11 percent had heard of this organization.

When those who had heard of an organization were asked their impressions, all of the organizations except Opportunity Builders received between 59 and 68 “positive” impression scores. Opportunity Builders was the only organization to receive less than a majority of positive impressions, mostly due to a higher than average “neutral” score (46 percent vs. 33 percent

average). No group had a majority of respondents indicating a contribution over the last two years, although Chesapeake Bay Foundation overshadowed all others by having 45 percent contributing compared to an average of only 22 percent. The median value was 18 percent.

H1N1 Flu

Three questions were asked about the H1N1 or “swine” flu. Virtually all respondents had heard of the flu (99 percent) and claimed to know the precautions to use to avoid its spread (98 percent). However, only a small majority (52 percent) said that they would be “very likely” to get vaccinated if they knew themselves to be eligible (12 percent were “somewhat likely” and 34 percent were “not very likely”).

National Issues

Most Important Problem Facing National Government

The survey included an open-ended question asking, “Thinking about all the problems facing the federal government, which concerns you the most?”

Table 15: Most Important Problem - Federal

Item	Percentage
Economy/unemployment	26
Health care	18
Wars/defense/terrorism	14
Budget/overspending	9
Deficit	8
Other	25
Total	100

As shown on Table 15, economic issues predominated over others. The economy was generally mentioned by over one-fifth of all respondents; another 5 percent mentioned unemployment. Government spending issues were also important with the budget/overspending and the federal budget deficit mentioned by a combined 17 percent. Health care was also a high priority concern at 18 percent. Foreign affairs (wars in Afghanistan/Iraq) and “defense/homeland security/terrorism” received a combined 14 percent.

A wide variety of other concerns were also conveyed including immigration, housing, individual rights, taxes, socialism, party bickering, leadership failures, Obama and Congress receiving up to 2 percent each.

President Obama – Job Approval

Since fall 2006, CSLI polls have closely tracked national trends as indicated by the Gallup poll. One year ago, the CSLI survey showed that only 24 percent had a favorable view of President George W. Bush’s performance; Gallup polls in October 2008 registered a 25 percent favorable figure.

With the change to the new administration, the job approval question turned to public approval of the job done by Obama. As seen on Table 16 and Graph 3, Obama’s initial

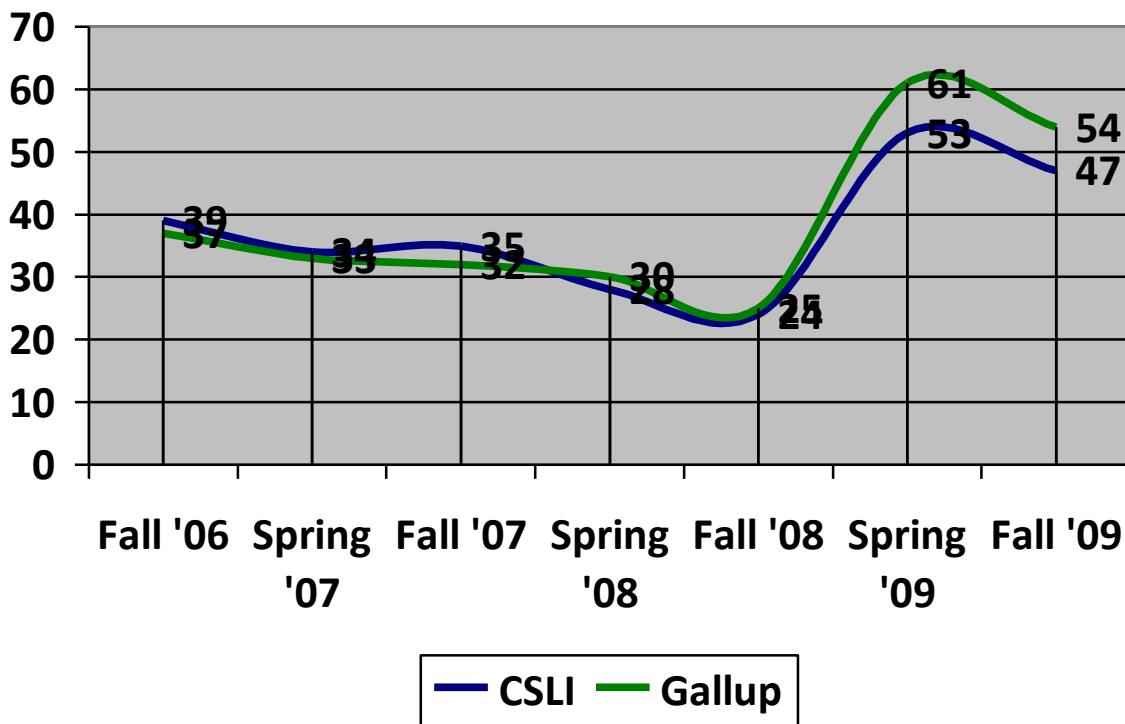
“honeymoon” period last March showed a job approval score twice that received by his predecessor last October. However, even then the Anne Arundel County public was somewhat less supportive than the American public overall, with the local job approval score at 53 percent compared to 61 percent according to the Gallup daily poll taken at that time.

