

Press Release: March 16, 2011
Center for the Study of Local Issues
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Anne Arundel County Survey Finds Economy Still Dominant Concern

A survey of 537 Anne Arundel County residents conducted March 7-10 by students assisting the Center for the Study of Local Issues (CSLI) at Anne Arundel Community College found the public to be focused on the economy above all other issues.

Respondents were asked, “What is the most important problem facing the residents of Anne Arundel County at the present time?” Thirty-five percent mentioned the economy – jobs, inflation, business closings or losses.

Starting in March 2008, CSLI surveys have found 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 October of that year. Concern peaked in March 2009, with the economy cited by nearly half (48 percent) of all respondents. Over the last 12 months, the percentage citing the economy has held steady at around 35-36 percent (see Table 1). “The concern over the economy was accentuated by frequent mention of rising gas prices. This additional recent factor may have kept the percentage mentioning the economy higher than it would have been otherwise,” said Dan Nataf, Ph.D., center director.

When the public was asked whether it was “hard to afford the cost of transportation,” the percentage citing this jumped from 24 to 41 percent during the six months since the last survey. “This again points to the strong contribution of rising gasoline prices to our respondents’ general assessment of the economy.”

Table 1: “Most Important Problem facing Residents” – Spring 2006 to Spring 2011¹

	Spring '06	Fall '06	Spring '07	Fall '07	Spring '08	Fall '08	Spring '09	Fall '09	Spring '10	Fall '10	Spring '11	Mean
Economy	15	7	12	8	23	38	48	33	36	36	35	26
Taxes – too high	10	9	15	17	16	12	10	12	11	13	11	12
Growth / development	16	21	16	16	12	9	5	5	5	2	4	10
Education / school problems	13	16	12	12	12	10	8	7	8	9	10	11
Traffic congestion/ problems	9	12	11	12	7	6	4	5	6	6	3	7
Crime / drugs	11	11	9	10	6	4	6	8	6	6	6	8
Unsure/no answer	8	7	9	6	9	7	8	10	10	8	12	9
Other answer	18	17	16	19	15	14	11	21	17	21	19	17
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	101	99	101	100	100

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

¹ From spring 2007 to spring 2010, 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” a practice which was resumed in fall 2010. The running totals in Table 1 combine both answers into the single “economy” category. Similarly, crime includes those saying “crime” and “illegal drugs.”

Another indicator of economic concerns – taxes – dropped a bit from 13 percent last fall to 11 percent in March, slightly below the 12 percent average for the period from March 2006 to the present. Other issue areas that have historically been in double digits such as growth and education have often fallen into the single digits.

Additional economic results can be found after the summary of other findings

Summary of Other Findings

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

Perceptions of the economy: A range of questions about perceptions of economic conditions and specific experiences relevant to the economy were included. Many of the indicators experienced only small changes as examined later in this article.

Right direction/wrong direction: There was little change from last fall in the percentage of those saying that the county was moving in the right direction (from 49 percent to 50 percent).

Economic challenge facing the county: Nearly one-fifth of the sample (18 percent) mentioned ‘balancing the budget/debt/reduced spending or inadequate revenue’ as the biggest economic challenge facing the county over the next decade. A majority (51 percent) felt somewhat or very confident that the county will effectively deal with whatever issue a respondent mentioned.

Decrease in services due to governmental belt-tightening: About one quarter (26 percent) of the sample had observed any decreases in services or programs due to budget problems of state or local government.

State/county legislation – support or oppose: A majority supported the following state proposals – imposing an additional fine of up to \$1,500 on drivers caught drunk driving; permitting the use of off-shore wind power near Ocean City; increasing the alcohol tax; permitting the purchase of marijuana for medical purposes; taking away drivers’ licenses from those who refuse to pay taxes; and, increasing the use of cameras to ticket those running red lights. The sample was evenly divided on same sex marriage and somewhat opposed to making preparations to implement health care reform. About one-third or fewer favored the following state and county proposals, limiting the use of binding arbitration when the county negotiates with public safety unions; increasing the county income tax to the maximum allowed by law to avoid cuts in essential services; allowing the children of illegal immigrants to pay in-state tuition for college; increasing university tuition to maintain the quality of higher education; reducing the pension and retiree health benefits of state workers; promising state workers no furlough days and providing them with a \$750 bonus; and, increasing the gasoline tax to bolster the transportation trust fund.

Public attention to governor, president, county council: 41 percent watched, listened to or read reports about Governor Martin O’Malley’s inaugural speech or his state of the state speech; 72 percent watched, listened to or read reports about President Barack Obama’s state of the union speech; 19 percent said they had watched county council hearings on cable television.

Estimating government budgets: Respondents were asked to provide their “best guess” regarding the amount of the federal, state and county governments’ budgets. Only 22 percent of those offering an estimate (51 percent of the sample) guessed the range for the federal budget (\$3-4.99 trillion); for the state budget, 13 percent of the 31 percent presenting an estimate offered a value even using a broad range of between \$11 to \$40 billion; and, 14 percent of the 31 percent offering an estimate were within the \$1 to \$2 billion range for the county budget.

Obama’s job approval: 47 percent approved, up from 42 percent last fall.

