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MARYLAND POLL

January 2026

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Background and Methodology

Patrick E. Gonzales graduated magna cum laude from the University of Baltimore with a degree in political science.

His career in the field of public opinion research began in the mid-1980s as an analyst with *Mason-Dixon Opinion Research*. During this time, Mr. Gonzales helped develop, craft and implement election surveys and exit polls for television and radio in the Baltimore-Washington D.C. metro area.

Mr. Gonzales has polled and analyzed thousands of elections in Maryland and across the country over the past forty years. Further, he and his associates have conducted numerous market research projects, crafting message development plans and generating strategy blueprints for businesses and organizations throughout the state.

Over his decades of conducting public opinion polls, Patrick Gonzales has been widely recognized by his peers for his ability to conduct unbiased surveys, and analyze the results in an impartial, evenhanded manner.

Mr. Gonzales appears frequently on radio and television in the Baltimore-D.C. region as a guest commentator.

This poll was conducted by **Gonzales Research & Media Services, Inc.** from December 21st through January 6th, 2026. A total of 808 registered voters in Maryland, who indicated they are likely to vote in the 2026 general election, were queried by live telephone interviews, utilizing both landline and cell phone numbers. A cross-section of interviews was conducted throughout the state, reflecting general election voting patterns.

The margin of error (MOE), per accepted statistical standards, is a range of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. If the entire population was surveyed, there is a 95% probability that the true numbers would fall within this range.

Gonzales Maryland Poll – January 2026 Results

Homicide Rate Drop in Baltimore City – Who Deserves More Credit

We told Maryland voters that the homicide rate in Baltimore City dropped by 35 percent in the past year and asked them who they believe deserves more credit for this – Mayor Brandon Scott or City State’s Attorney Ivan Bates?

The topline numbers show a modest edge for Mayor Brandon Scott: 36% of Marylanders credit him more for Baltimore’s thirty-five percent homicide decline, compared to 30% who say State’s Attorney Ivan Bates deserves more credit, with 14% saying neither, and 20% offering no response. But the most striking feature of the data is not the margin itself - it’s how sharply the credit assignment splits along familiar political and demographic lines. The public sees the same crime drop, yet different groups interpret its cause through very different lenses.

Partisanship produces the most dramatic divide. Nearly half of Democrats (48%) credit Scott, while only a quarter credit Bates. Republicans flip the script entirely: 43 percent say Bates deserves more credit, and only 15% say Scott. Independent voters sit between the poles, leaning slightly toward Scott (31%-27%) while showing the highest “no answer” rate, suggesting weaker attachment to either narrative. The homicide decline may be a shared outcome, but the story people tell about *why* it happened is deeply shaped by political identity.

Gender and race add another layer. Women give Scott a solid advantage (41% to 25%), while men lean toward Bates (36% to 30%). Among African American voters - the group most directly affected by Baltimore’s violence - Scott holds a commanding lead statewide (55% to 33%). Yet within the comparatively small sample of Baltimore City itself, Black voters split almost evenly between the two men, perhaps reflecting a more intimate familiarity with both leaders’ roles.

In the Washington suburbs, Black voters overwhelmingly credit Scott, 66% to 20%, suggesting regional perceptions of mayoral leadership travel farther than perceptions of prosecutorial strategy.

White voters, by contrast, show no clear statewide consensus, splitting almost evenly between Bates (29%) and Scott (28%), but with a much higher share choosing “neither” (18 percent) or offering no answer (25 percent).

Regional patterns round out the picture. Baltimoreans break toward giving Scott credit over Bates (47% to 37%), but hardly in a way that settles the question. Baltimore City respondents provide the smallest “Neither/No answer” reply (16% total), a marker that both the mayor’s policing reforms and the prosecutor’s charging strategies are more visible to city residents.

In the Baltimore suburbs - the region where nearly half of statewide white voters reside - Bates leads, 36% to 29%, comprised of running almost evenly with Scott among Black Baltimore suburbanites (43%-45%) and up 32%-25% among whites.

