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Center for the Study of Local Issues
Anne Arundel Community College

101 College Parkway, Arnold MD, 21012-1895
Contact: Dan Nataf 410-777-2733

Survey Shows Economic Optimism Mixed with Concerns over Cost of Living

According to a survey conducted March 6-9, 2006 by the Center for the Study of Local Issues (CSLI) at Anne Arundel Community College, a majority (74 percent) of county residents thinks that the state of the local economy is “excellent” or “good.” However, the percentage citing the economy as “the most important problem” rose from 7 to 15 percent. Large majorities cited the cost of housing (65 percent), utilities (63 percent) or gasoline (62 percent) as very serious. In addition, the costs of health care and prescription drugs (a combined 47 percent) as well as housing (12 percent) were cited as the most pressing issues faced by seniors.

“While the public perceives a strong local economy, the rise in housing costs, gasoline and utility rates along with health care costs for seniors have combined into a perfect storm of anxiety in the midst of plenty,” said the center’s director, Dan Nataf.

Summary of Other Findings

The CSLI survey evaluated a range of other issues including whether escalating housing prices have affected buying or selling decisions; support for certain state policies such as a ‘gay marriage’ amendment or the ‘Wal-Mart’ bill; reasons for voting for the next county executive; the public’s support for gubernatorial candidates and job approval for President Bush; the most important problems facing the state and federal governments; cancer rates, causes and treatment; recognition and impressions of charitable causes; and the “most pressing issue” affecting seniors.

The survey included some benchmark questions about the most important issue facing Anne Arundel County residents, the right/wrong direction of the county, the state of the local economy and questions about terrorism and the preparedness of local authorities to respond.

These items are summarized below and then explained in greater detail in the sections that follow:

- **Most important problem:** Growth and the economy were cited as the most important concerns; education, taxes and the environment were largely unchanged while crime rose.
- **Right direction/wrong direction:** There was very little change in the percentage saying that the county was moving in the right direction, moving from 57 percent in fall 2005 to 55 percent in spring 2006.

- **Economic conditions:** There was no significant change in the percentage of the sample saying that the county's economic conditions were "excellent" or "good," which rose from 71 to 74 percent.
- **Seriousness of basic costs:** The cost of housing, utilities and gasoline topped the list of items for which respondents said their level of concern was "very serious."
- **Have rising real estate prices affected buying or selling decisions:** Over one-third claimed that escalating prices had influenced their decisions, causing them to buy sooner, or to postpone buying altogether.
- **State policies:** Majorities supported three policies: The "Wal-Mart" bill obliging large employers to spend a minimum percentage of their payrolls on health care (62 percent); a smoking ban bill applying to restaurants and bars (64 percent); and an amendment to the Maryland constitution defining marriage as between a man and a woman (53 percent).
- **County executive voting motivations:** The main trait respondents seek in a prospective county executive candidate is "honesty" (22 percent); the main issues were education (16 percent), control of growth (9 percent) and lower taxes (7 percent).
- **Governor's race:** Incumbent Gov. Robert Ehrlich Jr. led the field with 40 percent of respondents favoring him over Martin O'Malley (23 percent) or Douglas Duncan (3 percent).
- **Most important problem facing Maryland:** Education topped the list of concerns (13 percent) followed by lower taxes and crime (both 10 percent), the environment and economic development (both 9 percent).
- **President George W. Bush's job approval:** An erosion in public perception of Bush's performance as president was seen as his job approval percentage went from 45 percent saying "approve" last fall to 37 percent this spring.
- **Most important problem facing federal government:** The war in Iraq topped the list (41 percent citing), followed by the deficit (12 percent), homeland security and terrorism (both 10 percent).
- **Cancer rates, causes and treatment:** A majority (54 percent) thought that cancer rates in Anne Arundel County were a very serious concern; most thought that smoking (77 percent) and air/water pollution (67 percent) were primary causes. Most respondents had a favorable impression of the accessibility, quality and providers, but were less optimistic about the affordability of services. Over a quarter (28 percent) had some experience with cancer treatment in the county.
- **Charitable causes:** Two charities had nearly 100 percent name recognition. Positive evaluations of them ranged from 89 to 31 percent. A majority claimed to have contributed to the Salvation Army and Red Cross during the last two years.
- **Seniors, services:** A majority (55 percent) was *not* familiar with services for seniors despite the fact that 75 percent of the sample said that there was someone going to be 55 or older in their immediate family within the next three years. The affordability and quality of health care (41 percent) and housing (12 percent) were the most pressing issues to seniors.
- **Terrorism:** Most respondents (57 percent) did not think that a terrorist attack was likely in Anne Arundel County this year, essentially unchanged from last fall. There was a decline in the percentage thinking that local authorities were "not very prepared" to deal with such a crisis, dropping from 44 percent in fall 2005 to 33 percent in this survey.
- **Methodology:** The survey polled a random sample of 401 county residents who were at least 18 years old and living in their primary residence. The margin of sampling error was approximately 5 percent. The dataset was weighted by demographic variables to better represent the general population.

Most Important Problem – Growth and the Economy

Each CSLI survey starts by asking the public an open-ended question: “What do you think is the most important problem facing the residents of Anne Arundel County at the present time?” Typically, crime, education, growth, transportation and taxes are the top items cited. This time a sharp rise in the proportion of those citing the economy disturbed the typical pattern (see Table 1 and Graph 1).

Compared with last fall, there was a decrease in concern about growth (from 22 to 16 percent) and transportation/traffic (from 14 to 9 percent). The rise in the percentage citing the economy (from 7 to 15 percent) was “probably due to the large number of people who cited affordable housing or high energy bills,” Nataf said. There was little change in the percentages citing education, taxes, the environment or drugs.

There was a notable increase in the percentage citing crime, rising from 6 to 11 percent. Nataf indicated that there was no common theme among the responses that could account for the increase. The drop in growth and transportation as a combined concern (from 36 to 25 percent) also followed no common theme.