Which party do you trust? The percentage favoring Democrats was unchanged from last fall (34 percent). The Republicans had been favored by a plurality last fall (37 percent) but were now only favored by 32 percent. The percentage saying ‘neither’ increased from 21 to 29 percent.

Methodology: The survey polled a random sample of 537 county residents who were at least 18 years old. It was conducted March 7-10, 2011, during evening hours. Phone numbers were derived from a database of

listed landline numbers as well as computer chosen, randomly assigned numbers. There was about a 4.17 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 for additional comments or questions at 410-777-2733 and ddnataf@aacc.edu. Check the CSLI website for results from this and previous surveys: www2.aacc.edu/csl.

Perceptions of the 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?”

Since spring 2009, the question was extended and asked also about the state of Maryland and the country overall.

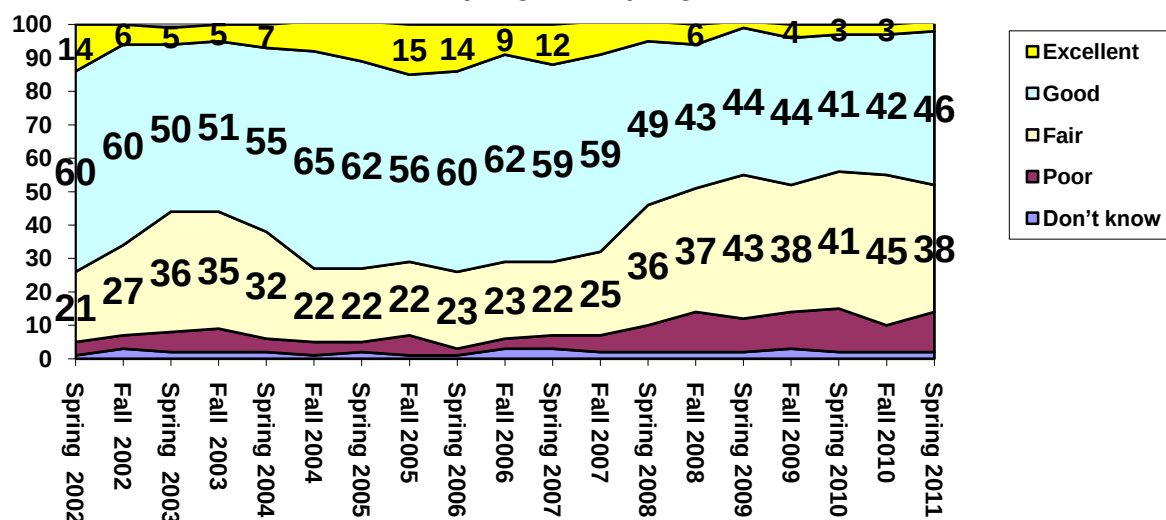
As shown on Table 2, since spring 2006 the county’s historical average saying that the economy was a combined “excellent” or “good” was 56 percent. This table as well as Graph 1 shows that there was a notable 4 percentage point increase in the combined total for spring 2011. The increase is drawn mostly from a change in the percentage saying “fair” – which dropped 7 points and also increased the percentage saying “poor” (from 8 to 12 percent).

“These results are decidedly mixed,” said Nataf. “We remain a long way from the stronger economy in 2007, when the combined score was around 70 percent.”

Table 2: Perceptions of County Economic Conditions

Condition	Spring 2006	Fall 2006	Spring 2007	Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Mean
Excellent +Good	74	71	71	69	55	49	46	48	44	45	49	56
Excellent	14	9	12	10	6	6	2	4	3	3	3	7
Good	60	62	59	59	49	43	44	44	41	42	46	50
Only fair	23	23	22	25	36	37	43	38	41	45	38	34
Poor	2	3	4	5	8	12	10	11	13	8	12	8
Don’t know	1	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
Total	100	100	100	101	101	100	101	100	100	100	101	101

**Graph 1: Economic Conditions in Anne Arundel County
Spring 2002-Spring 2011**



Regarding the state of Maryland, Table 2.1 shows slow, incremental improvement, with an 8 point overall rise in excellent/good scores respondents since spring 2009.

Table 2.1: Perceptions of State Economy

Condition	State Spring '09	State Fall '09	State Spring '10	State Fall '10	State Spring '11
Excellent+Good	27	30	31	32	35
Excellent	1	2	2	1	3
Good	26	28	29	31	32
Only fair	49	45	46	47	43
Poor	22	21	21	19	21
Don't know	2	4	2	2	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 2.2: Perceptions of National Economy

Condition	Country Spring '09	Country Fall '09	Country Spring '10	Country Fall '10	Country Spring '11
Excellent+Good	5	11	11	11	11
Excellent	0	1	1	2	2
Good	5	10	10	9	9
Only fair	30	39	42	41	43
Poor	63	48	46	47	45
Don't know	1	2	2	1	2
Total	99	100	101	100	101

With regard to the country's economy (see Table 2.2), recent Gallup surveys (March 3-5, 2011) of national samples produced an "excellent/good" score of 13 percent, slightly higher than CSLI's survey results (11 percent) for this spring.²

Nataf said that these results "continue past trends showing the county's economy to be nearly four times more robust than the national economy in the eyes of local citizens."