This fall, Gallup showed his job approval score at 54 percent for Oct. 20-22. The CSLI survey indicated a job approval value of 47 percent. Thus, Obama has not been as popular within Anne Arundel County as he has been in the country as a whole – but the spread between Gallup and CSLI has held virtually unchanged.

Table 16: Job Approval for Presidents Bush and Obama

Issue	Fall 2005	Spring 2006	Fall 2006	Spring 2007	Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009
Approve	45	37	39	34	35	28	24	53	47
Disapprove	48	54	55	58	57	62	69	31	42
No answer	7	8	7	7	9	10	8	16	11
Total	100	99	101	99	101	100	101	100	100

Graph 3: Presidential Job Approval – CSLI and Selected Gallup 2006-2009



As seen on Table 17, Obama’s popularity among Democrats declines a bit from last spring, from 79 to 72 percent approval – a 7 point drop. He also experienced a similar drop of 8 points among Republicans. His “approval” score was almost unchanged among unaffiliated respondents, although his “disapproval” score rose 8 points as those who had “no opinion” declined by 7 points.

Table 17: Presidential Job Approval by Partisan Affiliation

	Overall Obama		Democrats		Republicans		Unaffiliated	
	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall
Approve	53	47	79	72	25	17	53	54
Disapprove	31	42	11	19	55	72	30	38
No opinion	16	11	11	9	20	11	16	9
Total	100	100	101	101	100	100	99	101

The survey asked respondents to recall their vote in November 2008. Not surprisingly, 88 percent of those claiming to have voted for Obama signaled their continued approval of his job performance compared to only 13 percent of those who voted for McCain. “These findings show that Obama has managed to maintain a high level of support among his original backers despite some decline. By comparison, near the end of Bush’s term in October 2008, a plurality (48 percent) of Republicans disapproved of his job performance,” Nataf said.

Trust in Political Parties

Both last spring as well as this fall, the CSLI survey asked which party “do you trust to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years.” Table 18 compares the results for the two periods and shows declines for both parties. The percentage offering “neither” rose from 20 to 27 percent. “It is possible that battles in Congress over strategies for coping with the economic crisis and health care reform have taken a toll, effectively reducing support for either party,” Nataf suggested.

Table 18: Which Party do you Trust?

	Trust in 2009	
	Spring	Fall
Democrats	42	37
Republicans	30	28
Neither	20	27
No opinion	8	6
Total	100	100

Methodology

The survey polled a random sample of 577 county residents who were at least 18 years old. It was conducted Oct. 19-22, 2009, during evening hours. Phone numbers were derived from a database of listed numbers as well as computer chosen, randomly assigned numbers. There was about a 4 percent statistical margin of error for the overall sample; the error rate was higher for subgroups such as “Democrats.” The dataset was weighted by gender and political party to better represent the general population. College students were trained and used as telephone interviewers.