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE CITING ITEM AS COUNTY’S “MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM” 2003-06

Problem	Spring '03	Fall '03	Spring '04	Fall '04	Spring '05	Fall '05	Spring '06
Growth/overpopulation- too much development	12	15	8	14	18	22	16
Economy – (e.g., no jobs, high cost of living, business closing or losses)	14	8	12	8	7	7	15
Education, problems with schools	17	17	22	12	16	12	13
Crime	4	5	4	6	5	6	11
Taxes – too high	9	14	13	10	13	10	10
Traffic congestion/problems	9	11	10	17	9	14	9
Unsure/no answer	13	9	10	13	11	11	8
Other answer	8	11	8	9	10	8	6
Environment (e.g., air or water pollution, saving the Bay)	5	7	4	5	5	6	6
Drugs	3	1	4	3	3	2	4
Inefficient government, wasteful spending	2	1	2	1	1	1	1
Terrorism	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Corruption in government/politicians are bad	0	1	2	1	1	0	1
Total	98	100	100	100	99	100	101

Note: Table 2 and Graph 1 below combine “growth” and “transportation” into “Growth” as well as “crime” and “drugs” into “Crime” for reporting and comparison purposes. All values in tables are in percent unless otherwise indicated. In this and all other tables, totals do not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Graph 1: Most Important Issue - Trends

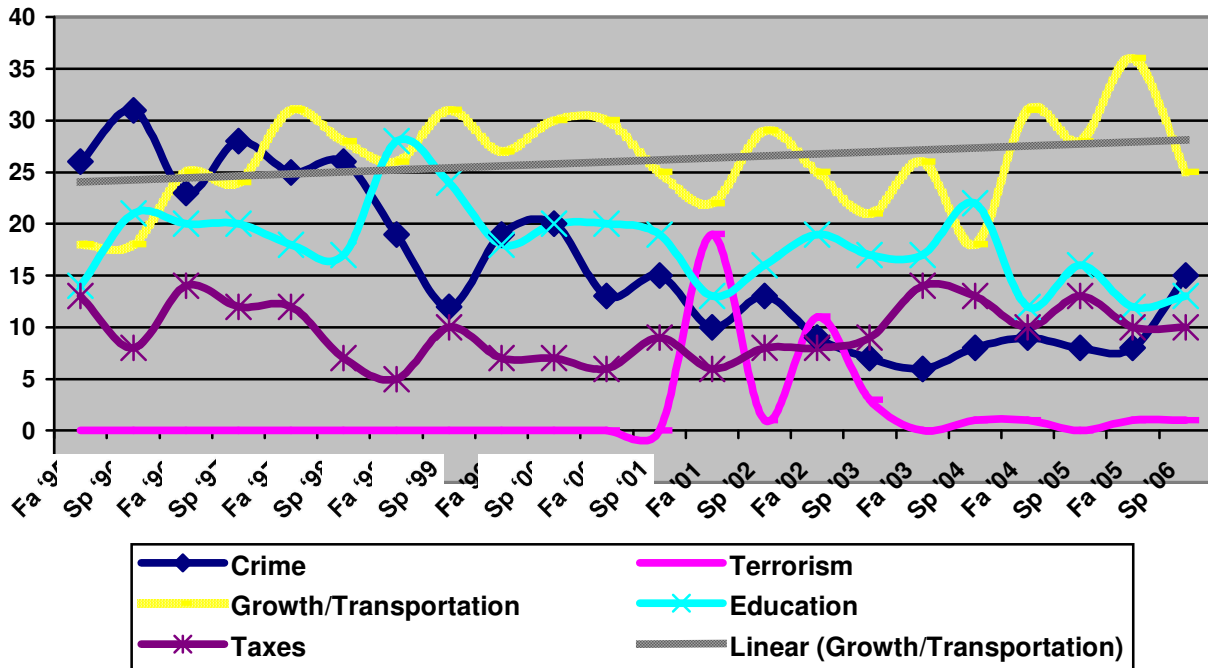


TABLE 2: “MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM FACING RESIDENTS” FALL 1995 TO SPRING 2006

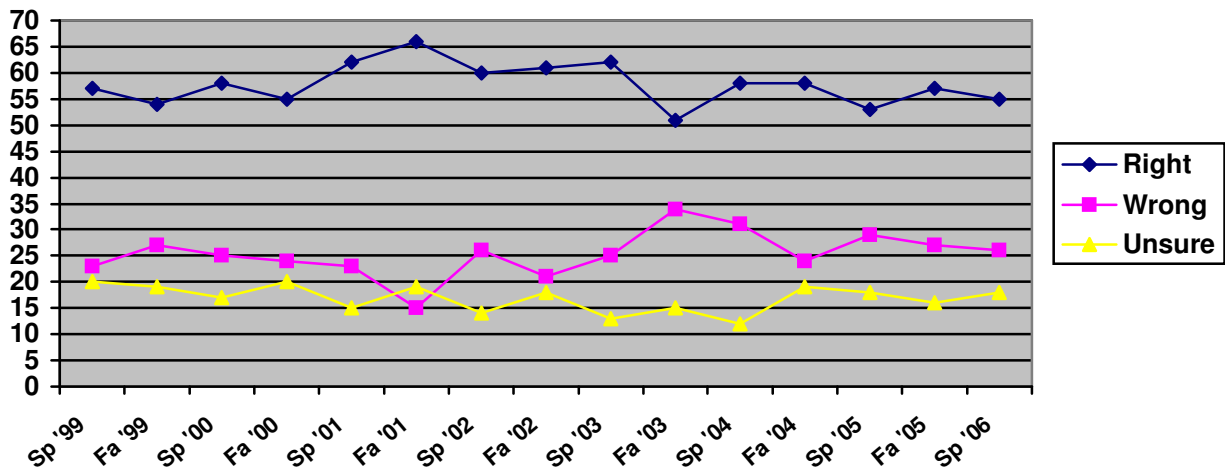
Problem	Sp '96	Fa '96	Sp '97	Fa '97	Sp '98	Fa '98	Sp '99	Fa '99	Sp '00	Fa '00	Sp '01	Fa '01	Sp '01	Fa '02	Sp '03	Fa '03	Sp '04	Fa '04	Sp '05	Fa '05	Sp '06
Crime	31	23	28	25	26	19	12	19	20	13	15	10	13	13	7	6	8	9	8	8	15
Terrorism	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	18	1	11	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Growth/ Transportation	18	25	24	31	28	26	31	27	30	30	25	22	28	25	21	26	18	31	28	36	25
Education	21	20	20	18	17	28	24	18	20	20	19	13	16	19	17	17	22	12	16	12	13
Taxes	8	14	12	12	7	5	10	7	7	6	9	6	8	8	9	14	13	10	13	10	10

County – Right or Wrong Direction?

The survey included a CSLI benchmark question: “Overall, would you say that the county is headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction?” Graph 2 shows that until fall 2003, the results did not vary much, hovering around 60 percent. However at that time, a sharp drop in those saying the “right” direction corresponded to the start of a lower overall range. There was little change this spring, with only a small decline from 57 to 55 percent among those saying the county was moving in the right direction. Overall, the last two years have shown little variation.