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 3 shows the results for the last seven CSLI surveys.

Table 3 shows the evolution of the public's responses to this set of questions. This spring, eight of the 10 items showed an increase in the percentage of people saying it applied to them or their households. A recovering stock market might account for the lowering of scores for the "significant losses in your stock or retirement accounts" – which reached its lowest level since fall 2008, when this item was first added to the set. Unemployment dropped a single percentage point as well. However, the real news was the increase in those items that measured apprehension about inflation – particularly regarding the cost of transportation which experienced a 17 point rise – as well as the general fear that salaries were not rising as fast as the cost of living, which saw a sharp 7 point rise. Not surprisingly, the perceived squeeze on private consumption led to a small rise in the percentage saying that taxes were too high in relation to the value of government services received.

Table 3: Economic Conditions Applying to Personal Circumstances

Condition	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Spring '11- Fall '10
Significant losses in your stock or retirement accounts	n.a.	71	75	70	56	60	52	-8
Hard to afford cost of taxes*	47	58	59	59	63	60	63	+3
Wages or salaries are not rising as fast as the cost of living	56	59	55	55	56	56	63	+7
Hard to afford cost of utilities such as electricity or gas	61	50	53	42	44	43	46	+3
Delay in making a major purchase such as a home or car	n.a.	n.a.	51	46	47	44	47	+3
Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate	35	30	29	33	32	34	35	+1
Facing the possibility of unemployment	11	15	24	24	19	21	20	-1
Hard to afford cost of transportation	40	32	21	17	21	24	41	+17
Unable to find affordable housing	21	11	12	13	15	10	14	+4
Facing the possibility of house foreclosure or loss	6	4	6	8	7	7	9	+2

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

² See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/110821/gallup-daily-us-economic-conditions.aspx>

Other Findings

County – Right or Wrong Direction?

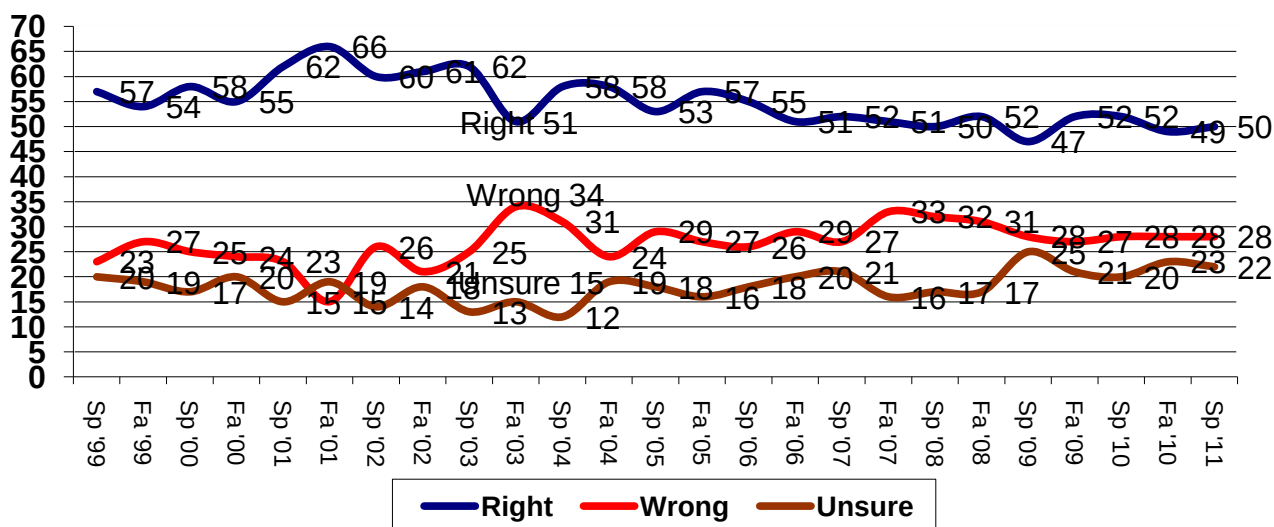
The survey included a CSLI benchmark question whose results are seen on Table 4: “Overall, would you say that the county is headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction?”

Table 4 and Graph 2 show that there was very little change in this indicator since last fall, with the “right direction” percentage moving from 49 to 50 points. Despite the economic anxiety noted above, the impact upon this measure of public sentiments was negligible.

Table 4: Anne Arundel County - Right vs. Wrong Direction

Response	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011
Right direction	52	52	49	50
Wrong direction	27	28	28	28
Unsure	21	20	23	22
Total	100	100	100	100

Graph 2: Right/Wrong Direction for Anne Arundel County



Main Economic Challenge Facing the County

The spring 2011 survey asked respondents an open-ended question: “What do you think will be the biggest economic challenge facing the county over the next decade or so?” CSLI last asked this question in October 2005 when residents tended to underline the need to manage growth and development (27 percent), provide affordable housing (17 percent) and provide proper skills and training for workers (11 percent). “Providing enough jobs” was not considered then to be very important, accounting for only 8 percent of the responses.