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CSLI Semiannual Survey – Fall 2009

1. What do you think is the most important problem facing the residents of Anne Arundel County at the present time? (DON'T READ THE LIST! Have them *volunteer* an answer)

Problem	Percentage
Crime	7
Terrorism	0
Drugs (illegal drugs, use or sale)	1
Growth/overpopulation- too much development	5
Traffic congestion/transportation problems	5
Education, problems with schools	7
Taxes – too high	12
Inefficient government, wasteful spending	1
Corruption in government/politicians are bad	1
Environment (e.g., air or water pollution, saving the Bay)	6
Economy – (e.g., no jobs, high cost of living, business closing or losses)	31
Lack of affordable housing	2
Other answer (write in:	13
Unsure/No Answer	10

2. Overall, would you say that the County is headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction?

- (1) **Right** direction 52%
- (2) **Wrong** direction 27%
- (0) **Unsure** or don't know 21%

3. Next I would like to know how you would rate economic conditions in Anne Arundel County, in Maryland, and in the United States generally. First how would you rate economic conditions in Anne Arundel COUNTY -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

- (1) Excellent 4% (2) Good 44% (3) Only Fair 38% (4) Poor 11% (0) No Answer 3%

3.1 How about economic conditions in Maryland overall?

- (1) Excellent 2% (2) Good 28% (3) Only Fair 45% (4) Poor 21% (0) No Answer 4%

3.2 How about economic conditions in the United States generally?

- (1) Excellent 1% (2) Good 11% (3) Only Fair 39% (4) Poor 48% (0) No Answer 2%

4. Thinking about your personal circumstances, please tell me whether any of these economic conditions apply to you or your household.

	Applies	Doesn't apply	Unsure, no answer
4.1 Wages or salaries are not rising as fast as the cost of living	55	42	3
4.2 Facing the possibility of unemployment	24	73	3
4.3 Significant losses in your stock or retirement accounts	70	29	2
4.4 Facing the possibility of house foreclosure or loss	8	91	2
4.5 Unable to find affordable housing	13	84	3
4.6 Hard to afford cost of transportation	17	80	3
4.7 Hard to afford cost of utilities such as electricity or gas	42	57	1
4.8 Delay in making a major purchase such as a home or car	46	52	3
4.9 Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate	33	64	3
4.10 Taxes are too high relative to what is received from government services such as education, roads and safety.	59	37	4

5.0 Thinking about this County's future, please tell me whether you think the following things will be better, about the same or worse in 2020.

	Better	About the same	Worse	Unsure (vol.)	No answer
5.1 Local taxes	8	21	66	4	1
5.2 Crime	11	30	54	5	1
5.3 Public schools	29	29	37	4	1
5.4 Access to health care	32	23	34	9	1
5.5 Health care quality	29	32	32	6	1
5.6 Economic conditions	47	20	26	6	2
5.7 Growth and development	35	29	31	5	1
5.8 Water quality of the Bay and tributaries	29	23	44	4	1
5.9 Air quality	24	32	40	3	1
5.10 Availability of fresh water	17	43	32	5	2

6. Governor Martin O'Malley has proposed several measures to try to deal with state budget deficits. When I mention a budget cutting measure, tell me whether it was "about right" or was it too big a cut or too small.

	About right	Too big	Too small	No answer
6.1 The proposal to cut \$210 million in state-aid to localities in Maryland	32	41	8	19
6.2 The proposal to cut \$15 million in local aid to Anne Arundel County	31	47	9	13
6.3 The governor's policy of making state employees take 3 to 10 days of unpaid leave.	51	37	7	6
6.4 Laying off 200 state employees	38	45	7	9
6.5 Cutting a combined \$30 million in health related funding	23	60	6	11



Do you support or oppose the following related ideas?

	Support	Oppose	Unsure	No answer
6.6 Maintaining the tuition freeze at the University of Maryland	79	15	5	1
6.7 Shifting the cost of teachers' pensions to local governments	24	58	15	4
6.8 Maintaining the level of state funding for public schools	78	17	4	1
6.9 Requiring school employees to take several unpaid days off	36	59	4	1

6.10 Overall, would you say that Governor O'Malley has done a good job, an okay job, or a poor job in balancing the state budget?