TABLE 2.1: ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY - RIGHT VS. WRONG DIRECTION

Response	Percent
Right direction	55
Wrong direction	26
Unsure	18
Total	99

Graph 2: County Trend - Right or Wrong Direction

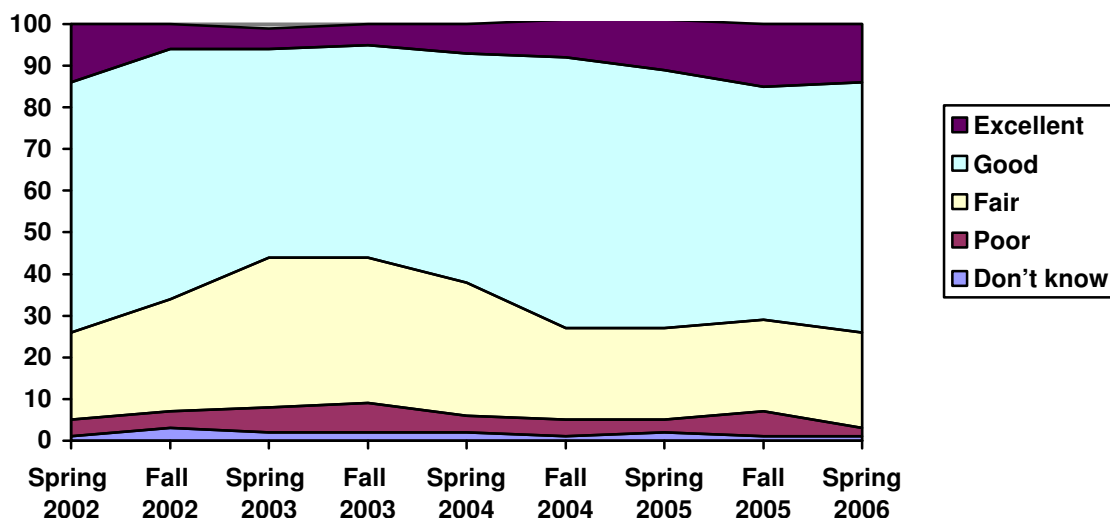
Economic Conditions – No Major Changes

There was little change in the public's perception of general economic conditions with the county. The percentage saying "excellent" or "good" increased slightly from 71 to 74 percent. In spring 2004, the combined value was only 62 percent, showing that the upward trend first seen in fall 2004 has not been significantly altered over the last year (see Table 3 and Graph 3). Nataf said that "while rising costs were noted as a cause for the rise in the percentage citing the economy as the most important problem, generalized optimism about the general state of the economy still prevails."

TABLE 3: PERCEPTIONS OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

	Spring 2002	Fall 2002	Spring 2003	Fall 2003	Spring 2004	Fall 2004	Spring 2005	Fall 2005	Spring 2006
Excellent	14	6	5	5	7	9	12	15	14
Good	60	60	50	51	55	65	62	56	60
Fair	21	27	36	35	32	22	22	22	23
Poor	4	4	6	7	4	4	3	6	2
Don't know	1	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	1
Total	101	100	99	100	100	101	101	100	100

Graph 3: Economic Conditions



Seriousness of Basic Costs?

The survey asked respondents to classify several basic costs as a “very serious,” “somewhat serious” or “not very serious” concern. Table 4 shows the answer choices and the percentages selecting each choice.

As observed in the section discussing the rise of the economy as a ‘most important problem,’ concern about the cost of housing and utilities topped the list shown in Table 4, closely followed by the cost of gasoline. “The real estate boom, the impending increase in electricity rates and the already felt increase in natural gas, and the near doubling of gasoline prices in the recent past have been clearly reflected in the public’s choice of top concerns,” Nataf said.

TABLE 4: SERIOUSNESS OF COSTS

	Very serious	Somewhat serious	Not very serious	No answer
The cost of housing	65	23	11	0
The cost of utilities such as electricity or natural gas	63	29	8	0
The cost of gasoline	62	30	8	0
The cost of health care	58	28	11	2
Not having enough money for retirement	57	24	16	3
The cost of education	51	29	16	5
The cost of property taxes	49	37	12	2

Next highest among concerns were health care and retirement (58 and 57 percent saying “very serious”). Several respondents mentioned that health care’s rising cost was much more likely to be felt by those without health insurance.

Finally, the ambiguous “education” category along with property taxes were least likely to be cited as a serious cost, although only property taxes lacked a majority saying “very serious” (49 percent). “These findings combine to show strong anxiety about many aspects of economic life,” Nataf observed.

The concern over the cost of housing was influenced by respondents’ income, as shown on Table 5.

TABLE 5: INCOME AND SERIOUSNESS OF HOUSING COSTS

Housing Cost	0-\$50,000	\$50,001 to \$100,000	\$100,001 to over \$150,000	Overall
Very serious	76	66	61	67
Somewhat serious	15	24	23	21
Not very serious	10	10	16	12
Total	101	100	100	100

While the relationship between age and housing costs as well as gasoline costs was not significant, age was significant with regards to utility costs (see Table 6).

TABLE 6: AGE AND SERIOUSNESS OF UTILITY COSTS

Utilities Cost	18-29	30-44	45-59	60 or more	Overall
Very serious	52	57	64	77	64
Somewhat serious	31	37	28	18	28
Not very serious	17	6	8	5	8
Total	98	100	100	100	100

“This may be due to a lesser degree of discretion in the use of utilities to offset rising costs, a problem most likely to be strongly felt by the elderly who are more typically on fixed incomes,” Nataf offered.

A similar rationale may explain the greater sensitivity of the elderly to property taxes, as indicated on Table 7. In addition, those who listed their employment as “retired” were much more likely to say that property taxes were a very serious concern (65 percent) compared to those having employment in the private sector or self-employed (46 percent).

TABLE 7: AGE AND SERIOUSNESS OF PROPERTY TAX COSTS

Property Taxes	18-29	30-44	45-59	60 or more	Overall
Very serious	43	44	50	61	50
Somewhat serious	36	47	35	32	38
Not very serious	21	9	15	7	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Income was also significantly related to property tax costs, as seen on Table 8. While 53 percent of those with incomes under \$50,001 perceived property taxes as a “very serious” concern, only 40 percent of those with incomes above \$100,000 agreed.

TABLE 8: INCOME AND SERIOUSNESS OF PROPERTY TAXES

Property Taxes	0-\$50,000	\$50,001 to \$100,000	\$100,001 to over \$150,000	Overall
Very serious	53	55	40	49
Somewhat serious	31	38	42	38
Not very serious	16	7	18	13
Total	100	100	100	100

While age and the cost of health care were not statistically related, a strong relationship between income and health care was found, shown on Table 9. While only 46 percent of those with incomes over \$100,000 felt that the cost of health care was a very serious concern, over three-quarters (79 percent) of those making up to \$50,000 expressed the highest level of concern.