Asked again this spring, the results look quite different. Table 5 shows the six most commonly listed items. While a nearly equal number cited education, the percentage mentioning providing enough jobs doubled to 16 percent and the percentage referring to balancing the county budget topped the list at 18 percent. “Clearly, the focus changed from the challenges of economic development to the fiscal threats facing county government,” noted Nataf.

Table 5: Biggest Economic Challenge Facing the County – Items Mentioned

Condition	Percentage citing
Balancing the county budget (less spending, more revenues)	18
Providing enough jobs	16
Providing enough skills/training or otherwise improving education/schools	12
Managing growth/development	8
Having enough infrastructure, roads, transportation	7
Keeping taxes low	7
All other answers	32
Total	100

When respondents were asked whether they were “very,” “somewhat” or “not very” confident that local government could effectively deal with whatever challenge they thought to be most important, the public was evenly divided. As shown on Table 6, 51 percent were either “somewhat” or “very” confident in local government – nearly equal to the percentage saying “not very confident” (43 percent) or who gave no answer (7 percent).³

Table 6: Level of Confident in Local Government Meeting Challenge

Confidence level	Percentage citing
Very	7
Somewhat	44
Not very	43
Don’t know, no answer	7
Total	101

³ There was no statistically significant relationship between levels of confidence and the type of economic challenge mentioned by the sample.

Perceptions of Decreases in Government Services

The survey asked two related questions regarding decreases in government services “as a result of [government] belt-tightening.” The first asked respondents to generally indicate whether they had perceived any decline in government services; the second asked them to specify the service or program which had been affected.

As seen on Table 7, a large majority did *not* perceive any decrease in services or programs due to belt-tightening.

Table 7: Perceptions of Decreases in Government Services

Answer	Percentage citing
Yes	26
No	70
Don't know, no answer	5
Total	101

Among those who answered affirmatively (respondents could identify more than a single area), the most frequently cited services were roads/mass transit (24 percent), schools/education/teachers (19 percent) and public libraries (15 percent).

Table 8: Perceptions of Decreases in Specific Government Services

Service mentioned	Cases	Percentage
Roads/mass transit	39	24
Schools/teachers	31	19
Library	24	15
College tuition	12	7
Fire/emergency services	10	6
Seniors services	10	6
Jobs/furloughs/pay cuts	10	6
Police	9	6
Staffing in government	7	4
Child services	6	4
MVA	3	2
Mental health services	2	1
Total	163	100

Policy Proposals – Maryland or Anne Arundel County Government

A significant part of the survey was devoted to asking respondents about their support or opposition to a variety of public policy proposals being considered by state or county government. Table 9 includes proposals affecting both of these levels of government.

Table 9: Policy Proposals for State and County Government

Proposals	Support	Oppose	Unsure/NA
State Proposals	%	%	%
Imposing an additional fine of up to \$1,500 on drivers caught drunk driving	86	13	1
Permitting the use of offshore wind power near Ocean City	80	10	10
Increasing the alcohol tax	68	29	3
Permitting the purchase of marijuana for medical purposes	65	29	7
Taking away drivers' licenses from those who refuse to pay taxes	64	32	3
Increasing the use of cameras to ticket those running red lights	59	41	1
Making same sex marriages legal in Maryland	47	46	7
Making preparations to implement President Obama's health care reform law	43	50	8
Allowing the children of illegal immigrants to pay in-state tuition for college	33	63	4
Increasing university tuition to maintain the quality of higher education	32	66	2
Reducing the pension and retiree health benefits of state workers	28	65	7
Promising state workers no furlough days, and providing them with a \$750 bonus	25	59	16
Increasing the gasoline tax to bolster the transportation trust fund	17	80	3
County Proposals			
Limiting the use of binding arbitration when the county negotiates with public safety unions	35	42	23
Increasing the county income tax to the maximum allowed by law to avoid cuts in essential services	25	68	7

Both proposals dealing with drivers received considerable support – additional fines on drunk drivers (86 percent supported) and taking away drivers' licenses from those refusing to pay taxes (64 percent).

Controversial measures such as “permitting the purchase of marijuana for medical purposes” and “making same sex marriages legal in Maryland” received distinct levels of support. In the case of the former, a large majority (65 percent) supported the measure. Regarding the latter, the public was evenly divided, with nearly as many in favor (47 percent) as against (46 percent).

Table 10 compares the percentages saying ‘support’ for same sex marriage; for simplicity, the percentages of e.g., Democrats who were opposed or had no answer are not presented. Those favoring same sex marriage tended to be Democratic, liberal or moderate, not part of an organized religion, single, female, white and under 61 years of age.

Table 10: Same Sex Marriage – Percentage Supporting by Social Category

Proposals	Support
Social Category	%
Party p=.01	
Democrat	57
Unaffiliated	48
Republican	35
Ideology p=.01	
Liberal	81
Moderate	53
Conservative	22
Religion p=.01	
None/Non-practicing	75
Jewish	71
Spiritual but not part of organized religion	64
Other	46
Catholic	43
Protestant	40
Some other Christian	38
Evangelical	30
Marital Status p=.01.	
Single	66
Married	45
Gender p=.3	
Female	51
Male	44
Age p=.07	
18-30	53
31-40	51
41-50	51
51-60	53
61+	37
Race p=.3	
Black	30
White	49
Other (including Hispanic, Asian and unspecified 'other')	50

Regarding another controversial state proposal, most of the sample (63 percent) opposed allowing the children of illegal immigrants to pay in-state tuition for college. Only liberals and Hispanics supported this measure.