(1) Good job 13% (2) Okay job 42% (3) Poor job 38% (4) Unsure 7% (0) No answer 1%

6.11 Do you support or oppose revoking part-time crabbing licenses for those who don't use them in order to allow state government to better manage the crab harvest?

(1) Support 49% (2) Oppose 33% (3) Unsure 14% (0) No answer 5%

6.12 As you may know, cameras are already being used to catch and ticket drivers who run red lights. Now there is consideration of using cameras to catch and ticket drivers who speed near schools or construction areas. Which of the following best represents your views on this issue?

- (1) Favor the use of cameras in all cases 49%
- (2) Favor the use of cameras only for red lights 16%
- (3) Favor the use of cameras only for speeding 6%
- (4) Oppose the use of cameras in general 28%
- (0) No opinion/no answer 2%

7.0 The following questions have to do with local non-profit organizations. For each, I will ask you if you have heard of it, whether you have a positive, negative or neutral impression, and whether you have made a cash or in kind contribution over the last two years.

	Heard of it		Positive/Negative/Neutral			Contributed over 2 years		
	Yes	No (if no skip to next)	1	2	3	Yes	No	Unsure
7.1 Opportunity Builders/OBI	11	88	44	10	46	13	85	2
7.2 The Providence Center	55	45	60	5	35	23	75	2
7.3 Chesapeake Bay Foundation	88	12	68	11	20	45	51	4
7.4 The Chrysalis House	25	75	63	4	33	16	81	3
7.5 Bello Machre	20	80	59	4	37	19	76	5
7.6 The "Riverkeeper" program	31	69	66	5	29	15	82	3

8. Have you heard about the H1N1 influenza also known as the “swine flu?”

- (1) Yes 99%
- (2) No 1%
- (0) N.A. 0%

8.1 Are you aware of precautions that should be taken to avoid the spread of this illness, such as using hand sanitizers or staying home when symptoms appear?

- (1) Yes 98%
- (2) No 2%
- (0) N.A. 0%

8.2 If you know you are eligible to receive a vaccination against this flu, how likely are you to get vaccinated - very likely, somewhat likely, or not very likely?

- (1) Very likely 52%
- (2) Somewhat likely 12%
- (3) Not very likely 34%
- (0) N.A. 2%

9. Thinking about the moves taken by the federal government in response to the economic crisis, do you feel very confident, somewhat confident, or not very confident that these measures will be effective?

- (1) Very confident 11%
- (2) Somewhat confident 39%
- (3) Not very confident 48%
- (4) Unsure 1%
- (0) No answer 1%

10. Thinking about the economic situation facing our economy, when do you think the following will occur – this year, next year or some future year? (If Respondent says “future year” ask “which year?”)

	This year	Next year	Future Year	Median year	Not sure, no answer
10.1 A major reduction in the unemployment rate	4	31	61	2012	4
10.2 A return to steady growth of the economy	5	32	59	2012	5
10.3 A stabilization of housing values	8	35	51	2012	7
10.4 A return to a better balance between revenues and expenditures for state and local government budgets	3	16	68	2014	13
10.5 A return to a better balance between revenues and expenditures for the federal government’s budget	3	10	73	2015	14

11. Thinking about all the problems facing the federal government, which concerns you the most?

Item	Percentage
Economy	21
Healthcare	18
Wars/defense/terrorism	14
Budget/overspending	9
Deficit	8
Unemployment	5

12. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

(1) Approve 47% (2) Disapprove 42% (0) Don't know, unsure 11%

12.1 If you voted in the 2008 presidential elections, did you vote for Democrat Barack Obama, Republican John McCain, someone else, or did you not vote?

(1) Barack Obama 40%
 (2) John McCain 41%
 (3) Someone else 5%
 (4) Didn't Vote 8%
 (0) Not sure or no answer 6%

13. Overall, which party, the (Democrats) or the (Republicans), do you trust to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years?

(1) Democrats 37%
 (2) Republicans 28%
 (3) Neither (volunteered) 27%
 (4) Other (volunteered) 2%
 (0) No answer 6%

The last few questions help us better understand our respondents. Please be assured that your responses are confidential and anonymous.