TABLE 9: INCOME AND SERIOUSNESS OF HEALTH CARE

Health Care	0-\$50,000	\$50,001 to \$100,000	\$100,001 to over \$150,000	Overall
Very serious	79	63	46	60
Somewhat serious	15	32	32	28
Not very serious	12	5	22	13
Total	100	100	100	100

“This suggests that those most likely to be in a secure employment situation with health insurance coverage are much less preoccupied about affording health care for themselves and their families,” Nataf concluded.

Having enough money for retirement was not related to age, but was strongly related to income, as seen on Table 10. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of those making up to \$50,000 thought that funding retirement was a “very serious” concern, compared to only 43 percent of those making over \$100,000.

TABLE 10: INCOME AND SERIOUSNESS OF HAVING MONEY FOR RETIREMENT

Having enough money for retirement	0-\$50,000	\$50,001 to \$100,000	\$100,001 to over \$150,000	Overall
Very serious	73	64	43	59
Somewhat serious	17	24	28	23
Not very serious	10	12	30	17
Total	100	100	101	99

“Overall, these findings show that income and age play important roles in increasing the sense of economic vulnerability of the population in quite specific ways,” Nataf remarked.

Rising Real Estate Prices

The survey included a question that asked, “Has the rise in real estate prices affected your decision to purchase or sell your home?” Over one-third (36 percent) of the sample agreed that rising prices had affected their decisions. Many cited the need to consummate the purchase

“before prices went up even more” or an inability to “move up” due to the differential between the selling price of their existing house and the purchase price of the “move up” house.

TABLE 11: RISING REAL ESTATE PRICES AFFECTED BUYING/SELLING DECISIONS?

Rise Affected Decision to Buy or Sell?	Percent
Yes	36
No	61
No answer	3
Total	100

Public Support for State Issues

The survey next asked respondents’ opinions about three issues: amending the Maryland constitution to define marriage as only between a man and a woman; the “Wal-Mart” bill requiring large employers to spend at least 8 percent of their payrolls on health benefits; and a proposal to ban all smoking in bars and restaurants.

As seen on Table 12, a majority supported all three proposals.

TABLE 12: SUPPORT FOR VARIOUS ISSUES

Proposal	Support	Oppose	No opinion
An amendment to the Maryland constitution defining marriage as only between a man and a woman	53	39	8
The General Assembly overrode Governor Ehrlich’s veto of the so called “Wal-Mart Bill” which makes employers with over 10,000 employees spend at least 8 percent of their payrolls on health benefits. Do you support or oppose this bill?	62	31	7
There is a bill facing the General Assembly that would eliminate all smoking in bars and restaurants – do you support or oppose this bill?	64	34	2

Of the three, the least supported was the “gay marriage” amendment. Responses to this proposal were clearly generational, with retired people (60 percent support) and those 60 or over (70 percent support) providing the underpinnings of support for this idea. By contrast, only 39 percent of those between 18-29 were likely to agree with this proposal.

The “Wal-Mart” bill received a relatively even level of support from the various demographic groups. The smoking ban was slightly more likely to be supported by older persons (69 percent support) as opposed to younger ones (49 percent support).

Politics – Candidates, Issues

Several questions in the survey touched on candidate and issue preferences. The first of these asked, “Thinking ahead to the race for county executive in our county, what is the most important issue or candidate trait that would make you vote for a particular candidate?”

TABLE 13: REASONS FOR VOTING FOR A COUNTY EXECUTIVE CANDIDATE

	Cases	Percent
Experience	9	3.8
Candidate Traits		
Honest	57	21.7
Integrity, ethical	11	4.3
Share vision, convictions	9	3.3
For people	8	3.2
Competent, responsible	5	2.1
Other	5	1.8
Independent, open minded	4	1.5
Knows communities, knowledgeable	4	1.7
Partisan	3	1.1
Family values	1	0.4
Section total	107	41
Issues		
Education	43	16.3
Control growth	24	9.1
Lower taxes	17	6.6
Other	17	6.4
Environment	9	3.6
Budget, funding	8	3.1
Economic development	7	2.6
Property tax	7	2.5
Abortion	5	2.0
Crime	3	1.1
Health care	3	1.1
Horse farm	2	0.7
Section total	145	55.5
Total (overall)	261	100

As this question was open-ended, a wide variety of responses followed. These were grouped into three basic categories: experience, candidate trait, and issues. As there were relatively few responses within the “experience” category, no within-category breakdown was attempted. For the candidate trait and issues categories, a grouping of specific citations can be seen on Table 13.

There was a relatively even division between candidate traits (41 percent) and issues (55 percent). Only a few respondents (4 percent) cited specific elements of a candidate’s experience such as “having a background in education,” or “being a proven leader.”

Among candidate traits, honesty (22 percent overall) was the most cited characteristic, with integrity (4 percent) and “having a shared vision/convictions” tied with “being for the people” at 3 percent. Some respondents wanted a candidate who was partisan, while others sought one who was independent and open-minded.

Among issues, education clearly was the top issue (16 percent), followed by controlling growth (9 percent, 13 percent when “environment” is included) and lowering taxes/controlling spending (7 percent, 9 percent when “property taxes” is included).

Some demographic correlates include: 23 percent of those with incomes over \$100,000 and 29 percent of those between 18 and 29 identified education as the key issue (vs. 16 percent overall); 17 percent of those 60 or more and 13 percent of men identified controlling growth as a major issue (vs. 9 percent overall); 10 percent of those 30-44 and 11 percent of men chose lower taxes as a key issue (vs. 7 percent overall); and 26 percent of women said that honesty was a vital candidate trait (vs. 22 percent overall).

Governor’s Race, Most Important Issue facing Maryland

The survey asked respondents to choose among three gubernatorial candidates for the fall elections. As seen on Table 14, no candidate received a majority of support, although the incumbent governor, Robert Ehrlich Jr., did obtain a plurality.

TABLE 14: WHICH CANDIDATE DO YOU SUPPORT?

Candidate	Overall	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Men	Women
Robert Ehrlich Jr.	40	22	68	32	49	35
Martin O’Malley	23	39	10	18	18	29
Douglas Duncan	3	8	1	0	4	3
Undecided	30	31	22	50	29	33
Total	100	100	101	100	100	100

“Ehrlich beat Kathleen Kennedy Townsend by 30 percentage points in 2002. Being up by 17 isn’t such good news,” Nataf commented. However, Ehrlich does profit from a significant number of defections among Democrats, 22 percent of which voiced support for the Republican governor. Many Democrats (31 percent) were still undecided and clearly have not turned their attention to the race. “This might provide some inspiration for Doug Duncan, since he couldn’t be very pleased with his 31 point deficit among Democrats to Martin O’Malley,” Nataf said. “Democrats as a whole might relish the thought that a fifth of Republicans were undecided about the race, despite having one of their own as the incumbent.”