The public was divided regarding policies affecting state workers. Only 28 percent favored reducing the pension and retiree health benefits of state workers, but just 25 percent agreed with the governor's decision to offer no furlough days and a \$750 bonus.

Regarding taxes, the public was also divided. There was very little support for increasing the gas tax (17 percent said support), but significant support for increasing the alcohol tax (68 percent).

Looking at the two proposals related to county government, only one-fourth were convinced of the need to increase the county's income tax to the maximum allowed by law to avoid cuts in essential services.

Regarding the proposal to limit the use of binding arbitration when the county negotiates with public safety unions, a plurality opposed the introduction of limits (42 percent). However, a large group – 23 percent – could not provide an opinion. “Our student interviewers were often asked to explain what was at stake regarding the issue of binding arbitration, signaling that the public was not clear how this would affect all the parties concerned,” said Nataf.

Public Attentiveness to Major Speeches, County Council Hearings

Three questions focused on how much attention the public placed on elected officials’ ability to communicate – either through major speeches or televised council hearings. Only President Obama’s state of the union speech was noted by a majority of respondents (72 percent). Far fewer (41 percent) paid attention to or watched Governor O’Malley’s inaugural or state of the state speeches; a smaller percentage (19 percent) watched county council deliberations on television.

Table 11: Watched, listened or read about...

	Yes	No	Unsure/N.A.	Total
Governor O’Malley’s inaugural speech or his state of the state speech	41	58	1	100
President Obama’s state of the union speech?	72	28	1	101
Watched County Council hearings being broadcast on local cable stations anytime over the last year?	19	80	1	100

Those most likely to have followed Governor O’Malley were Democrats, had postgraduate education, were not religious, males and over 60 years of age. Those following President Obama’s speech were most likely to be Democrats, moderates or liberals, have at least an Associate’s degree, women, and either 41-50 or over 60. There were only weak patterns associated with the council’s viewership.

Guessing the size of Federal, State and Local Budgets

Respondents were asked, “Based on your best guess, about how much is the federal (state/county) government’s yearly budget?” This was an open-ended question to which respondents could offer vague remarks such as “billions” or specific answers such as \$1.5 trillion. Only with regard to the federal budget was a majority of respondents able to venture a guess (51 percent). Under one third (31 percent in both cases) were inspired to provide some estimate for state and local government budgets. The following tables exclude those who did not provide either any answer or a non-numeric one.

Table 12: Estimations of Federal Budget

Estimates	Percentage citing
Under \$1 billion	4
\$1 billion to \$500 billion	17
\$501 to \$999 billion	4
\$1-1.999 trillion	21
\$2-2.99 trillion	10
\$3-4.99 trillion	22
\$5-6 trillion	6
Over \$6 trillion	17
Total	101

President Obama's most recent budget proposal for fiscal year 2012 was \$3.73 trillion.⁴ Most respondents guessed lower than that amount (56 percent). Another 23 percent were clearly above. Thus, about one-fifth of the respondents were reasonably close to the total.

Table 13: Estimations of State Budget

Estimates	Percentage citing
Under \$1 billion	30
\$1-5.99 billion	26
\$6 to \$10.99 billion	7
\$11-15.99 billion	4
\$16-20.99 billion	5
\$21-30.99 billion	3
\$31-40 billion	1
Over \$40 billion	24
Total	100

According to the *Maryland Reporter*, the governor's proposed budget totals \$34.2 billion.⁵ As seen in Table 13, three-quarters of the sample underestimated the state budget's size; only one percent was within the accurate range (between 31 and 40 billion). Even with a broader range of \$11 to 40 billion, only 13 percent guessed correctly. Another 24 percent thought the budget exceeded \$40 billion. A majority (56 percent) thought that the budget was under \$6 billion. "Apparently, the public had a harder time identifying the correct state budget amount," Nataf remarked.

⁴ See, for example, http://www.bostonherald.com/news/us_politics/view/20110214obama_budget_offers_11_trillion_in_deficit_trims/

⁵ See <http://marylandreporter.com/2011/01/21/summary-the-basics-of-gov-martin-omalleys-34-2-billion-budget/>

Table 14: Estimations of County Budget

Estimates	Percentage citing
Under \$5 million	22
\$6-50 million	18
\$51 to \$100 million	10
\$101-350 million	8
\$351-650 million	9
\$651-999 million	7
\$1-1.99 billion	14
\$2-2.99 billion	3
\$4-6.99 billion	4
Over \$7 billion	6
Total	101

According to county documents, the total county budget including both operating and capital expenditures for 2011 is \$2.189 billion, of which \$1.883 billion is operating budget and \$319 million is capital.⁶ Given the budget ranges in Table 14, only 17 percent of the sample offering any estimate were vaguely close (between \$1 and 3 billion). A fifth thought that the budget was “under \$5 million;” 50 percent placed the budget at no more than \$100 million.

“The public’s range of answers may indicate a need for greater public education and government transparency, especially in these fiscally challenging times,” Nataf said.

