County Survey Focuses on Substance Abuse, the Economy, State and Local Policies

A survey of 387 Anne Arundel County residents conducted March 30 to April 2 by students assisting the Center for the Study of Local Issues (CSLI) at Anne Arundel Community College asked respondents about a variety of issues.

A distinctive part of the spring 2015 survey focused on substance abuse. Respondents were most likely to know a "friend or family member" with alcoholism (31 percent), followed by a "dependence on marijuana" (18 percent), "dependence on prescription pain killers (16 percent), "heroin consumption or overdose" (11 percent) and a "dependence on cocaine" (6 percent).

In terms of treatment options for those with heroin dependencies, the most favored was "expanded treatment options for those who are insured" (80 percent) and "increased government funding for in-patient treatment clinics" (61 percent). Respondents were more likely to favor "increased jail sentences" for heroin distributors (84 percent) rather than those "convicted of heroin possession" (39 percent).

The survey also asked a range of questions about the local economy and its impact upon residents. General attitudes about the state of Maryland's transportation system, regulation of the environment and businesses were evaluated. A set of issues including eliminating state income tax on the retirement income of police, fire and military personnel, gasoline taxes, tax breaks for contributions to private schools, monitoring the use of chicken manure by farmers and a variety of measures to help balance the state budget were also covered.

A detailed review of these issues as well as other results follows the summary of findings. The actual questionnaire and percentages can be found in Appendix A at the end of the press release.

Summary of Main Findings

Most important problem facing county residents: One quarter of all respondents identified the category of "high taxes" as the most important problem, while 13 percent mentioned crime and 12 percent said the economy. (See p. 4.)

Perceptions of the economy: The survey found that 57 percent viewed the county's economy as excellent or good – up sharply from last fall when it was 44 percent; 41 percent said the same for Maryland's economy (an increase of 13 points) and 27 percent favorably rated the national economy, up 11 points. (See p. 6.)

Economic conditions experienced by individuals: Starting in March 2008 a variety of items were added to the semi-annual survey to evaluate respondents' economic experiences and perceptions. The spring 2015 survey found that most economic indicators improved since the October 2014 survey: an 8 percentage point decrease in concern about taxes; a 6 point decrease in the percentage saying that wages or salaries were not rising as fast as the cost of living; and a 2 point decrease in those saying that "Health care insurance is

unavailable, too expensive or inadequate." There was a 5 point drop in the percentage saying that they were "facing the possibility of unemployment" (from 17 to 12 percent). (See p. 10.)

Consumer confidence: There were positive changes in three of the four measures of economic expectations over the next twelve months, with improvements in the forecast for growth, employment and inflation. Only personal financial situation was unchanged. (See p. 12.)

General perceptions of Maryland and various institutions: This survey included a set of propositions about Maryland – its transportation system, regulation of the environment and business, welfare system, its attractiveness as a retirement site, the Chesapeake Bay – as well as about AACC and public libraries. For example, 61 percent agreed that the "Chesapeake Bay is too polluted to swim in" and 25 percent agreed that "Maryland is a good place in which to retire." (See p. 13.)

County and state proposals: Several proposals reflecting state initiatives were presented to respondents. They could support or oppose various measures to help balance the budget (reduce state workers' salaries – 19 percent said "support") or express their views about tax proposals (eliminate state taxes on police, fire and military retirement income – supported by 49 percent). (See p. 15.)

Officeholders' job approval: Job approval for the newly elected governor, Larry Hogan, was strong at 56 approve (former governor Martin O'Malley's respective percentage was only 27 percent last fall). President Obama saw his job approval percentages move up 5 points to 37 percent. County executive Steve Schuh (45 percent) did not quite match previous county executive Laura Neuman's approval (50 percent) but this partly reflected a very large "no answer" percentage (42 percent). (See p. 16.)

Which party do you trust? The percentage favoring Democrats dropped slightly from 34 to 32 percent since last fall. The Republican percentage dropped a bit, falling from 39 to 36 percent, with the percentage saying "neither" rising from 21 to 23 percent. (See p. 18.)

Right direction/wrong direction: The percentage of those saying that the **county** was moving in the right direction was up 9 points to 58 percent. A dramatic increase was seen in the percentage of those saying that the **state** was going in the right direction – 47 percent and up 20 points. The percentage applicable to the **country** was up mildly from 23 percent to 27 percent. (See p. 20.)

Substance abuse: The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they knew "any friends or family members who have any of the following health concerns." Alcoholism was the most commonly cited (31 percent) followed by "dependence on marijuana" (18 percent). Only 11 percent cited "heroin consumption or overdose." When asked about a variety of approaches for dealing with "rising heroin use" the expansion of treatment options for those who are insured (80 percent) was most favored, along with increasing government funding for in-patient clinics (61 percent). Far more respondents favored increasing jail sentences for those convicted of heroin distribution (84 percent) than for those found with heroin possession (39 percent). (See p. 21.)

Methodology: The survey polled a random sample of 387 county residents who were at least 18 years old. It was conducted March 30, 31, April 1 and 2, 2015 during evening hours. Phone numbers were derived from a database of listed landline numbers, cell phone numbers as well as computer chosen, randomly assigned numbers. There was about a 5 percent statistical margin of error for the overall sample; the error rate was higher for subgroups such as "Democrats" or "men." 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 website for results for this and previous surveys: www2.aacc.edu/csli.

Detailed Review of Survey Findings

The Most Important Problem Facing Residents

Since spring 2008, CSLI surveys have tended to show high levels of concern about the state of the economy in answer to the question, "What is the most important problem facing the residents of Anne Arundel County at the present time?"

The high concern peaked in fall 2011 (when 48 percent mentioned the economy). Since that time, a gradual diminution of concern has been observed. As shown in Table 1 and Graph 1, the spring 2015 survey witnessed a further diminution of concern with the economy (12 percent – down 6 points from fall 2014). By contrast, the percentage citing "high taxes" continued at near record highs (25 percent – down 3 points from fall 2014). The percentage citing crime (13 percent) rose to its highest level in years. Education (9 percent) remained slightly more cited than traffic problems or the environment (both 8 percent). (See the frequency distribution in Appendix A for a complete list.)

Table 1: "Most Important Problem Facing Residents" – Spring 2008 to Spring 2015[1]

	Sp '08	Fa '08	Sp '09	Fa '09	Sp '10	Fa '10	Sp '11	Fa '11	Sp '12	Fa '12	Sp '13	Fa '13	Sp '14	Fa '14	Sp '15
Taxes – too high	16	12	10	12	11	13	11	9	17	17	19	19	22	28	**25**
Crime / drugs	6	4	6	8	6	6	6	8	4	7	5	9	8	6	**13**
Economy	23	38	48	33	36	36	35	48	30	27	23	16	16	18	**12**
Education / school problems	12	10	8	7	8	9	10	5	7	8	8	6	12	11	**9**
Traffic congestion/ problems	7	6	4	5	6	6	3	5	5	6	5	4	4	5	**8**
Growth / development	12	9	5	5	5	2	4	4	4	3	2	4	4	2	**2**
Unsure/no answer	9	7	8	10	10	8	12	8	9	9	10	12	11	12	**10**
Other answer	15	14	11	21	17	21	19	13	24	23	29	30	23	19	**21**
Total	100	100	100	101	99	101	100	100	100	100	101	100	100	101	**100**

Note: In this and other tables, totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding. Unless otherwise noted, all numeric values included in tables and graphs are percentages.

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[1] From spring 2007 to spring 2010, surveys' answer categories for "most important problem" 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."

Graph 1: Most Important Problem – Percentage Citing a Category
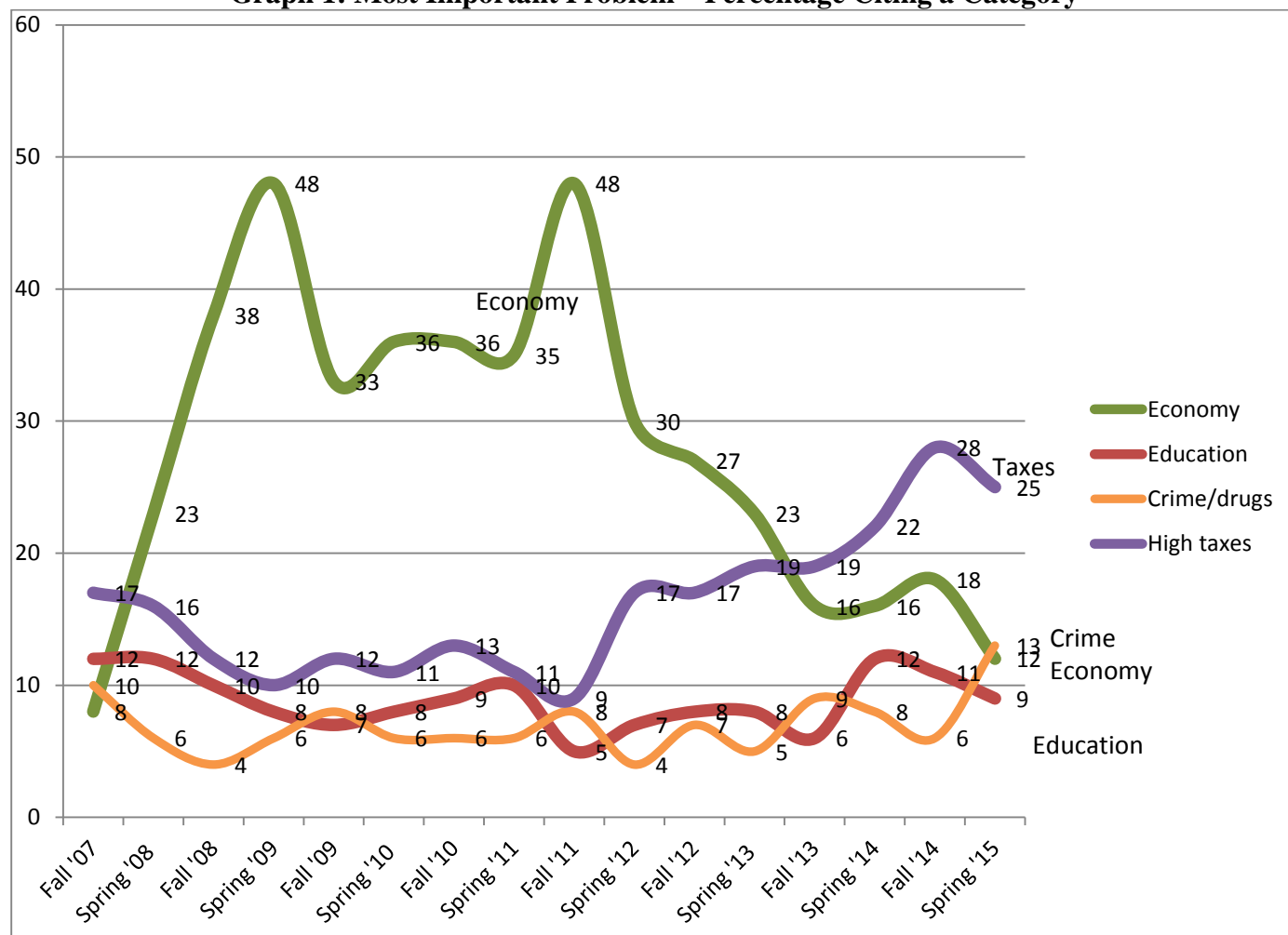
Rating Economic Conditions – Anne Arundel County