Also observed on Table 14 is the scope of the “gender gap” between the Republican and Democratic candidates. Women were a majority of O’Malley’s vote, while there was a 14 point difference between the male and female vote for Ehrlich. “The gender gap shows that Democrats have not been very successful in broadening their appeal to men, while Republicans are still facing an uphill battle to win over women,” Nataf said.

The survey also asked respondents to offer the “most important issue facing the state of Maryland at this time.”

Citizens volunteered an impressive array of issues (see Table 15). Education (13 percent), lower taxes/spending and crime (both 10 percent), the environment and economic development (both 9 percent) and growth/traffic (8 percent) were the most frequently cited.

TABLE 15: WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM FACING MARYLAND?

Issue	Cases	Percent
Education	34	12.5
Lower taxes, less spending	27	9.9
Crime	27	9.8
Environment	26	9.4
Economic development	25	9.1
Growth, planning, traffic	22	7.9
Budget	16	5.9
Other	16	5.9
Cost of living	14	5.3
Health care	14	5.1
Ports (sale of)	14	5.0
Utility bills	13	4.8
Gambling	8	2.8
Homeland security	6	2.1
Gays, abortion, morality	4	1.5
Gas prices	4	1.4
Immigrants	2	0.8
War	2	0.8
Total	274	100

Bush’s Job Approval, Most Important Issue facing Federal Government

Both the fall 2005 and the spring 2006 surveys included presidential job approval questions. The results for both surveys are shown on Table 16. Recent national polls have shown Bush’s job approval declining into the mid to upper 30 percent range; CSLI polls have also tracked a decline to a similar level.

“Anne Arundel County is generally a favorable environment for Republican ‘top of the ticket’ candidates and politicians. For Bush to have fallen to parity with a low national job approval value in this county indicates a sense of frustration with the president and his policies,” Nataf observed.

TABLE 16: PRESIDENT BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL

Issue	Fall 2005	Spring 2006
Approve	45	37
Disapprove	48	54
No opinion	7	8
Total	100	99

As seen on Table 17, the predictable polarization among partisans was evident, although the rather large percentage disapproving of Bush among Republicans (24 percent, vs. only 17 percent of Democrats approving) signals some defection among those in the president's party.

"Independents were virtually identical with Democrats in the percentage disapproving of Bush's job performance, suggesting that the approval of the president's job performance is narrowly concentrated within his partisan base," Nataf said.

TABLE 17: PRESIDENT BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL BY PARTY REGISTRATION

Issue	Overall	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Approve	37	17	65	19
Disapprove	54	78	24	77
No opinion	8	5	10	3
Total	100	100	99	99

As with the county and state, the survey asked about the most important question facing the federal government. The results are shown on Table 18.

The war in Iraq was clearly the most prominent issue raised by the sample (cited by 41 percent). When combined with similar concerns such as homeland security and terrorism (both 10 percent) as well as the Dubai ports issue (2 percent), nearly two-thirds of the respondents pointed to foreign affairs related concerns.

Among domestic concerns, the most cited issue was the government deficit and "excessive spending" (12 percent) along with the economy (5 percent), healthcare (4 percent), immigration (3 percent), and social security (2 percent).

A residue category directed at Bush himself, his leadership, and the administration's competence, credibility or honesty received 5 percent.

TABLE 18: MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Issue	Cases	Percent
War in Iraq	121	40.9
Deficit	35	11.8
Homeland security	30	10.2
Terrorism	28	9.5
Bush, leadership, competence, credibility, honesty	15	5.1
Economy	13	4.5
Health care	12	3.9
Other	9	3.1
Immigration	8	2.6
Social Security	6	1.9
Ports	5	1.7
Budget	4	1.4
Katrina	3	0.9
Environment	2	0.7
Partisanship	2	0.7
Taxes	2	0.6
Social issues	1	0.5
Total	295	100

Cancer Rates, Causes, Treatment

This survey asked a series of questions about cancer-related topics. The first of these was “How serious a concern are cancer rates in Anne Arundel County?” As shown on Table 19, a majority of respondents said that rates were a “very serious” concern.

TABLE 19: CANCER RATES – HOW SERIOUS A CONCERN?

Seriousness	Percent
Very serious	54
Somewhat serious	25
Not very serious	10
No opinion	11
Total	100

When asked to assess the importance of various causes of cancer, respondents pointed to smoking (77 percent saying “very important”) and air or water pollution (67 percent) as primary causes (see Table 20).

TABLE 20: CANCER CAUSES

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	No answer	Total
Smoking	77	17	5	1	100
Air or water pollution	67	26	4	3	100
Exercise	55	33	11	2	100
Heredity	55	34	8	4	100
Eating habits	44	42	12	3	100
Work-related factors	39	41	15	4	100

Asked to agree or disagree with descriptions of cancer treatment in the county, most respondents thought that services were accessible (67 percent) and of high quality (56 percent) with compassionate providers (53 percent). They were less certain about the affordability of services (27 percent).

Slightly over one fifth (28 percent) claimed to have had some experience with cancer treatment providers in Anne Arundel County. Most (61 percent) said that they were able to get all their treatment needs addressed within the county

Charitable Causes – Awareness, Impression, Contribution

The spring 2006 survey asked the public about its awareness of various charitable causes, whether the respondent had a positive, negative or neutral impression of each, and whether any contribution had been offered during the last two years.

The Salvation Army and Red Cross had the highest name recognition (99, 98 percent) as well as the highest positive impressions (89, 80 percent). They were also the two charities with the highest likelihood of having a respondent contribute (78, 64 percent).

TABLE 21: CHARITABLE CAUSES – AWARENESS, IMPRESSION, CONTRIBUTION

	Heard of it		Positive/Negative/Neutral			Contributed over 2 years		
	Yes	No	1	2	3	Yes	No	Unsure
The YWCA	88	11	63	4	33	14	85	1
The YMCA	96	4	64	5	31	11	88	1
The United Way	95	4	56	17	26	46	58	2
The Salvation Army	99	1	89	4	7	78	22	0
The Red Cross	98	1	80	10	10	64	35	1
The Chrysalis House	25	74	31	3	53	10	74	16

The United Way and YMCA also had high name recognition (95, 96 percent), but did not have similarly high positive impression scores (56, 64 percent). While 46 percent claimed to have contributed to the United Way over the last two years, only 11 percent mentioned having done so for the YMCA.

The YWCA had a slightly lower name recognition score (88 percent), but a positive impression score (63 percent) virtually identical to the YMCA. A slightly larger number (14 percent) said that they had contributed to the YWCA than the YMCA.