14. With which political party, if any, are you registered?

(1) Democratic 42%	4) None (NOT REGISTERED TO VOTE) 4%
(2) Republican 38%	(5) Other (e.g., Green Party) 0%
(3) Independent or undeclared 15%	(0) No Answer 2%

15. Overall, which of the following best describes your political beliefs: Conservative, Moderate or Liberal?

(1) Conservative 35% (2) Moderate 45% (3) Liberal 15% (0) Other, No Answer 5%

16. What is your age?

Range	Percentage
18-30	7
31-40	12
41-50	28
51-60	19
61-65	12
65+	21

17. I am going to read some categories relating to education. Please stop me when I reach the category in which the highest level of your formal education falls.

(1) less than a high school diploma 2%	(5) Completed college with a bachelor's degree 24%
(2) a high school diploma 12%	(6) post graduate work 24%
(3) some college but less than a 2 year degree 20%	(7) Other vocational or technical training 3%
(4) Completed at least a 2 year associate college degree but without a bachelor's degree 13%	(0) No Answer 2%

18. I am going to read some categories relating to income. Please stop me when I reach the category in which your household income falls.

(1) Less than \$30,000 7%
 (2) \$30,000 to \$50,000 12%
 (3) \$50,001 to \$75,000 16%
 (4) \$75,001-\$100,000 19%
 (5) \$100,001-\$150,000 18%
 (6) Over \$150,000 14%
 (0) No Answer 14%

19. Stop me when I reach the employment category that best describes your situation?

Retired	32
Self employed	14
Employed full time for a company in the private sector	21
Employed full time for government in a non-defense related activity such as education, public works or public safety	9
Employed full time for government in a defense related activity	7
Employed in a private non-profit organization	2
Employed part time	5
Student	1
Unemployed and seeking a job	5
Unemployed and not seeking a job	2
No answer	2

20. Regarding race, how would you describe yourself?

- (1) White 88%
- (2) Black or African American 6%
- (3) Hispanic or Latino 1%
- (4) Asian 0%
- (5) Other 2%
- (0) No Answer 3%

21. Regarding religion, how would you describe yourself?

- (1) None 5%
- (2) Non-practicing 9%
- (3) Evangelical or born again Christian (possibly Baptist, Pentecostal) 13%
- (4) Catholic 28%
- (5) Jewish 1%
- (6) Protestant (possibly Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterian, Anglican, Episcopalian) 23%
- (7) Some other Christian 8%
- (8) A “spiritual person” not associated with an organized religion 4%
- (9) Other 4%
- (0) No Answer 3%

22. What is your current marital status?

- (1) Single 14%
- (2) Married 69%
- (3) Separated/divorced 8%
- (4) Widowed 8%
- (5) Other 1%
- (0) No answer 1%

23. I have one last request: In an attempt to provide students with more opportunities to survey the public, the Center is asking respondents if they would like to be contacted no more than once a month by email to participate in short surveys taking no more than a couple of minutes to complete. Can we count on your help?

(1) Yes 33%

(2) No 66%

23.1 IF YES: What email address shall we use to contact you?

(CLEAR SPELLING/HANDWRITING PLEASE!)

SAY: That concludes our survey, thanks for participating.

Once the respondent hangs up, make sure to enter GENDER and ZIP CODE

24. Gender of respondent to whom you were speaking: (1) Male 48% (2) Female 52%

25. Zip code

Zipcode	Percent
20401	.2
20711	.9
20724	2.1
20733	.8
20751	.5
20758	.1
20764	.5
20776	.9
20778	.8
21012	6.9
21021	.3
21032	2.9
21035	2.2
21037	3.9
21043	.3
21049	.1
21054	2.2
21060	3.6

21061	9.7
21076	.6
21090	1.8
21106	.3
21107	.2
21108	4.3
21113	4.4
21114	5.9
21122	10.3
21140	.9
21144	3.3
21146	6.4
21149	.1
21226	.9
21401	8.3
21402	.3
21403	7.2
21404	.1
21405	.1
21407	.2
21409	5.8
Total	100.0