⁶ See http://www.aacounty.org/Budget/Resources/FY2011_Approved_Budget_Message_Current_Expense_Budget.pdf, p.21

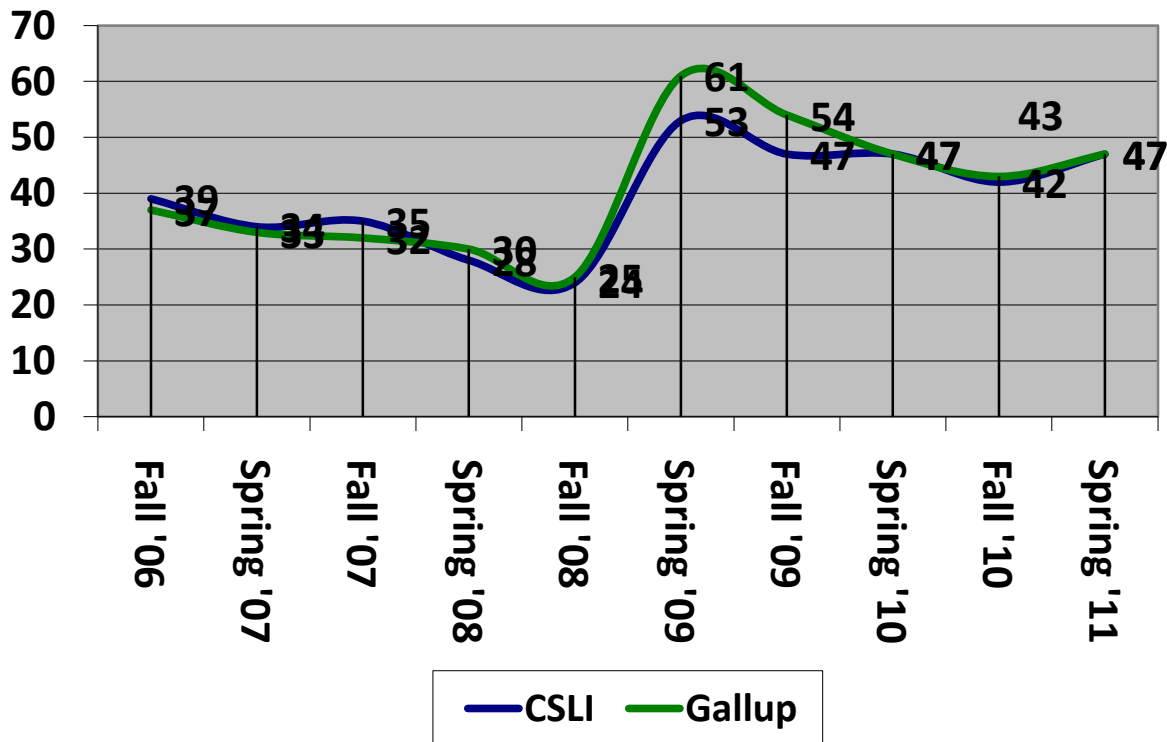
President Obama – Job Approval

Since fall 2006, CSLI polls have closely tracked national presidential job approval trends as indicated by Gallup surveys.⁷ From spring 2009 through fall of last year, President Obama’s job approval trended downward, both in national and CSLI local polling. This spring, CSLI polling again matched that reported for a national sample by the Gallup polling firm: 47 percent citing approval, showing some upward movement.

Table 15: Job Approval for Presidents Bush and Obama

Issue	Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011
Approve	35	28	24	53	47	47	42	47
Disapprove	57	62	69	31	42	45	49	44
No answer	9	10	8	16	11	8	10	9
Total	101	100	101	100	100	100	101	100

**Graph 3: Presidential Job Approval –
CSLI and Selected Gallup 2006-2011**



⁷ See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/113980/gallup-daily-obama-job-approval.aspx>

As seen on Table 16, Obama's popularity among Democrats had declined last fall but it rebounded this spring to the same level observed one year ago: 70 percent. Among Republicans, Obama's approval descended to 18 percent, but rose sharply to a recent high among unaffiliated/ independent voters (57 percent).

Table 16: Presidential Job Approval by Partisan Affiliation

	Overall Obama				Democrats				Republicans				Unaffiliated			
	Fa '09	Sp '10	Fa '10	Sp '11	Fa '09	Sp '10	Fa '10	Sp '11	Fa '09	Sp '10	Fa '10	Sp '11	Fa '09	Sp '10	Fa '10	Sp '11
Approve	47	47	42	47	72	70	61	70	17	24	24	18	54	53	33	57
Disapprove	42	45	49	44	19	24	29	26	72	67	70	73	38	42	45	29
No opinion	11	8	10	9	9	7	10	4	11	9	6	9	9	5	21	14
Total	100	100	101	100	100	101	100	100	100	100	100	100	101	100	99	100

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 17 shows that Democrats have stabilized, seeing no change in level of trust from last fall (both 34 percent). Republicans lagged behind Democrats until last fall when they were up by 3 points. This spring, Republicans were down by 2 points behind the Democrats. Perhaps signaling disillusionment with both parties, the percentage volunteering "neither" rose from 21 percent last fall to 29 percent this spring (see Table 17 for details).

Table 17: Which Party do you Trust?