The Chrysalis House, a residential treatment facility for women in Crownsville, was least well known (25 percent name recognition), but had a high ratio of positive to negative scores (31 percent positive, 3 percent negative), with 10 percent saying they had contributed to it over the last two years.

Seniors, Services

The survey asked several questions about seniors and services directed toward them. The first question attempted to gauge the size of the senior population by asking, “Is someone in your immediate family going to be 55 or older in the next three years?” Three-quarters of the sample responded affirmatively. “This points to the aging of the population and the likely need for greater attention to the ways in which seniors’ needs are being met,” said Nataf.

The second question asked, “How familiar are you with the services available to seniors in this area such as transportation assistance or volunteer opportunities – very familiar, somewhat, or not very familiar?” Table 22 shows the results: a majority (55 percent) was not very familiar with seniors’ services.

TABLE 22: FAMILIARITY WITH SENIORS’ SERVICES

Level of familiarity	Percent
Very familiar	16
Somewhat familiar	28
Not very familiar	55
No answer	1
Total	100

TABLE 23: FAMILIARITY WITH SENIORS’ SERVICES BY AGE GROUP

Level of familiarity	19 to 29	30 to 44	45 to 59	60 or more	Overall
Very familiar	6	7	20	26	16
Somewhat familiar	25	28	24	38	28
Not very familiar	67	65	55	36	55
No answer	2	0	1	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 23 shows that the familiarity level increases with age, but that over one-third of seniors thought they were “not very familiar” with services that might be available to them.

When asked, “How confident are you that should the need arise, you could become very familiar with seniors services – are you very confident, somewhat confident, or not very confident?” a majority (59 percent) said “very confident” (28 percent said “somewhat confident” and 11 percent “not very confident,” 3 percent “no answer.”) There was a small rise in confidence with age such that among those 60 or more, 62 percent said they were “very

confident” and only 7 percent said “not very confident.” Only 52 percent of those between 18-29 were “very confident;” 15 percent were “not very confident.”

The final question in this series asked, “Thinking about the needs of seniors living in Anne Arundel County, what you do think is the most pressing need they face?”

TABLE 24: SENIORS - MOST PRESSING NEEDS

Need	Percent
Health care	41
Affordable housing	12
Assisted living	7
Adequate income	7
Drug costs	6
Cost of living	6
Transportation	6
Taxes	4
Independence	4
Other	4
Social isolation	2
Seniors facilities/programs	2
Total	101

Health care was the most cited need (41 percent), with respondents mentioning the need for affordable health care, quality care and the like. Related categories included the cost of drugs (6 percent) and the availability and cost of assisted living, nursing homes and long-term care (7 percent). Several respondents mentioned economic factors such as affordable housing (12 percent), the concern over having adequate income (7 percent), the cost of living (6 percent), transportation (6 percent) and the burden of property taxes (4 percent).

“The public is apparently pointing to the diminished earning capacity of seniors, whose health may require significant outlays while income is depressed,” Nataf observed.

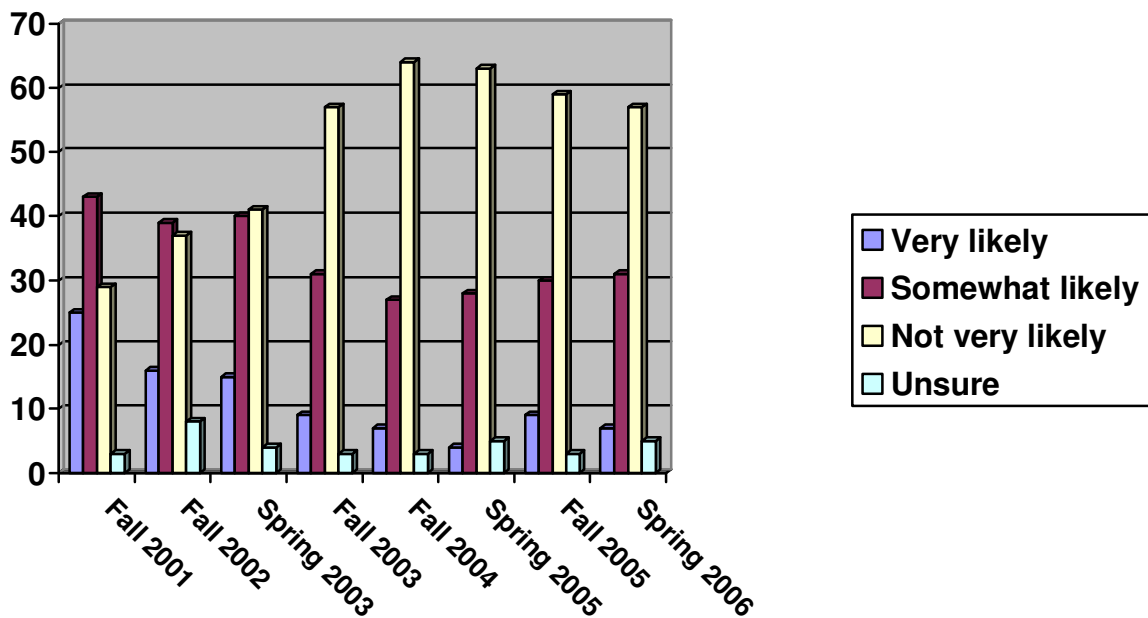
Terrorism: Likelihood of Attack, Government Preparedness

For the last few years, CSLI polls have asked about the likelihood of a terrorist attack on a location within Anne Arundel County. As shown on Table 25 and Graph 4, there has been little change since fall 2005. Most respondents (57 percent) think a terrorist attack is “not very likely.”

TABLE 25: HOW LIKELY IS TERRORIST ATTACK WITHIN THE COUNTY DURING THE NEXT YEAR?