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 shown on Table 2, since March 2007 the county's historical average saying that the economy was a combined "excellent" or "good" was 52 percent. As shown on Graph 2, since falling from historic highs in 2007, the percentage has been oscillating up and down within a narrow band of 44 percent on the low side, to 57 percent on the high side – obtained this spring. The recent uptick was a notable movement away from the recent low of 44 percent last fall.

Table 2: Perceptions of County Economic Conditions – Spring 2007 to Spring 2015

	Sp '07	Fa '07	Sp '08	Fa '08	Sp '09	Fa '09	Sp '10	Fa '10	Sp '11	Fa '11	Sp '12	Fa '12	Sp '13	Fa '13	Sp '14	Fa '14	Sp '15	Average
Excellent+Good	**71**	**69**	**55**	**49**	**46**	**48**	**44**	**45**	**49**	**48**	**51**	**48**	**49**	**53**	**50**	**44**	**57**	**52**
Excellent	12	10	6	6	2	4	3	3	3	4	2	5	3	6	8	4	**5**	**5**
Good	59	59	49	43	44	44	41	42	46	44	49	43	46	47	42	40	**52**	**46**
Fair	22	25	36	37	43	38	41	45	38	40	37	39	38	35	40	41	**33**	**37**
Poor	4	5	8	12	10	11	13	8	12	11	11	12	11	10	9	12	**7**	**10**
Don't know	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	3	3	3	2	**4**	**2**
Total	100	101	101	100	101	100	100	100	101	101	100	101	101	101	101	99	**101**	**101**

Graph 2: Percentage Saying "Excellent" or "Good" about the County's Economy
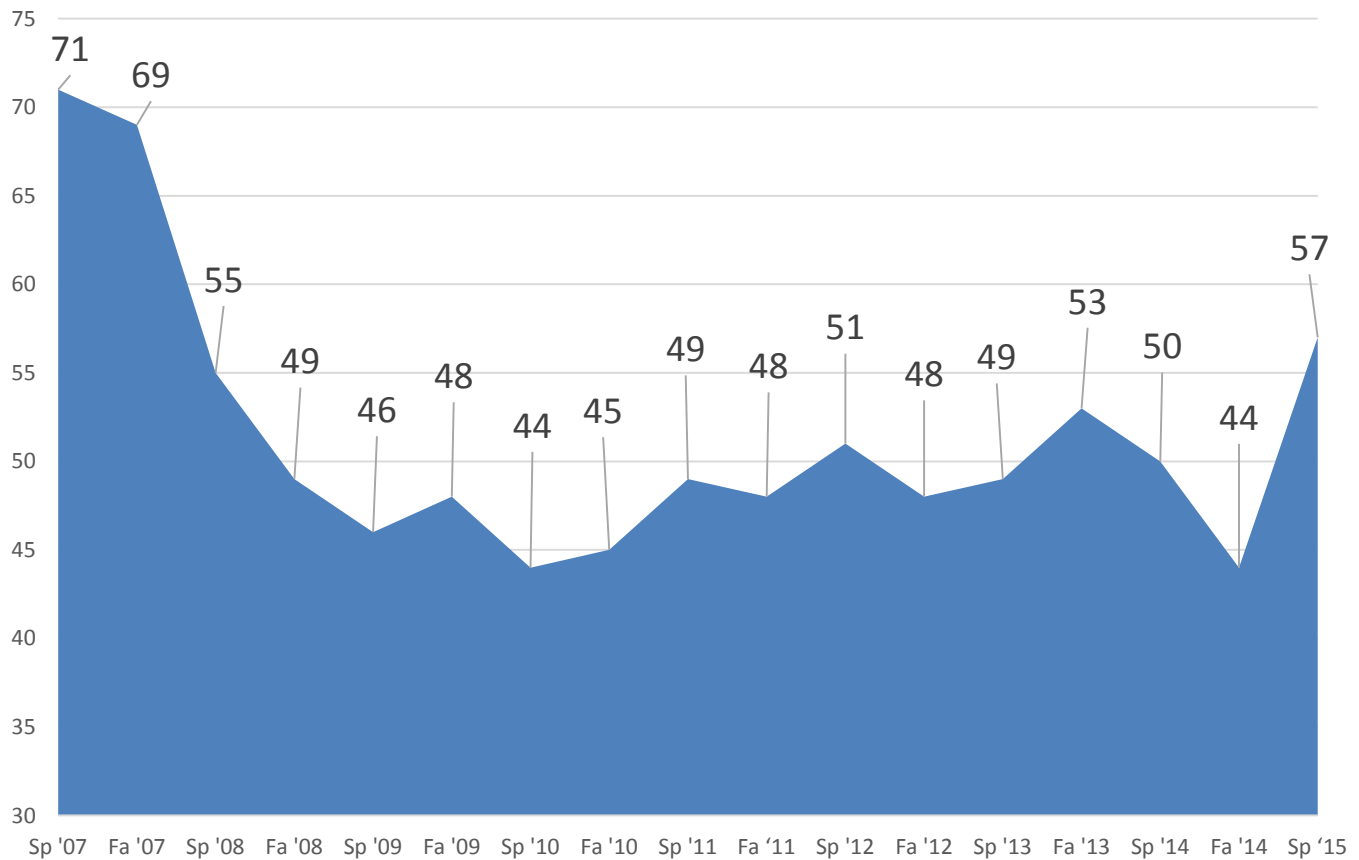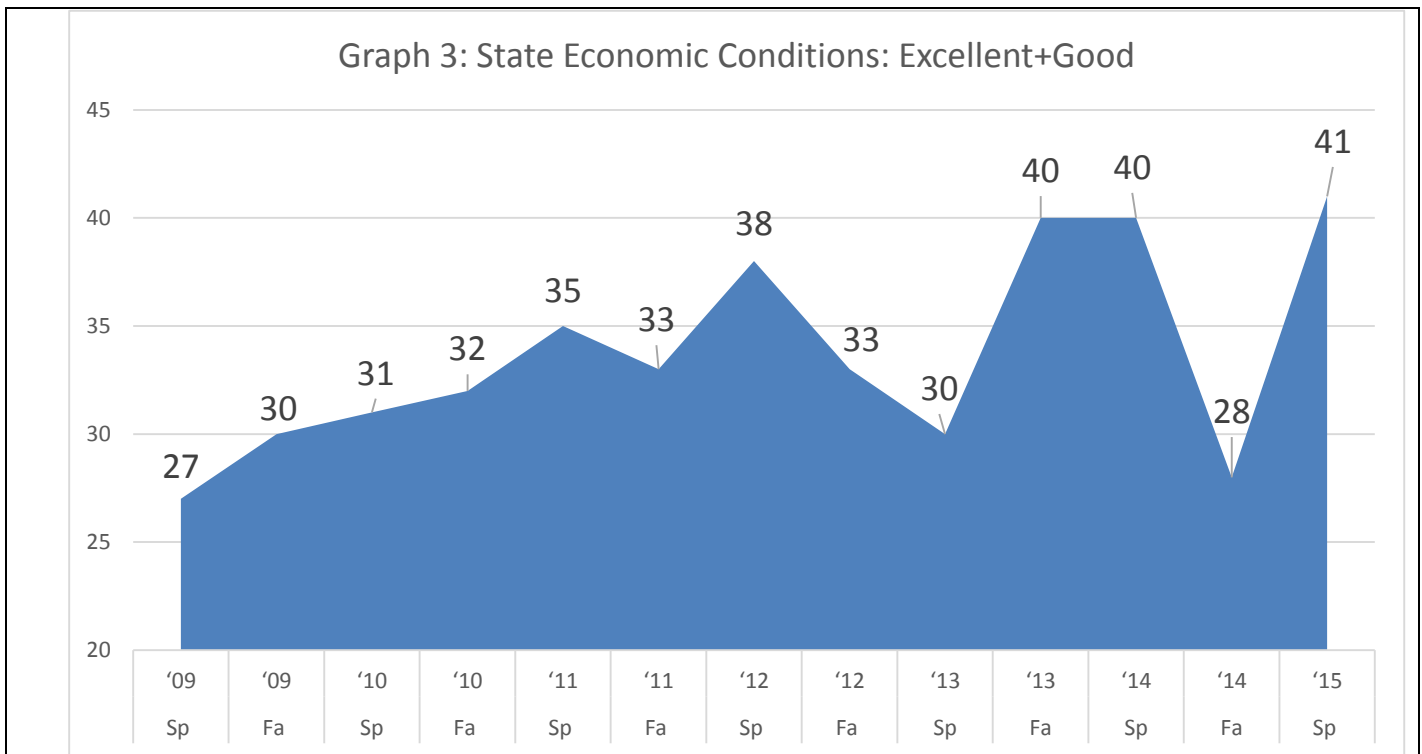
Rating Economic Conditions – Maryland and the National Economy

Since spring 2009, the question about rating economic conditions has been extended to the state of Maryland and the country overall.