	2009		2010		2011
	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
Democrats	42	37	33	34	34
Republicans	30	28	31	37	32
Neither	20	27	31	21	29
No opinion	8	6	6	8	4
Total	100	98	101	100	99

Methodology

The survey polled a random sample of 537 county residents who were at least 18 years old. It was conducted March 7-10, 2011 during evening hours. Phone numbers were derived from a database of listed landline numbers as well as computer chosen, randomly assigned numbers. There was about a 4.17 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.

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 this and previous surveys: www2.aacc.edu/csli.

CSLI Semi-Annual Survey – Spring, 2011

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	Circle one
Crime/Drugs	6
Economy – (e.g., no jobs, high cost of living, business closing or losses)	35
Education, problems with schools	10
Environment (e.g., air or water pollution, saving the Bay)	3
Government – corrupt, unethical	2
Government – inefficient, wasteful	1
Government – lacks resources for roads, schools, services	2
Growth/overpopulation- too much development	4
Health care (cost, access)	1
Slots	1
Taxes – too high	11
Transportation problems/traffic congestion	3
Other answer (write in:	8
Unsure/No Answer	12

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

- (1) **Right** direction 50%
- (2) **Wrong** direction 28%
- (0) **Unsure** or don't know 22%

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 3% (2) Good 46% (3) Only Fair 38% (4) Poor 12% (0) Don't Know, N.A. 2%

3.1 How about economic conditions in Maryland?

(1) Excellent 3% (2) Good 32% (3) Only Fair 43% (4) Poor 21% (0) Don't Know, N.A. 1%

3.2 How about economic conditions in the United States?

(1) Excellent 2% (2) Good 9% (3) Only Fair 43% (4) Poor 45% (0) Don't Know, N.A. 2%

4. Thinking now 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	63	35	2
4.2 Facing the possibility of unemployment	20	78	2
4.3 Significant losses in your stock or retirement accounts	52	46	2
4.4 Facing the possibility of house foreclosure or loss	9	90	1
4.5 Unable to find affordable housing	14	85	2
4.6 Hard to afford the cost of transportation	41	59	1
4.7 Hard to afford the cost of utilities such as electricity or gas	46	53	1
4.8 Delay in making a major purchase such as a home or car	47	52	1
4.9 Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate	35	63	2
4.10 Taxes are too high in relation to government services provided	63	35	3

5.1 What do you think will be the biggest ECONOMIC challenge facing the county over the next decade or so? (DON'T READ THE LIST, LISTEN TO THE ANSWER AND THEN CHOOSE FROM BELOW)

Providing enough jobs	16
Providing proper skills/education for workers	12
Managing growth/development	8
Providing adequate services such as police and fire	2
Keeping taxes low	7
Providing affordable housing	3
Having enough infrastructure, roads	7
Improving the business climate	2
No answer	0
Balancing the county budget (less spending, more revenues)	18
BRAC	1
Environment	3
Healthcare	2
County workers	1
Pensions	2
Other housing	2
Crime	1
Cost of living	3
Illegal immigrants	2
Slots	1

5.2 How confident are you that local government will be able to effectively deal with this challenge, are you very confident, somewhat confident or not very confident?

- (1) Very confident 7%
- (2) Somewhat confident 44%
- (3) Not very confident 43%
- (0) No answer, don't know 7%

5.3 The state and county governments have had to tighten their belts to balance their budgets lately. Have you observed any decreases in services as a result of this belt-tightening?

- (1) No 70% (0) No answer 5%
- (2) **Yes** 26% 

5.4 If YES, which services or programs were affected?

(DON'T READ LIST but circle all that are mentioned) (Percentages only include values from the 26 percent with opinions on this item-multiple answers possible).

Program or service mentioned	Circle
Child services (daycare subsidies, juvenile justice)	4
College tuition (higher tuition, harder to find classes)	7
Fire department, emergency medical services (salaries, staffing, response time, equipment)	6
Library services (fewer hours, smaller collections, fewer publications available)	15
Mental health services (lower availability, less access to medical services – medicine, appointments)	1
MVA (higher documentation fees, registration fees)	2
Police (salaries, staffing, response time, equipment)	6
Roads, mass transit (lack of maintenance, less frequent bus service, higher cost)	24
Schools, teachers (salaries, school-based programs)	19
Seniors' services (fewer hours, less staff support)	6
Staffing problems within government (unspecified) – office hours lessened, slower service	4
Jobs/furloughs/salaries	6

Next I will read some proposals being discussed by Maryland or county government. When I read the item tell me whether you support or oppose it. Remember that some of the proposals are part of an effort to balance government budgets during these difficult economic times.