	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Spring 2003	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Spring 2005	Fall 2005	Spring 2006
Very likely	25	16	15	9	7	4	9	7
Somewhat likely	43	39	40	31	27	28	30	31
Not very likely	29	37	41	57	64	63	59	57
Unsure/no answer	3	8	4	3	3	5	2	5

Graph 4: Likelihood of Terrorist Attack in County



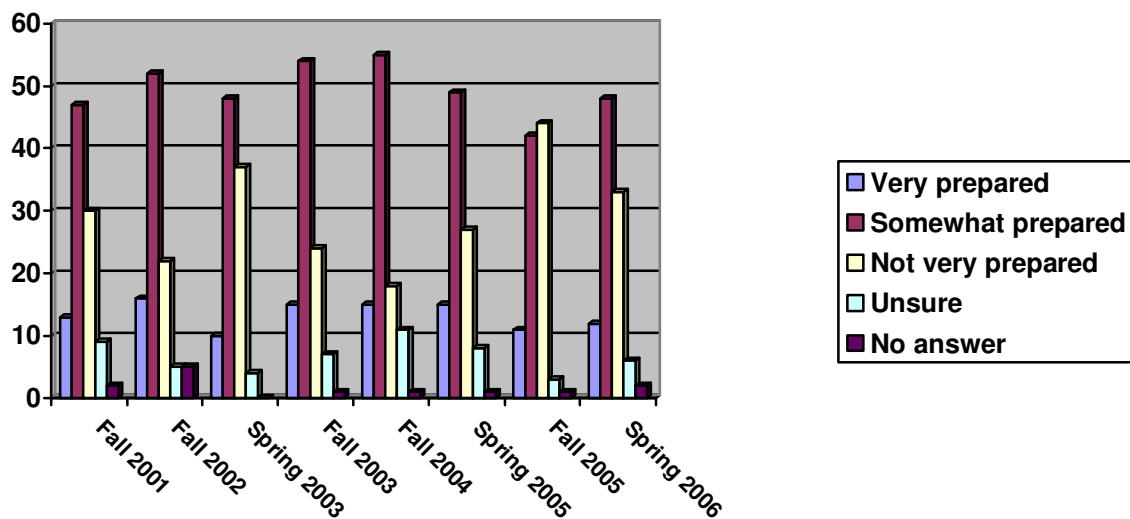
The next terrorism question asked: “How prepared do you believe local authorities to be in the event of a terrorist attack in Anne Arundel County?” As seen on Table 26 and Graph 5, in fall the answer choice “not very prepared” received its highest level ever recorded in a CSLI survey (44 percent); by spring, there was an apparent return to levels more typical of the “pre-Katrina” pattern (33 percent saying “not very prepared”).

“Evidently Katrina produced a sharp decline in the public’s confidence in government’s ability to help during a disaster, but as the media’s focus moved to other issues, public opinion reverted to a level similar to the pre-Katrina situation,” Nataf said.

TABLE 26: PERCEIVED PREPAREDNESS OF LOCAL GOVT. IN EVENT OF TERRORISM

	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Spring 2003	Fall 2003	Spring 2004	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Spring 2006
Very prepared	13	16	10	15	15	15	11	12
Somewhat prepared	47	52	48	54	55	49	42	48
Not very prepared	30	22	37	24	18	27	44	33
Unsure	9	5	4	7	11	8	3	6
No answer	2	5	0	1	1	1	1	2
Total	101	100	99	101	100	100	101	101

Graph 5: Government Preparedness



Methodology

The survey polled a random sample of 401 county residents who were at least 18 years old. Phone numbers were derived from a database of listed numbers as well as computer chosen, randomly assigned numbers. There is about a 5 percent statistical margin of error for the overall sample; the error is higher for subgroups. The dataset was weighted by demographic variables to better represent the general population. For information about this survey or CSLI, call Dan Nataf at 410-777-2733, or visit the CSLI Web site at www2.aacc.edu/csli where this press release is posted under “Recent Surveys.”

CSLI Semi-Annual Survey – Spring, 2006

1.0 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). N=399

Problem	Circle one
Crime	11
Terrorism	1
Drugs (illegal drugs, use or sale)	4
Growth/overpopulation- too much development	16
Traffic congestion/transportation problems	9
Education, problems with schools	13
Taxes – too high	10
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)	15
Other answer (write in:	6
Unsure/No Answer	8

2.0 Overall, would you say that the county is headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction? N=399

- (1) **Right** direction 55 percent
- (2) **Wrong** direction 26 percent
- (0) **Unsure** or don't know 18 percent

3.0 Thinking about our county's economy, how would you rate economic conditions in Anne Arundel County today -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor? N=400

- (1) Excellent 14 percent
- (2) Good 60 percent
- (3) Only Fair 23 percent
- (4) Poor 2 percent
- (0) No Answer 1 percent

4. The next few questions deal mostly with financial issues.

First, please tell me how serious a concern the following items are to you, very serious, somewhat serious or not very serious?

	Very serious	Somewhat serious	Not very serious	No answer
4.1 The cost of housing N=400	65	23	11	0
4.2 The cost of gasoline N=400	62	30	8	0
4.3 The cost of utilities such as electricity or natural gas N=399	63	29	8	0
4.4 The cost of property taxes N=392	49	37	12	2
4.5 The cost of health care N=391	58	28	11	2
4.6 The cost of education N=378	51	29	16	5
4.7 Not having enough money for retirement N=390	57	24	16	3

5.0 Has the rise in real estate prices affected your decision to purchase or sell your home? N=398

(1) Yes 36% (2) No 61% (0) No answer 3%

5.1 If yes: In what way? N=107

Turning to some issues in the news, please tell me whether you support or oppose the following policies:

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
6.1 An amendment to the Maryland constitution defining marriage as only between a man and a woman N=394	53	39	8
6.2 The General Assembly overrode Governor Ehrlich's veto of the so called "Wal Mart Bill" which makes employers with over 10000 employees spend at least 8 percent of their payrolls on health benefits. Do you support or oppose this bill? N=394	62	31	7
6.3 There is a bill facing the General Assembly that would eliminate all smoking in bars and restaurants – do you support or oppose this bill. N=395	64	34	2

7.0 Thinking ahead to the race for county executive in our county, what is the most important issue or candidate trait that would make you vote for a particular candidate?

See table in text. N=303

7.1 Focusing now on the race to become Maryland's next governor, which of the following candidates do you support to be the next governor?

(1) Democrat Douglas Duncan 3 percent (2) Democrat Martin O'Malley 23 percent
 (3) Republican Robert Ehrlich Jr. 40 percent (4) Undecided 30 percent
 (0) No answer 4 percent

7.2 What is the most important issue facing the state of Maryland at this time?

See table in text. N=315

7.3 Do you approve of the job George W. Bush is doing as President? N=393

(1) Approve 37 percent (2) Disapprove 54 percent (0) No answer 8 percent

7.4 What is the most important issue facing the federal government at this time?

See table in text. N=340

8.1 How serious a concern are cancer rates in Anne Arundel County, very, somewhat or not serious? N=387

(1) Very serious 54 percent (2) Somewhat serious 25 percent
(3) Not very serious 10 percent (0) No opinion 11 percent

8.2 How important are each of the following factors in increasing the risk for cancer in Anne Arundel County – Are they ‘very important,’ ‘somewhat important’ and ‘not very important?’