Regarding the state economy, Table 3 shows that the average "excellent+good" percentage is 34 percent. The low (27 percent) over that period was in the depths of the Great Recession (spring 2009) while the high was obtained this spring (41 percent). As illustrated in Graph 3, last fall the percentage (28 percent) nearly equaled the historic low– foreshadowing an electoral loss for the incumbent Democrats in the November 2014 race for governor. While the percentage rebounded sharply with the election of Governor Larry Hogan, the 40 percent mark had been hit as recently as one year ago under the previous administration. The overall percentage still lags considerably behind the score for the county.

Table 3: Perceptions of State Economic Conditions – Spring 2009 to Spring 2015

	Sp '09	Fa '09	Sp '10	Fa '10	Sp '11	Fa '11	Sp '12	Fa '12	Sp '13	Fa '13	Sp '14	Fa '14	Sp '15	Avg.
Excellent+good	27	30	31	32	35	33	38	33	30	40	40	28	**41**	**34**
Excellent	1	2	2	1	3	1	4	3	1	4	4	1	**3**	**2**
Good	26	28	29	31	32	32	34	30	29	36	36	27	**38**	**31**
Fair	49	45	46	47	43	41	40	42	41	36	40	40	**39**	**42**
Poor	22	21	21	19	21	24	21	23	24	21	18	30	**16**	**22**
Don't know	2	4	2	2	1	2	2	2	4	4	2	2	**4**	**3**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	101	100	99	101	100	100	**100**	**100**

Graph 3: State Economic Conditions: Excellent+Good

Rating Economic Conditions –The National Economy

As shown on Graph 4, economic appraisal of the national economy has always lagged significantly behind both the county and state.
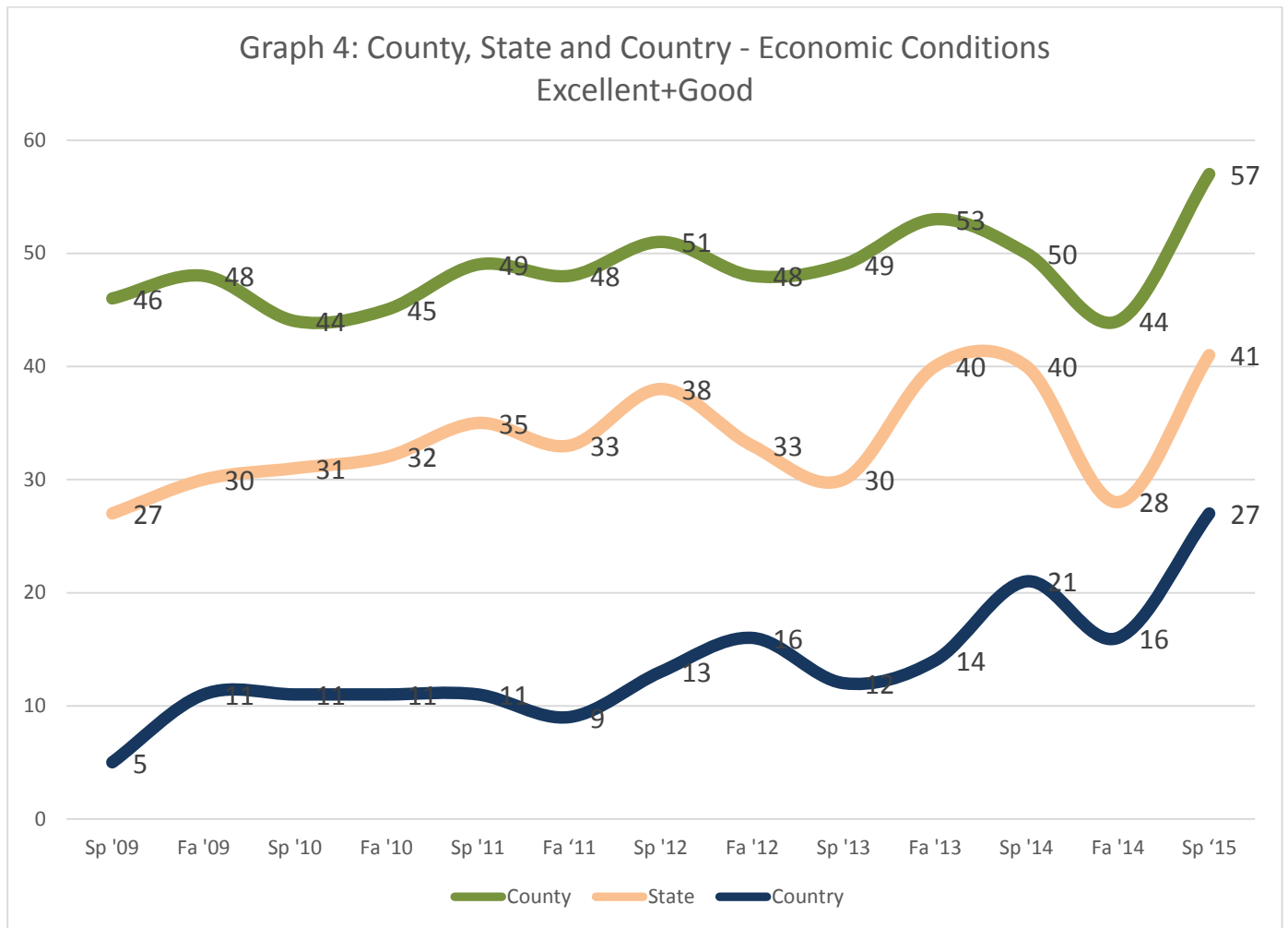
Graph 4: County, State and Country - Economic Conditions
Excellent+Good

County: 46, 48, 44, 45, 49, 48, 51, 48, 49, 53, 50, 44, 57
State: 27, 30, 31, 32, 35, 33, 38, 33, 30, 40, 40, 28, 41
Country: 5, 11, 11, 11, 11, 9, 13, 16, 12, 14, 21, 16, 27

(x-axis: Sp '09, Fa '09, Sp '10, Fa '10, Sp '11, Fa '11, Sp '12, Fa '12, Sp '13, Fa '13, Sp '14, Fa '14, Sp '15)

Legend: County, State, Country

Table 3a shows that these measures of economic appraisal are highly correlated.

Table 3a: Correlations between County, State and Country

	County	State	Country
County	--	.829**	.642*
State	.829**	--	.676*
Country	.642*	.676*	--

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The upswing in optimism reflected in the state and county percentages was also found in the percentage for the national economy, which went up 11 points to a high of 27 percent.

The national mood as measured by the Gallup polling organization was similar – 26 percent saying excellent or good. [2] The Gallup data indicates that the national trend has been stuck around this percent for the last few months.

Table 4: Perceptions of National Economic Conditions– Spring 2009 to Spring 2015

	Sp '09	Fa '09	Sp '10	Fa '10	Sp '11	Fa '11	Sp '12	Fa '12	Sp '13	Fa '13	Sp '14	Fa '14	Sp '15
Excellent+Good	**5**	**11**	**11**	**11**	**11**	**9**	**13**	**16**	**12**	**14**	**21**	**16**	**27**
Excellent	0	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	**1**	**3**
Good	5	10	10	9	9	7	12	14	10	13	20	**15**	**24**
Fair	30	39	42	41	43	28	47	37	38	31	41	**42**	**32**
Poor	63	48	46	47	45	62	39	46	47	55	37	**40**	**37**
Don't know	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	3	1	1	**2**	**4**
Total	99	100	101	100	101	101	101	100	100	101	100	**100**	**100**

Economic Conditions Applying to Respondents

Respondents were asked: "Thinking about your personal circumstances, please tell me whether any of these economic conditions apply to you or your household." Table 5 shows the results for recent CSLI surveys. The fall 2014 survey significantly modified the list of items included – two new items were added ("Hard to afford the cost of education" and "Hard to afford the cost of food and groceries"), while several previous items were dropped. Other modifications have occurred over the years, such as the inclusion of questions asking about a "salary increase or other increase in income recently" and whether the respondent had "found a new or better job recently" – these were items introduced in fall 2011.

Table 5 is ordered by the highest percentage of respondents saying a condition applied in spring 2015 – the ranking order was unchanged from fall 2014. Continued anxiety about the loss of purchasing power was suggested by the high scores received by "taxes are too high" (66 percent) and "wages/salaries are not rising as fast as the cost of living" (57 percent), although both of these were down somewhat from fall 2014.

Another indicator focused on economic anxiety was "Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate." This indicator had dropped between fall 2013 and spring 2014 – possibly suggesting an impact of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). However, last fall showed a rise from 26 to 40 percent; in spring 2015, the percentage remained at historically high levels (38 percent). The cause for this lasting jump in "health care insurance anxiety" is unclear.