Proposals	Support	Oppose	Unsure/NA
State Proposals	%	%	%
6.1 Increasing university tuition to maintain the quality of higher education	32	66	2
6.2 Increasing the alcohol tax	68	29	3
6.3 Imposing an additional fine of up to \$1,500 on drivers caught drunk driving	86	13	1
6.4 Taking away drivers' licenses from those who refuse to pay taxes	64	32	3
6.5 Increasing the gasoline tax to bolster the transportation trust fund	17	80	3
6.6 Reducing the pension and retiree health benefits of state workers	28	65	7
6.7 Promising state workers no furlough days and providing them with a \$750 bonus	25	59	16
6.8 Allowing the children of illegal immigrants to pay in-state tuition for college	33	63	4
6.9 Increasing the use of cameras to ticket those running red lights	59	41	1
6.10 Making preparations to implement President Obama's health care reform law	43	50	8
6.11 Permitting the use of offshore wind power near Ocean City	80	10	10
6.12 Making same sex marriages legal in Maryland	47	46	7
6.13 Permitting the purchase of marijuana for medical purposes	65	29	7
County Proposals			
6.14 Increasing the county income tax to the maximum allowed by law to avoid cuts in essential services	25	68	7
6.15 Limiting the use of binding arbitration when the county negotiates with public safety unions	35	42	23

The next items will help us better understand residents' attention to public affairs.

	Yes	No	Unsure/NA
7.1 Did you watch, listen to or read reports about Governor O'Malley's inaugural speech or his state of the state speech	41	58	1
7.2 Did you watch, listen to or read reports about President Obama's state of the union speech?	72	28	1
7.3 Have you watched the county council hearings being broadcast on local cable stations anytime over the last year?	19	80	1
7.4 Based on your best guess , about how much is the federal government's yearly budget?			See Table 12
7.5 How about the state's yearly budget?			See Table 13
7.6 Finally, how about the county's budget?			See Table 14

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

(1) Approve 47% (2) Disapprove 44% (0) No answer 9%

9. 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 34%
- (2) Republicans 32%
- (3) Neither (volunteered) 29%
- (4) Other (volunteered) 0%
- (0) No answer 4%

We are almost done. The last few questions will help us to better understand your responses.

10. With which political party, if any, are you registered? (weighted values presented)

- (1) Democratic 40%
- (2) Republican 36%
- (3) Unaffiliated (or “independent”) 14%
- (4) None (NOT REGISTERED TO VOTE) 6%
- (5) Other (e.g., Green Party) 1%
- (0) No Answer 3%

11. Which of the following best describes your political beliefs: Conservative, Moderate or Liberal?

- (1) Conservative 33%
- (2) Moderate 50%
- (3) Liberal 14%
- (0) Other, No Answer 3%

12. What is your age? _____ (0) No Answer

Age Range	Percentage
18-30	7
31-40	16
41-50	20
51-60	23
61-70	18
71+	16

13. 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 a four-year bachelor’s degree 22%
(2) High school diploma 11%	(6) Postgraduate work 30%
(3) some college 23%	(7) Something else? 1%
(4) Completed a two-year associate degree 10%	(0) No answer 1%

14. 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 13%
- (4) \$75,001-\$100,000 19%
- (5) \$100,001-\$150,000 21%
- (6) Over \$150,000 12%
- (0) No Answer 16%

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

Retired	30%
Self-employed	10%
Employed full time for a company in the private sector	19%
Employed full time for government in a nondefense-related activity such as education, public works or public safety	17%
Employed full time in a defense-related activity	6%
Employed in a private nonprofit organization	2%
Employed part time	6%
Student	2%
Unemployed and seeking a job	3%
Unemployed and not seeking a job	5%
No answer	1%

16. Regarding race, how would you describe yourself?

- (1) White 86%
- (2) Black or African American 7%
- (3) Hispanic or Latino 2%
- (4) Asian 1%
- (5) Other 3%
- (0) No answer 2%

17. Regarding religion, how would you describe yourself?

- (1) None 8%
- (2) Nonpracticing 8%
- (3) Evangelical or born again Christian (possibly Baptist, Pentecostal) 12%
- (4) Catholic 25%
- (5) Jewish 3%
- (6) Protestant (possibly Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterian, Anglican, Episcopalian) 25%
- (7) Some other Christian 9%
- (8) A 'spiritual person' not associated with an organized religion 3%
- (9) Other 5%
- (0) No answer 3%

18. What is your current marital status?

- (1) Single 14%
- (2) Married 67%
- (3) Separated/divorced 10%
- (4) Widowed 7%
- (5) Other 3%
- (0) No answer 1%

19. 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 or twice a semester by e-mail to participate in short surveys taking no more than a couple of minutes to complete. Can we count on your help?

(1) Yes 48% (2) No 52%

20.1 IF YES: What e-mail 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

21. Gender of respondent to whom you were speaking: (1) Male 50% (2) Female 50% (weighted)

22. Zip code _____

	Valid Percent
20711.00	1.0
20724.00	.9
20733.00	.4
20751.00	.3
20755.00	1.0
20757.00	.3
20758.00	.1
20764.00	1.0
20765.00	.3
20772.00	.2
20776.00	.9
20778.00	.3
21012.00	6.2
21032.00	2.5
21035.00	1.5
21037.00	5.3
21054.00	1.4
21056.00	.3
21060.00	4.9
21061.00	8.5
21076.00	2.7
21090.00	2.1
21108.00	4.0
21113.00	4.5
21114.00	4.8
21122.00	11.5
21140.00	.4
21141.00	.2
21144.00	4.8
21146.00	6.6
21147.00	.2
21226.00	1.1
21401.00	7.6
21402.00	.8
21403.00	6.4
21405.00	.2
21409.00	4.8
Total	100