	(1) Very important	(2) Somewhat important	(3) Not very important	(0) No answer	Cases
8.2a Smoking	77	17	5	1	382
8.2b Eating habits	44	42	12	3	382
8.2c Exercise	55	33	11	2	382
8.2d Heredity	55	34	8	4	382
8.2e Air or water pollution	67	26	4	3	382
8.2f Work-related factors	39	41	15	4	381

8.3 Do you have any experience with cancer treatment from providers in Anne Arundel County, either for yourself or a family member? N=259

(1) Yes 28 percent (2) No 69 percent (0) No answer 2 percent

8.4 Would you agree or disagree with the following descriptions of cancer treatment in the county

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Cases
8.4a Services are accessible	67	5	28	348
8.4b Services are affordable	27	31	42	346
8.4c Services are of high quality	56	7	37	347
8.4d Providers are compassionate	53	7	41	345

8.5 Were you or your family member able to get all your cancer treatment needs met here in Anne Arundel County? N=259

(1) Yes 34 percent (2) No 22 percent (0) No answer 44 percent

The following questions have to do with donations to charities. We are not asking you to contribute to any cause, we are simply trying to understand how well residents know and support some local charities.

For the following charities, I will ask you if you have heard of each, whether you have a positive, negative or neutral impression of each, and whether you have contributed to each any time over the last two years.

	Heard of it		Positive/Negative/Neutral			Contributed over 2 years		
	Yes	No	1	2	3	Yes	No	Unsure
9.1 The YWCA N=378	88	11	63	4	33	14	85	1
9.2 The YMCA N=378	96	4	64	5	31	11	88	1
9.3 The United Way N=377	95	4	56	17	26	46	58	2
9.4 The Chrysalis House N=377	25	74	31	3	53	10	74	16
9.5 The Salvation Army N=379	99	1	89	4	7	78	22	0
9.6 The Red Cross N=380	98	1	80	10	10	64	35	1

Thinking about the aging of Anne Arundel County's population, the next few questions deal with seniors and services.

10. Is someone in your immediate family going to be 55 or older in the next three years? N=381

(1) Yes 75 percent (2) No 24 percent (0) No answer 1 percent

10.1 How familiar are you with the services available to seniors in this area such as transportation assistance or volunteer opportunities - very familiar, somewhat, or not very familiar? N=378

1) Very familiar 16 percent (2) Somewhat familiar 28 percent
(3) Not very familiar 55 percent (0) No answer 1 percent

10.2 How confident are you that should the need arise, you could become very familiar with seniors' services - are you very confident, somewhat confident, or not very confident? N=376

(1) Very confident 59 percent (2) Somewhat confident 28 percent (3) Not very confident 11 percent (0) No answer 3 percent

10.3 Thinking about the needs of seniors living in Anne Arundel County, what you do think is the most pressing need they face?

See table in text, N=337

11. In your opinion, how likely is a terrorist attack on a location within Anne Arundel County over the next year, very likely, somewhat likely or not very likely? N=379

- (1) Very likely 7 percent
- (2) Somewhat likely 31 percent
- (3) Not very likely 57 percent
- (0) Unsure, no answer 5 percent

11.1 How prepared do you believe local authorities to be in the event of a terrorist attack in Anne Arundel County, very prepared, somewhat prepared, not very prepared? N=380

- (1) Very prepared 12 percent
- (2) Somewhat prepared 48 percent
- (3) Not very prepared 33 percent
- (4) Unsure 6 percent
- (0) No answer 2 percent

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

12.0 With which political party, if any, are you registered? N=379

- (1) Democratic 40 percent
- (2) Republican 39 percent
- (3) Independent 9 percent
- (4) None (NOT REGISTERED) 8 percent
- (5) Other (e.g., Green Party) 1 percent
- (0) No Answer 3 percent

**13. Which of the following best describes your political beliefs: N=377
Liberal, Moderate or Conservative?**

- (1) Liberal 18 percent
- (2) Moderate 49 percent
- (3) Conservative 28 percent
- (0) Other, No Answer 5 percent

14. I am going to read some categories of age classifications. Please stop me when I reach the category in which your age falls. N=379

- (1) 19 to 29 15 percent
- (2) 30 to 44 27 percent
- (3) 45 to 59 34 percent
- (4) 60 or more 24 percent
- (0) No Answer 0 percent

15. 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. N=380

(1) less than a high school diploma	1 percent	(5) postgraduate work	23 percent
(2) a high school diploma	16 percent	(0) No answer	1 percent
(3) some college or a two-year degree	34 percent		
(4) completed college with a bachelor's degree	25 percent		

16. I am going to read some categories relating to income. Please stop me when I reach the category in which your household income falls. N=379

- (1) Less than \$30,000 9 percent
- (2) \$30,000 to \$50,000 16 percent
- (3) \$50,001 to \$75,000 21 percent
- (4) \$75,001-\$100,000 14 percent
- (5) \$100,001-\$150,000 20 percent
- (6) Over \$150,000 11 percent
- (0) No Answer 10 percent

17. Which of the following employment categories best describes your situation? N=379

Employed full time for a company in the private sector or self employed	44
Employed full time for government	18
Employed part time	9
Retired	22
Unemployed and seeking a job	2
Unemployed and not seeking a job	3
No answer	2

18. Regarding race, how would you describe yourself? N=379

- (1) Black/African American 11 percent
- (2) White 81 percent
- (3) Hispanic 2 percent
- (4) Asian 2 percent
- (5) Other or mixed racial background 2 percent
- (0) No answer 2 percent

19. Regarding religion, how would you describe yourself? N=378

- (1) Non-practicing, Agnostic or Atheist 15 percent
- (2) Evangelical or born again Christian 14 percent
- (3) Protestant 27 percent
- (4) Catholic 32 percent
- (5) Jewish 1 percent
- (6) Other 6 percent
- (0) No answer 5 percent

20. What is your current marital status? N=381

(1) Single 18 percent	(2) Married 66 percent	(3) Separated or divorced 8 percent	(4) Widowed 7 percent	(5) Other 1 percent	(0) Won't say 0 percent
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21. How many years have you lived in Anne Arundel County?__median 20 years N=375

22. Gender of respondent to whom you were speaking: N=397

(1) Male 39 percent

(2) Female 61 percent

(0) No answer 0 percent (Weighted to 49 percent male, 51 percent female)

23. ZIP code

ZIP code	Percent
20711	0.6
20724	2.3
20733	0.5
20751	0.4
20754	0.2
20755	0.8
20758	0.2
20764	2.0
20776	0.9
20778	0.5
21012	4.3
21032	2.2
21035	0.6
21037	3.5
21054	1.7
21056	0.3
21060	2.5
21061	9.7
21076	1.8
21090	1.5
21108	5.3
21113	3.2
21114	4.6
21122	13.7
21140	0.6
21144	6.3
21146	7.8
21226	1.3
21401	11.1
21403	4.8
21405	0.5
21409	4.1