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[2] See http://www.gallup.com/poll/110821/gallup-daily-us-economic-conditions.aspx for Gallup's running totals for this question. This Gallup national percentage was for the period April 1-3 2015.
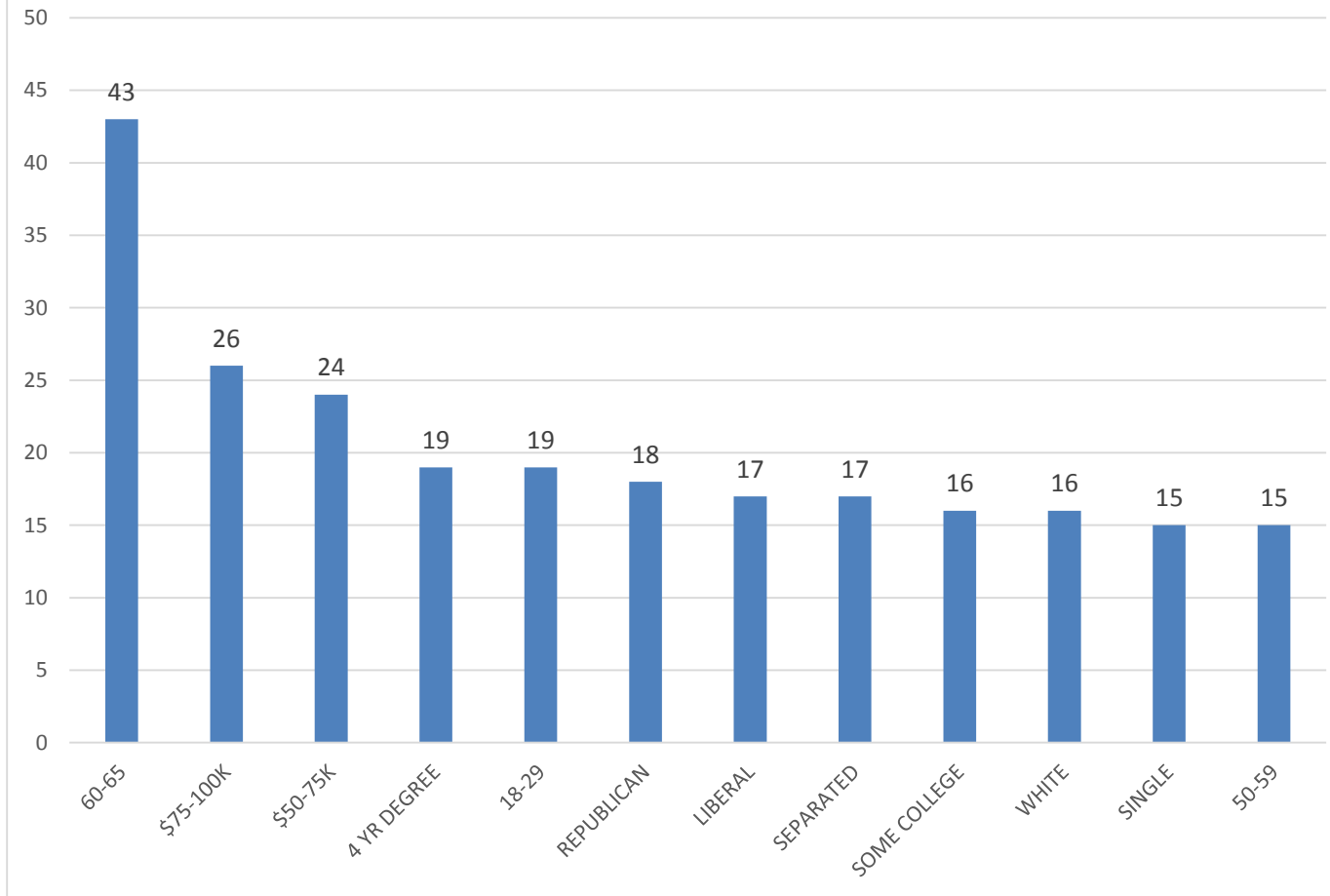
Table 5: Economic Conditions Applying to Personal Circumstances – Fall 2008 to Spring 2015

Condition	Fa '08	Sp '09	Fa '09	Sp '10	Fa '10	Sp '11	Fa '11	Sp '12	Fa '12	Sp '13	Fa '13	Sp '14	Fa '14	Sp '15
Taxes are too high in relation to the govt. services provided	58	59	59	63	60	63	58	63	63	62	66	65	74	**66**
Wages or salaries are not rising as fast as the cost of living	59	55	55	56	56	63	59	66	59	59	60	57	63	**57**
Hard to afford the cost of education	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	45	**41**
Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate	30	29	33	32	34	35	32	32	27	32	29	26	40	**38**
Received a salary increase or other increase in income recently	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	26	35	31	34	29	36	33	**37**
Hard to afford the cost of food and groceries	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	33	**31**
Facing the possibility of unemployment	15	24	24	19	21	20	21	17	14	19	17	16	17	**12**
Found a new or better job recently	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	14	16	11	14	16	14	12	**11**
Delay in making a major purchase such as a home or car	n.a.	51	46	47	44	47	51	45	38	42	38	43	n.a.	n.a.
Hard to afford cost of utilities such as electricity or gas	50	53	42	44	43	46	39	39	32	31	29	37	n.a.	n.a.
Significant losses in your stock or retirement accounts	71	75	70	56	60	52	60	44	38	32	32	26	n.a.	n.a.
Hard to afford cost of transportation	32	21	17	21	24	41	30	36	30	27	24	24	n.a.	n.a.
Unable to find affordable housing	11	12	13	15	10	14	11	15	9	12	14	10	n.a.	n.a.
Facing the possibility of house foreclosure or loss	4	6	8	7	7	9	8	8	4	7	7	4	n.a.	n.a.

Graph 5 shows the 10 demographic groups with the greatest increases in "applies" scores for the health insurance measure by ranking the groups by the difference in the spring 2014 and spring 2015 scores. All the groups had greater than the 12 percent average difference for the two surveys. As can be seen, age and income groups report the greatest differences in scores, with an extraordinary 43 point difference for those in the 60-65 age group. A much smaller 19 point difference was evident for those between 18 and 29. Among income groups, middle income groups earning between $50,000 and $75,000 (24 point increase) and $75,001 to $100,000 (26 point increase) were the most affected.[3]

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[3] Caution should be used when evaluating such cross-tabulations since the sample sizes for these groups is very small compared to the sample overall. Thus there were only 55 individuals within the 60-65 age group for spring 2015. Margins of error for such small subgroups are much higher.

Graph 5: Spring 15 Health Care Insurance "Applies" Minus Spring 14

Category	Value
60-65	43
$75-100K	26
$50-75K	24
4 YR DEGREE	19
18-29	19
REPUBLICAN	18
LIBERAL	17
SEPARATED	17
SOME COLLEGE	16
WHITE	16
SINGLE	15
50-59	15

There was some positive movement among two indicators: a small rise (from 33 to 37 percent) in the percentage of those saying that they had "received a salary increase or other increase in income lately." There was a relatively large drop in the percentage of those saying that they were facing "the possibility of unemployment" (from 17 to 12 percent). Compared to fall 2014, all indicators but "found a new or better job lately" were improved.

Table 5a shows the impact of income on the indicators of economic conditions applying to personal circumstances. Dividing the sample of respondents into those earning $75,000 or less into one group and those earning over $75,000 into a second group, it is clear that almost all desirable outcomes favor the higher income group. Over twice as many lower income respondents mentioned that it was hard to afford the cost of food and groceries. They were much more likely to point to wage stagnation, or challenges obtaining adequate health insurance. They were nearly three times more likely to be "facing the possibility of unemployment, and less than half as likely to have received an increase in income recently.

Table 5a: Income Groups and Economic Indicators

Condition	Under $75,000	$75,000+	Under $75k-Over 75K	Signif.
Hard to afford cost of food and groceries	52	**19**	**33**	.01
Wages or salaries are not rising as fast as the cost of living	76	**54**	**22**	.01
Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate	51	**32**	**19**	.01
Facing the possibility of unemployment	20	**7**	**13**	.01
Hard to afford the cost of education	45	**39**	**6**	.48
Found a new or better job recently	**12**	10	2	.02
Taxes are too high in relation to the government services provided	66	66	0	.34
Received a salary increase or other increase in income recently	18	**44**	**-26**	.01

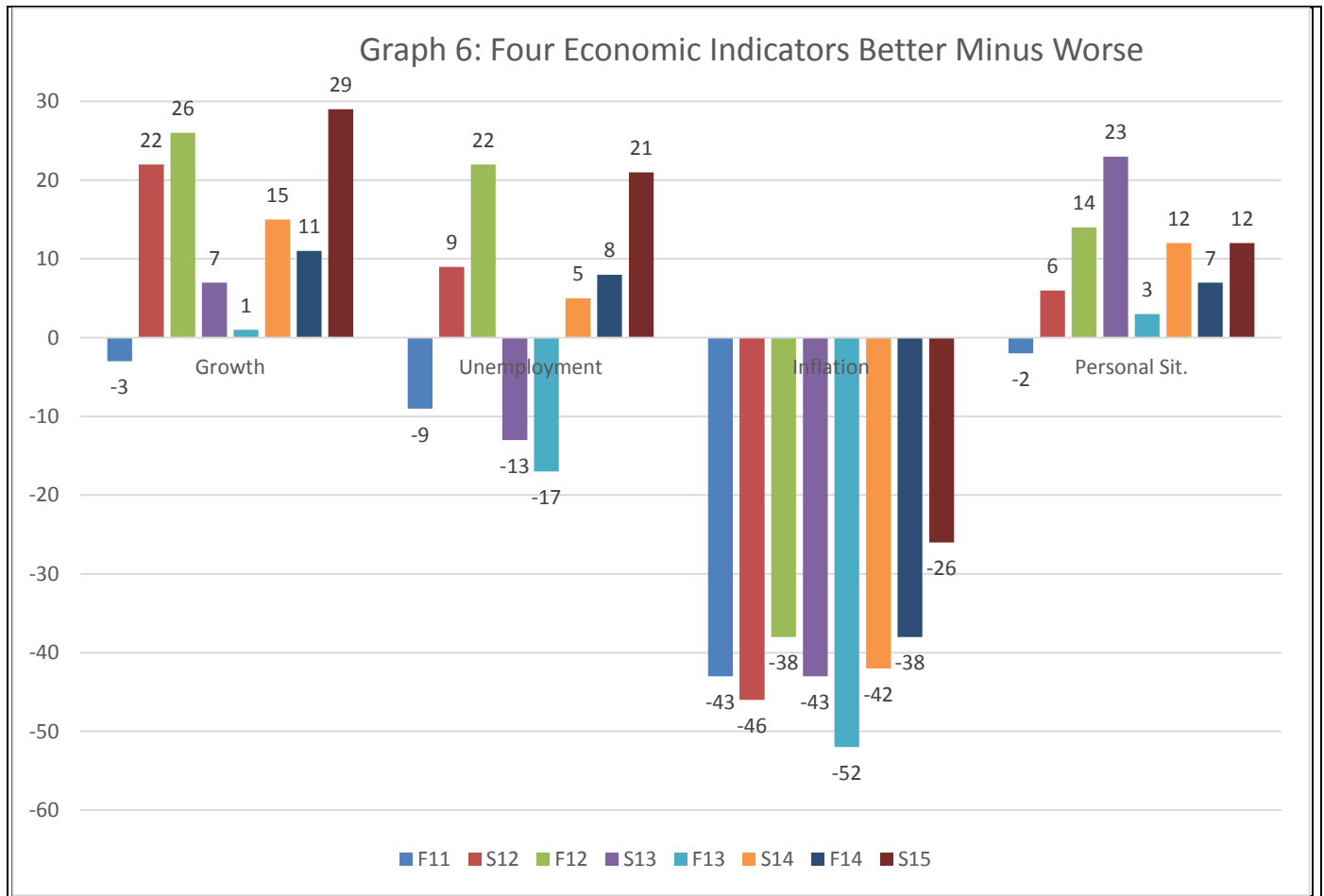Note: Desirable outcomes are bolded.

Consumer Confidence

Two measures of economic performance suggested rising public optimism - the continued decline in percentages citing the economy as the most important problem and the improved ratings of the state, county and national economies. The gradual improvement in perceptions of the economy was also reflected in 4 measures of consumer confidence as respondents were asked to ponder the county's economy over the next 12 months and say whether growth, inflation, unemployment and their personal financial situation would be the same, better or worse.

Table 6 shows the results just for spring 2015; Graph 6 shows the results since fall 2011, calculated by subtracting the value of "worse" from the value of "better" (with a higher number indicating greater economic optimism).

Table 6: Economic Conditions over the Next 12 Months

	Better	Same	Worse	Unsure/NA	Total
Economic growth	39	45	10	6	100
Unemployment	37	42	16	5	100
Inflation	13	39	39	9	100
Your personal financial situation	25	58	13	4	100

Graph 6 shows that all four indicators improved from fall 2014. The expectation for growth was a record high (29 point difference between better and worse scores). Unemployment expectations were near record highs (21 points). Inflationary expectations were at a record low (-26 points). However, personal financial situation was not nearly as positive (12 points) as the other three indicators.

Graph 6: Four Economic Indicators Better Minus Worse

30
20
10
0
-10
-20
-30
-40
-50
-60

Growth: -3, 22, 26, 7, 1, 15, 11, 29
Unemployment: -9, 9, 22, -13, -17, 5, 8, 21
Inflation: -43, -46, -38, -43, -52, -42, -38, -26
Personal Sit.: -2, 6, 14, 23, 3, 12, 7, 12

F11 S12 F12 S13 F13 S14 F14 S15

Agreement with Statements about Maryland and Anne Arundel County

The next section of the survey asked respondents to agree or disagreement with a variety of statements about the state and county. Table 6a ranks them by the percentage agreeing with the statement.

Table 6a: Agreement with Statements about Maryland and Anne Arundel County

	Agree	Disagree	Unsure/NA
By providing free access to materials and programs, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	89	6	5
Anne Arundel Community College provides excellent education at low cost to county residents.	75	5	20
Maryland has a welfare system that is too generous and often abused.	63	24	14
The Chesapeake Bay is too polluted to swim in.	61	27	12
Maryland imposes too many regulations on businesses.	56	25	19
Maryland's regulation of the environment is too weak.	43	44	13
Maryland has a very effective transportation system.	41	50	9
Anne Arundel County has done an excellent job maintaining its roads.	32	63	6
Maryland is a good place in which to retire.	25	69	7

The highest ranked statements reflected attitudes about public libraries and Anne Arundel Community College. Only 6 percent disagreed with the view that the public libraries play an "important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed." A similar percentage (5 percent) disagreed with the view that AACC "provides excellent education at low cost to county residents" although the "unsure/no answer" category was quite high (20 vs. 5 percent for libraries).

Three other statements received a majority in agreement: "Maryland has a welfare system that is too generous and often abused" (63 percent agreed); the "Chesapeake Bay is too polluted to swim in" (61 percent) and "Maryland imposes too many regulations on business" (56 percent).

The lowest agreement scores were regarding Maryland's regulation of the environment as being "too weak" (43 percent), the presence of a "very effective transportation system" (41 percent) and the county's "excellent job maintaining its roads" (32 percent). The lowest agreement score was obtained by the statement "Maryland is a good place in which to retire" (25 percent).

Table 6b ranks these items by partisan differences, with the percentages indicating the percentage of those agreeing with the statement based on their party registration. The sharpest partisan differences form around the role of government in regulating business, the environment and in providing a welfare system, with predictable patterns of support along liberal-conservative lines. There were some differences that didn't reflect traditional ideological lines – for example, Democrats were much more likely to see Maryland as a good place to retire than Republicans. Some statements elicited no significant partisan disagreement (e.g., AACC, libraries, Chesapeake Bay).

Table 6b: Partisan Differences about Statements

	Democrat	Republican	Dem-Rep	Unaffiliated	Signif. Level
Maryland has a welfare system that is too generous and often abused	55	81	-26	46	.01
Maryland imposes too many regulations on businesses.	40	75	-35	57	.01
Maryland's regulation of the environment is too weak.	55	32	23	.38	.01
Maryland is a good place in which to retire.	36	15	21	18	.01
By providing free access to materials and programs, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	94	86	8	88	.02
Maryland has a very effective transportation system.	34	42	-8	54	.06
The Chesapeake Bay is too polluted to swim in.	63	64	-1	54	.2
Anne Arundel County has done an excellent job maintaining its roads.	33	31	2	34	.6
Anne Arundel Community College provides excellent education at low cost to county residents.	76	79	-3	70	.7

Major Issues facing the State and County

The spring 2015 survey asked respondents whether they supported, opposed or were unsure about a variety of proposals that might be considered by the state or county. Table 7 shows the results ranked by the percentage saying "support."

Table 7: State and County Proposals – Support, Oppose, Unsure

	Support	Oppose	Unsure/NA
Repeal the automatic adjustment in gasoline taxes linked to inflation and make the General Assembly have to vote each time it wants to raise gasoline taxes	76	18	7
Force farmers to closely monitor and if necessary reduce their use of chicken manure and reduce phosphorous pollution into the Chesapeake Bay	74	17	10
Eliminate state taxes on police, fire and military retirement income	49	39	12
Increase tax breaks for those who contribute to private or religious schools	36	54	10
Reduce the anticipated funding to the public schools in order to balance Maryland's budget	21	71	8
Reduce state workers' salaries to help balance Maryland's budget	19	72	9
Close local public libraries or reduce hours to save money	18	79	3

Two proposals clearly garnered strong majorities in support: repealing the automatic adjustment in gasoline taxes linked to inflation (76 percent), and forcing farmers to closely monitor and reduce their use of chicken manure (74 percent). Other proposals that did not receive a majority in support included measures such as reducing "the anticipated funding to the public schools in order to balance Maryland's budget," (21 percent "support"); reducing "state workers' salaries to help balance Maryland's budget" (19 percent); and "close local public libraries or reduce hours to save money" (18 percent). Answers to this last group of items show the difficulty of finding broadly accepted ways to reduce government budgets.

Table 7a ranks each of the items by the difference in agreement scores given by Democrats and Republicans with highest negative scores (indicating relative Republican agreement compared to Democrats) listed at the top.

Ideological aspects to the partisan contrasts were evident in several questions. Democrats were less inclined to constrain tax increases, provide tax breaks or cut funding to state workers or libraries. They were also more inclined to force farmers to monitor farming practices. Partisan differences were statistically significant for all but one item (elimination of taxes on retirement income).

	Democrat	Republican	Dem-Rep	Unaffiliated	Signif.
Repeal the automatic adjustment in gasoline taxes linked to inflation and make the General Assembly have to vote each time it wants to raise gasoline taxes	63	89	-26	82	.01
Increase tax breaks for those who contribute to private or religious schools	30	46	-16	36	.01
Reduce state workers' salaries to help balance Maryland's budget	13	25	-12	23	.01
Eliminate state taxes on police, fire and military retirement income	44	55	-11	54	.7
Close local public libraries or reduce hours to save money	14	24	-10	18	.01
Reduce the anticipated funding to the public schools in order to balance Maryland's budget	20	23	-3	20	.03
Force farmers to closely monitor and if necessary reduce their use of chicken manure and reduce phosphorous pollution into the Chesapeake Bay	84	68	16	68	.01

Job Approval: County Executive, Governor, President

The survey asked respondents to indicate approval or disapproval of the job performed by the incumbent in an office.

Table 8: Job Approval for County Executive, Governor, President

Elected official	Approve			Disapprove			No answer/ DK		
	Sp '14	Fa '14	Sp '15	Sp '14	Fa '14	Sp '15	Sp '14	Fa '14	Sp '15
County Executive Neuman/Schuh	54	50	45	11	18	13	35	33	42
Governor O'Malley/Hogan	33	27	56	55	63	14	12	8	30
President Barack Obama	39	32	37	52	58	56	9	9	7

As shown in Table 8, the most significant change pertained to the approval level for the incumbent in the governor's office as Hogan's approval rating this spring jumped by 29 points over Martin O'Malley's in fall 2014. Regarding the county executive's office, current incumbent Steve Schuh posted a favorable score slightly below that of the previous incumbent (Laura Neuman), but the difference was not in the disapproval level but mainly in the percentage of respondents with no opinion (42 percent vs. Neuman's 33 percent in fall 2014).

Regarding presidential job approval, President Obama experienced a mild improvement – from 32 percent approval in fall 2014 to 37 percent in spring 2015. Since fall 2007 CSLI polls of county residents have generally tracked national presidential job approval trends as indicated by Gallup surveys.[4] For the period closest to that during which CSLI was calling residents, Gallup's presidential job approval surveys conducted March 27-29 indicated that 49 percent approved of the president's performance, considerably above CSLI's own polling figure (see Table 9 and Graph 7). That finding is consistent with a tendency for President Obama's job approval in Anne Arundel County to run a few points lower than in the country as a

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[4] See http://www.gallup.com/poll/113980/gallup-daily-obama-job-approval.aspx for Obama job approval findings cited here.

whole, although the gap between his national job approval and that expressed by residents of Anne Arundel County appears to be growing.

**Table 9: Presidential Job Approval**

Issue	Sp '08	Fa '08	Sp '09	Fa '09	Sp '10	Fa '10	Sp '11	Fa '11	Sp '12	Fa '12	Sp '13	Fa '13	Sp '14	Fa '14	Sp '15
Approve	28	24	53	47	47	42	47	37	42	44	44	40	39	32	**37**
Disapprove	62	69	31	42	45	49	44	56	49	50	51	53	52	58	**56**
No answer	10	8	16	11	8	10	9	7	8	6	4	7	9	9	**7**
Total	100	101	100	100	100	101	100	100	99	100	99	100	100	99	**100**

Graph 7: Presidential Job Approval - CSLI and Gallup
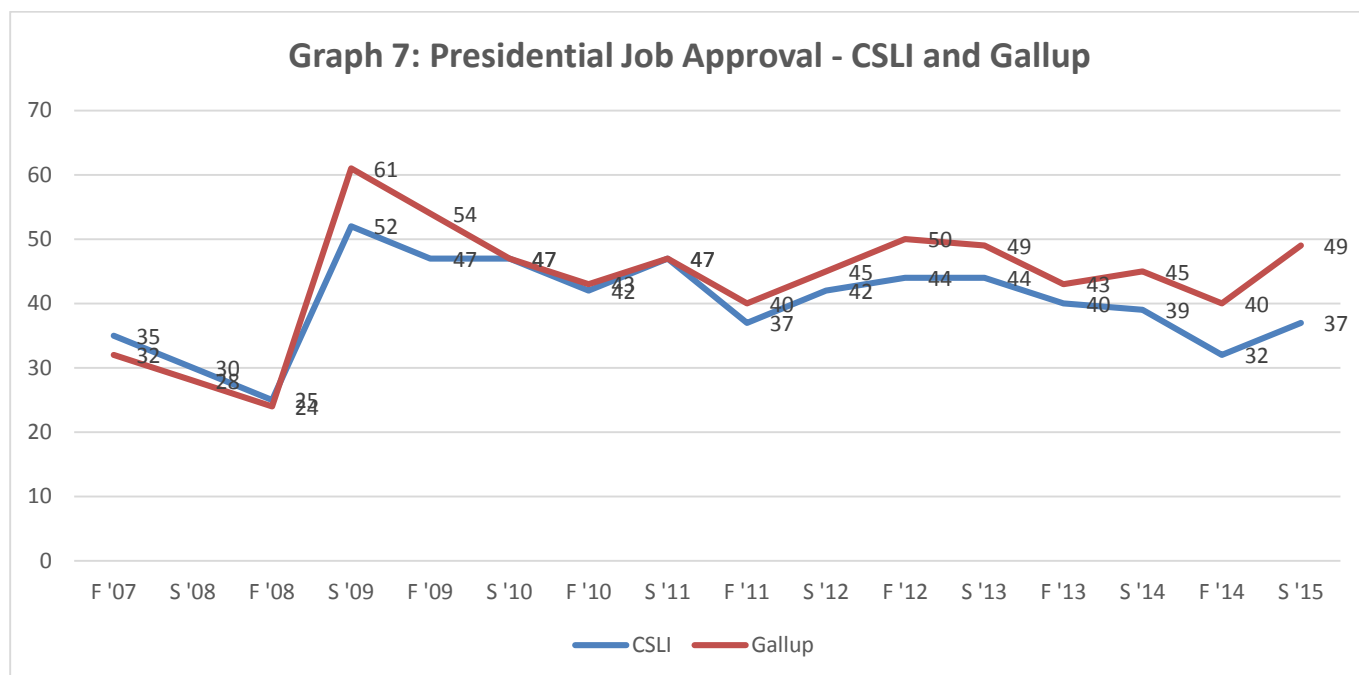
As seen on Graph 8, Obama's popularity among Democrats rose somewhat – increasing from a historic low last fall (53 percent) to a still relatively low 62 percent. There was little change in support among Republicans (up 2 points to 11 percent) or unaffiliated voters (moving from 36 to 38 percent).[5]

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[5] Again, the reminder that the number of unaffiliated voters is quite small; any estimates for this group are subject to much larger margins of error.

17

Graph 8: Presidential Job Approval by Party Registration – Fall '09 to Spring '15
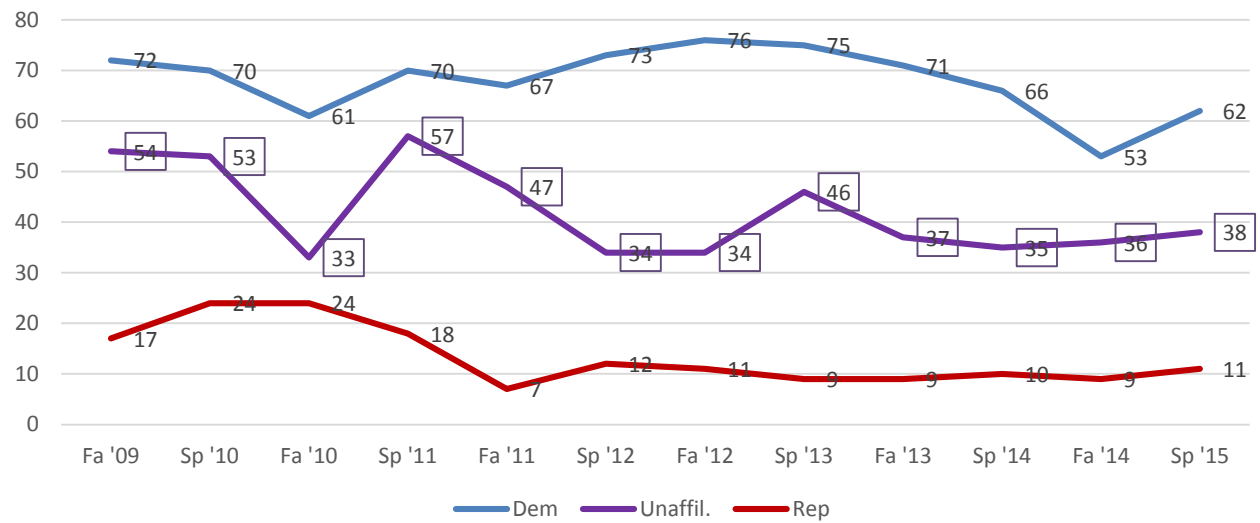
Trust in Political Parties

Since 2008, the CSLI survey has 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." Graph 9 shows that Republicans have rebounded the most since their low point in fall 2013 - prompted by the government shutdown - going from 23 percent then to 36 percent at this time (3 points down from fall 2014). The "neither" option (which is volunteered by the respondent without prompting by the interviewer) dropped from 37 percent in fall 2013 to only 23 percent in spring 2015. Changes in the levels of support for the "neither" option appears to be weakest during election periods – thus the relatively low scores in fall 2010, fall 2012 and fall 2014.

**Graph 9: Trust in Political Parties - Spring 2008 to Spring 2015**
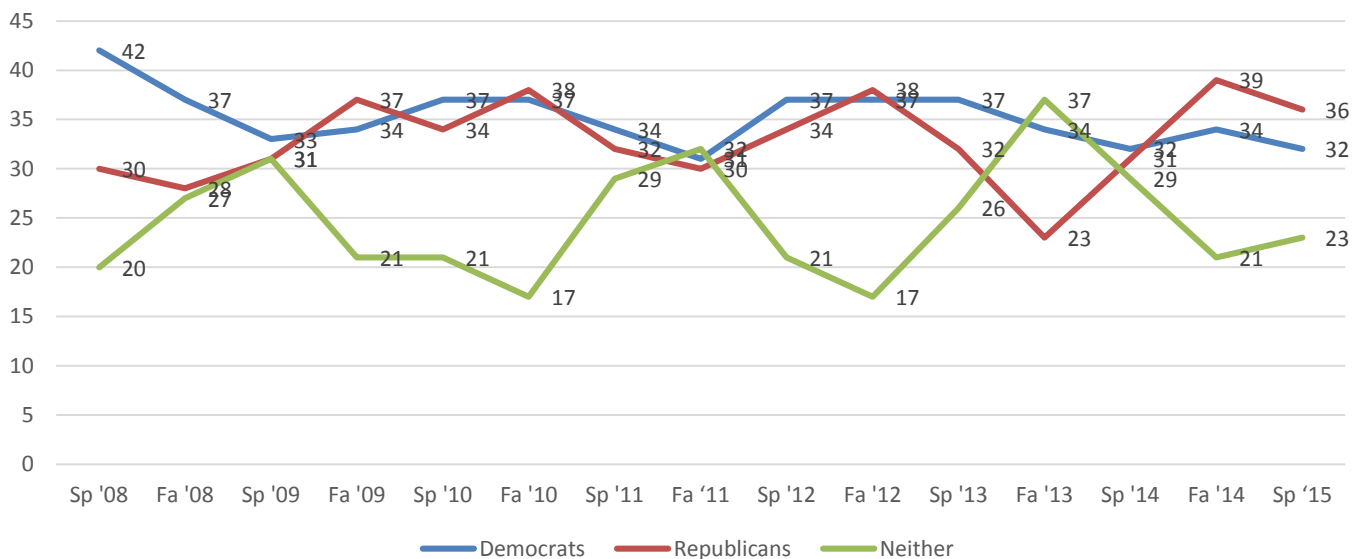
County – Right or Wrong Direction?

The survey included a CSLI benchmark question whose results are seen on Table 10 and Graph 10: "Overall, would you say that the county is headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction?" The right direction score was the highest since spring 2005 – 58 percent.

Table 10: Anne Arundel County - Right vs. Wrong Direction Fall 2009 to Spring 2015

Response	Fa '09	Sp '10	Fa '10	Sp '11	Fa '11	Sp '12	Fa '12	Sp '13	Fa '13	Sp '14	Fa '14	Sp '15	Average
Right direction	52	52	49	50	47	43	50	49	50	50	49	58	50
Wrong direction	27	28	28	28	32	41	36	33	35	33	38	25	32
Unsure	21	20	23	22	22	16	14	18	16	17	13	17	18
Right-wrong	25	24	21	22	15	2	14	16	15	17	11	33	18
Total	100	100	100	100	101	100	100	100	101	100	100	100	100

Graph 10: County Right/Wrong Direction Fall 2000 to Spring 2015
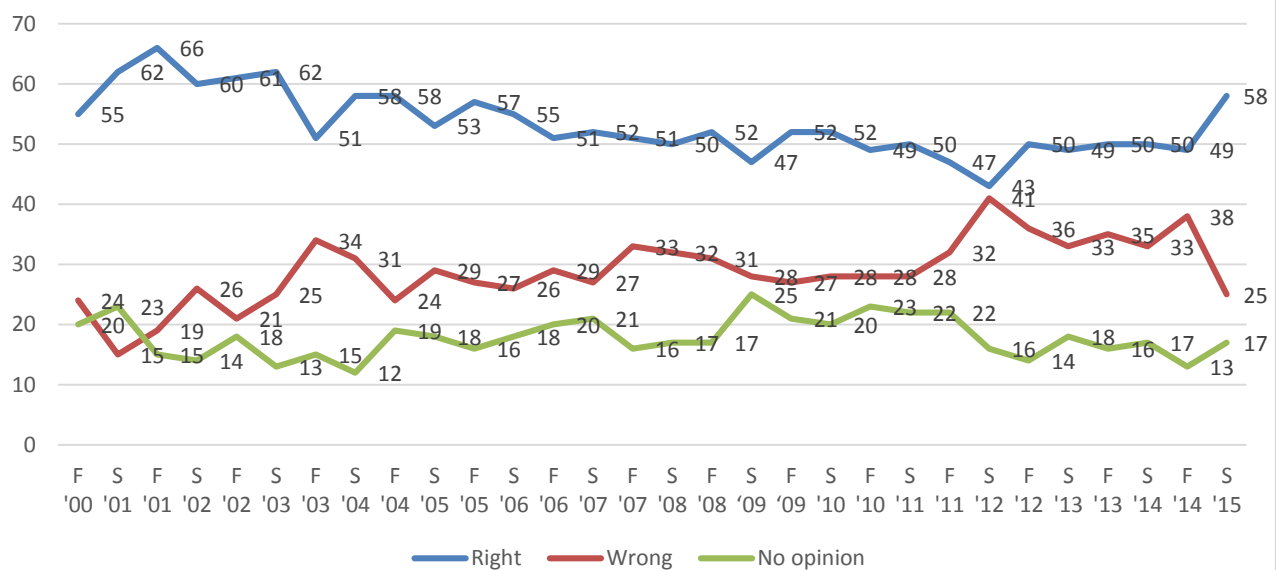
The survey also asked individuals to indicate right/wrong views about the state and the nation. Table 11 shows those results along with the county's.

Graph 11 shows the trend for the last six CSLI surveys at each level of government. While the county's "right direction" percentage has remained relatively steady, as has the federal level, the state score jumped 20 points since last fall, perhaps indicative of a "honeymoon" period for the new governor. Those who approved of Governor Hogan's performance in office were statistically significantly more likely to say that the state was moving in the right direction: 57 percent (for those who approve) vs. 34 percent (for those who disapprove – p=.01).

Table 11: Right/Wrong Direction for County, State and Nation, Spring 2015

	Right	Wrong	Unsure/ Don't know
County	58	25	17
State	47	35	19
Nation	27	60	13

Graph 11: Right Direction Percentage for County, State and Country, Fall 2012-Spring 2015
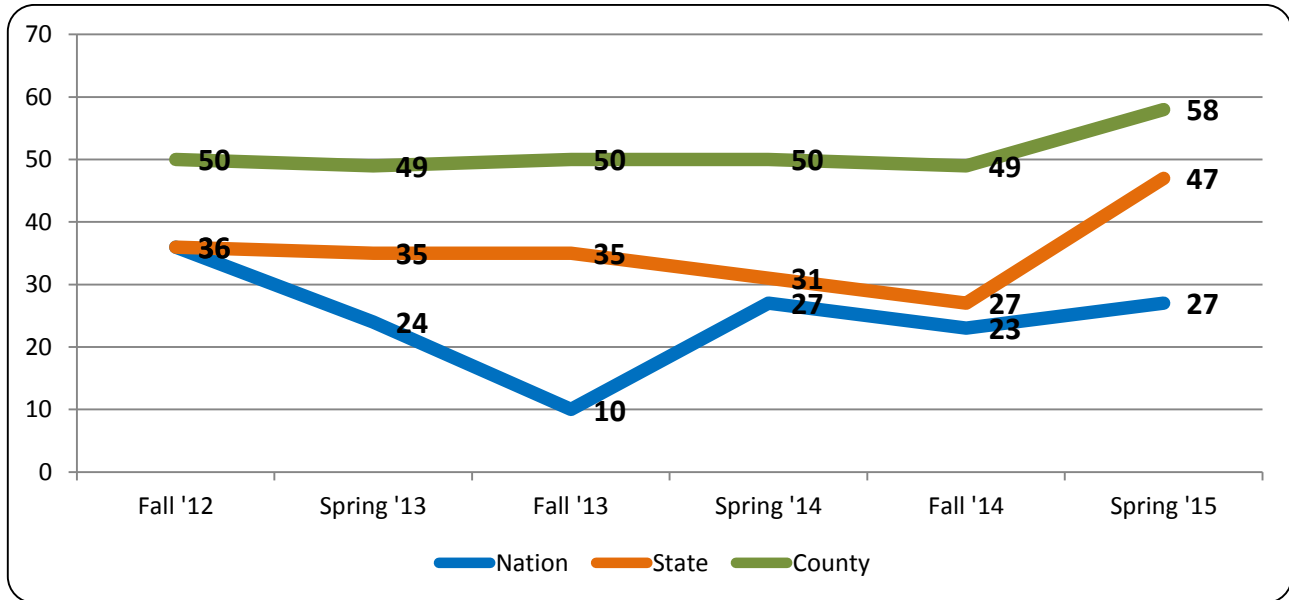
Substance Abuse – Prevalence

Respondents were asked "Do you know any friends or family members who have any of the following health concerns?" Table 12 shows the choices the survey offered and the percentages of respondents with positive or negative replies.

Table 12: Percentages Indicating Substance Abuse for Friend or Family Member

Concerns:	Yes	No	No answer
Alcoholism	31	68	1
Dependence on marijuana	18	82	0
Dependence on prescription pain killers	16	84	0
Heroin consumption or overdose	11	88	1
Dependence on cocaine	6	93	1

Alcoholism was perceived as the most prevalent form of substance abuse, cited by 31 percent of all respondents. Marijuana dependence was the second most cited (18 percent), although off 13 percentage points from the percentage citing alcoholism. Dependence on prescription pain killers obtained a similar percentage (16 percent), while heroin (11 percent) and cocaine (6 percent) trailed the list.

Substance abuse by type wasn't consistently correlated with specific demographic variables, but generally perceptions of alcoholism, marijuana use and heroin consumption were associated with younger respondents. Lower educational levels were associated with alcoholism, marijuana, cocaine and pain killers. Race was associated with marijuana use (more commonly cited by African-Americans) while use of cocaine was more commonly cited by men.

The survey also asked about various ways to combat "rising heroin use." Table 13 shows that there was a broad consensus about using the public schools to discuss the health impact of heroin consumption (88 percent favored). There was also a broad consensus on increasing jail sentences for those convicted of distributing heroin (84 percent), but not for doing the same for those convicted of heroin possession for personal consumption (39 percent). There was broad support for expanding "treatment options for those who are insured" (80 percent), but somewhat less support for increasing "government funding for in-patient clinics" (61 percent). A plurality (44 percent) favored the creation of "more clinics that can distribute methadone" although this was the least consensual among the health oriented responses.

Table 13: Favorability towards Various Methods of Confronting Heroin Use

Responses:	Favor	Oppose	No answer
Increase education in public schools about the health impact of heroin consumption	88	6	6
Increase jail sentences for those convicted of distributing heroin	84	9	7
Expand treatment options for those who are insured	80	12	9
Increase government funding for in-patient clinics	61	28	11
Create more clinics that can distribute methadone	44	39	17
Increase jail sentences for those convicted of heroin possession for personal consumption	39	50	11

Generally, demographic variables were not often statistically linked to differences of opinion about these approaches. Table 14 shows some differences by party registration. While Democrats generally favored health oriented approaches more than Republicans or unaffiliated voters, the only statistically significant results were with regard to the use of methadone clinics (which a majority of Democrats favored – 52 percent) and the jailing of heroin distributors, which Democrats were somewhat less likely (80 percent) to favor than Republicans (92 percent).

Table 14: Percentage Favoring an Approach to Heroin Use by Party Registration

	Democrat	Republican	Dem-Rep	Unaffiliated	Signif.
Increase government funding for in-patient clinics	69	60	9	49	.09
Increase education in public schools about the health impact of heroin consumption	92	86	6	80	.19
Expand treatment options for those who are insured	82	79	3	79	.9
Increase jail sentences for those convicted of distributing heroin	80	92	-12	77	**.05**
Increase jail sentences for those convicted of heroin possession for personal consumption	34	49	-15	27	.2
Create more clinics that can distribute methadone	52	34	-18	46	**.03**

Methodology

The survey polled a random sample of 387 county residents who were at least 18 years old. It was conducted March 30, 31, April 1 and 2, 2015 during evening hours. Phone numbers were derived from a database of listed landline numbers, cell phone numbers as well as computer chosen, randomly assigned numbers. There was about a 5 percent statistical margin of error for the overall sample; the error rate was higher for subgroups such as "Democrats" or "men." 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 website for results for this and previous surveys: www2.aacc.edu/csli.

Appendix A:

CSLI Semi-Annual Survey – Spring 2015 with Frequencies (percentages instead of coded values)

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/Drugs	13
Economy – (e.g., no jobs, high cost of living, business closing or losses)	12
Education, problems with schools	9
Environment (e.g., air or water pollution, saving the Bay)	8
Government ethics – corrupt, immoral	2
Government waste – inefficient, spends too much	2
Government lack resources –for roads, schools, services	2
Growth/overpopulation- too much development	2
Healthcare (cost, access)	1
Taxes – too high	25
Transportation problems/traffic congestion	8
Other answer - write in:	5
Unsure/No Answer	10

2. The next questions ask you to say whether things are going in the right or wrong direction. First, would you say that the county is headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction? How about the state of Maryland? How about the nation as a whole?

	Right	Wrong	Unsure/Don't know
2.1 **County**	58	25	17
2.2 **State**	47	35	19
2.3 **Nation**	27	60	13

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? How about the state? How about the nation?

	Excellent	Good	Only fair	Poor	Unsure/Don't know
3.1 **County**	5	52	33	7	5
3.2 **State**	3	38	39	16	4
3.3 **Nation**	3	24	32	37	4

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	57	36	6
4.2 Received a salary increase or other increase in income recently	37	58	5
4.3 Facing the possibility of unemployment	12	83	5
4.4 Found a new or better job recently	11	84	5
4.5 Hard to afford the cost of food and groceries	31	67	1
4.6 Hard to afford the cost of education	41	53	6
4.7 Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate	38	58	4
4.8 Taxes are too high in relation to government services provided	66	28	6

5. Thinking about the next twelve months and the county's economy, please answer the following questions by saying whether a particular condition will be better, the same or worse:

	Better	Same	Worse	Unsure/NA
5.1 Economic growth	39	45	10	6
5.2 Unemployment	37	42	16	5
5.3 Inflation	13	39	39	9
5.4 Your personal financial situation	25	58	13	4

5.5 Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Maryland or Anne Arundel County:

	Agree	Disagree	Unsure/NA
5.5a Maryland has a very effective transportation system.	41	50	9
5.5b Maryland's regulation of the environment is too weak.	43	44	13
5.5c Maryland imposes too many regulations on businesses.	56	25	19
5.5d Maryland has a welfare system that is too generous and often abused.	63	24	14
5.5e Maryland is a good place in which to retire.	25	69	7
5.5f The Chesapeake Bay is too polluted to swim in.	61	27	12
5.5g Anne Arundel County has done an excellent job maintaining its roads.	32	63	6
5.5h Anne Arundel Community College provides excellent education at low cost to county residents.	75	5	20
5.5i By providing free access to materials and programs, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	89	6	5

Do you support or oppose the following policies that might be considered by state or county government…

	Support	Oppose	Unsure/NA
5.6a Eliminate state taxes on police, fire and military retirement income	49	39	12
5.6b Repeal the automatic adjustment in gasoline taxes linked to inflation and make the General Assembly have to vote each time it wants to raise gasoline taxes	76	18	7
5.6c Increase tax breaks for those who contribute to private or religious schools	36	54	10
5.6d Force farmers to closely monitor and if necessary reduce their use of chicken manure and reduce phosphorous pollution into the Chesapeake Bay	74	17	10
5.6e Reduce the anticipated funding to the public schools in order to balance Maryland's budget	21	71	8
5.6f Reduce state workers' salaries to help balance Maryland's budget	19	72	9
5.6g Close local public libraries or reduce hours to save money	18	79	3

6. Do you know any friends or family members who have any of the following health concerns?

Concerns:	Yes	No	No answer
6a. Alcoholism	31	68	1
6b. Dependence on marijuana	18	82	0
6c. Dependence on cocaine	6	93	1
6d. Dependence on prescription pain killers	16	84	0
6e. Heroin consumption or overdose	11	88	1

7. Do you favor or oppose the following public health responses when thinking about how best to confront rising heroin use?

Responses:	Favor	Oppose	No answer
7.1. Create more clinics that can distribute methadone	44	39	17
7.2. Expand treatment options for those who are insured	80	12	9
7.3 Increase government funding for in-patient clinics	61	28	11
7.4. Increase jail sentences for those convicted of heroin possession for personal consumption	39	50	11
7.5. Increase jail sentences for those convicted of distributing heroin	84	9	7
7.6. Increase education in public schools about the health impact of heroin consumption	88	6	6

8.0   Do you approve or disapprove of the way the following elected officials are handling their jobs:

Elected official	Approve	Disapprove	No answer/ DK
8.1 County Executive Steve Schuh	45	13	42
8.2 Governor Larry Hogan	56	14	30
8.3 President Barack Obama	37	56	7

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?

	Percentage
(1) Democrats	32
(2) Republicans	36
(3) Neither (volunteered)	23
(4) Other (volunteered)	3
(0) No answer	7

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

	Percentage
(1) Democratic	41
(2) Republican	38
(3) Unaffiliated (or "independent")	15
(4) Other.	1
(5) None (not registered to vote)	4
(0) No Answer	1

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

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

	Percentage
(1) Conservative	32
(2) Moderate	44
(3) Liberal	15
(0) Other, No Answer	9

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

Age Range	Percentage
18-30	11
31-40	9
41-50	12
51-60	28
61-65	16
66+	24

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.

	Percentage
(1) less than a high school diploma	2
(2) a high school diploma	12
(3) some college	24
(4) Completed a 2 year associate college degree	11
(5) Completed a 4 year bachelor's degree	21
(6) post graduate work	25
(7) Something else?	2
(0) No Answer	3

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.

	Percentage
(1) Less than $30,000	8
(2) $30,000 to $50,000	8
(3) $50,001 to $75,000	13
(4) $75,001-$100,000	16
(5) $100,001-$150,000	19
(6) $150,001-$250,000	15
(7) Over $250,000	6
(0) No Answer	16

15. Stop me when I reach the employment category that best describes your situation. If you have retired and re-entered the workforce then indicate retired and as well as your current employment category.

Category	Percentage
Retired	31
Self employed	12
Employed full time for a company in the private sector	18
Employed full time for government in a non-defense related activity such as education, public works or public safety	12
Employed full time in a defense related activity	5
Employed in a private non-profit organization	2
Employed part time	8
Student	5
Unemployed and seeking a job	2
Unemployed and not seeking a job	3
No answer	2

16. Regarding <u>race</u>, how would you describe yourself?

	Percentage
(1) White	81
(2) Black or African American	8
(3) Hispanic or Latino	2
(4) Asian	1
(5) Other	3
(0) No answer	6

17. Regarding <u>religion</u>, how would you describe yourself? (Italics not to be read)

	Percentage
(1) None	12
(2) Non-practicing	*8*
(3) Evangelical or born again Christian	10
(4) Catholic	28
(5) Protestant	20
(6) Some other Christian	7
(7) Jewish	2
(8) A 'spiritual person' not associated with an organized religion	2
(9) Something else	3
(0) No Answer	8

18. What is your current marital status?

	Percentage
(1) Single	19
(2) Married	67
(3) Separated/divorced	5
(4) Widowed	8
(5) Other	1
(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 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?

<div align="center">(1) Yes   (2) No</div>

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

(CLEAR SPELLING/HANDWRITING PLEASE!)

_____

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

20. <u>Gender</u> of respondent to whom you were speaking:

	Percentage (weighted)
(1) Male	49
(2) Female	51

21. **Zipcode** (from calling sheet) _____

Zipcode	Percentage
20711	2.6
20724	1.2
20733	0.6
20751	0.2
20755	0.6
20764	0.5
20765	0.3
20776	0.7
20778	0.3
20779	0.6
20781	0.6
20782	0.2
21012	4
21032	3
21035	1.9
21037	2.7
21043	0.3
21054	2.9
21060	5.1
21061	6.9
21076	2.6
21090	1.1
21108	2.4
21113	5.7
21114	4.9
21122	15.6
21140	0.6
21144	5
21146	9.7
21225	1.1
21226	0.3
21401	6.4
21403	4.7
21409	4
21666	0.5
21764	0.3