In the Washington suburbs - farther from the day-to-day realities of Baltimore crime - voters give Scott a wide lead (45%-20%), perhaps responding more to statewide media narratives than to local operational details.

All told, the data show that the homicide drop is widely recognized, but the credit for it is filtered through political identity and geography, rather than any single shared understanding of what drove the change.

Deserves More Credit for Drop	<u>Scott</u>	<u>Bates</u>
Statewide	36%	30%
Democrat	48%	25%
Republican	15%	43%
Independent	31%	27%
Women	41%	25%
Men	31%	36%
White	28%	29%
African American	55%	33%
Rural Maryland	26%	36%
Baltimore City	47%	37%
Baltimore Suburbs	29%	36%
Washington Suburbs	45%	20%

Appendix A: Data Tables

QUESTION: Homicide Decline – Who Deserves Credit Baltimore murders fell 35 percent this past year. Who do you think deserves more credit - Mayor Brandon Scott or State's Attorney Ivan Bates?

HOMICIDE DROP - DESERVES MORE CREDIT	Number	Percent
Brandon Scott	291	36.0 %
Ivan Bates	242	30.0 %
Neither	112	13.9 %
No answer	163	20.2 %
Total	808	100.0 %

N=808

HOMICIDE DROP - DESERVES MORE CREDIT			
	Brandon Scott	Ivan Bates	Neither

RESULTS

Statewide	291 36.0%	242 30.0%	112 13.9%	163 20.2%
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N=808

HOMICIDE DROP - DESERVES MORE CREDIT			
	Brandon Scott	Ivan Bates	Neither

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	210 47.5%	111 25.1%	44 10.0%	77 17.4%
Republican	31 15.2%	87 42.6%	45 22.1%	41 20.1%
Unaffiliated	50 30.9%	44 27.2%	23 14.2%	45 27.8%

N=808

HOMICIDE DROP – DESERVES MORE CREDIT			
	Brandon Scott	Ivan Bates	Neither

GENDER

Female	177 40.8%	107 24.7%	58 13.4%	92 21.2%
Male	114 30.5%	135 36.1%	54 14.4%	71 19.0%

N=808

HOMICIDE DROP - DESERVES MORE CREDIT

	Brandon Scott	Ivan Bates	Neither	No answer
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RACE/ETHNICITY

White	131 28.0%	134 28.6%	85 18.2%	118 25.2%
African American	133 55.2%	79 32.8%	10 4.1%	19 7.9%
Other/No answer	27 27.3%	29 29.3%	17 17.2%	26 26.3%

N=808

HOMICIDE DROP - DESERVES MORE CREDIT

	Brandon Scott	Ivan Bates	Neither	No answer
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AGE

18 to 34	50 31.4%	48 30.2%	27 17.0%	34 21.4%
35 to 49	74 38.1%	45 23.2%	28 14.4%	47 24.2%
50 to 64	78 35.8%	73 33.5%	31 14.2%	36 16.5%
65 and older	89 37.6%	76 32.1%	26 11.0%	46 19.4%

N=808

HOMICIDE DROP - DESERVES MORE CREDIT

	Brandon Scott	Ivan Bates	Neither	No answer
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REGION

Rural Maryland	33 26.0%	46 36.2%	21 16.5%	27 21.3%
Baltimore City	29 46.8%	23 37.1%	6 9.7%	4 6.5%
Baltimore Suburbs	90 28.8%	112 35.8%	52 16.6%	59 18.8%
Washington Suburbs	139 45.4%	61 19.9%	33 10.8%	73 23.9%

Race **within** Region

African-American Voters

Black Voters – Baltimore City

<u>HOMICIDE DROP - DESERVES MORE CREDIT</u>	Number	Percent
Brandon Scott	14	43.8 %
Ivan Bates	15	46.9 %
Neither	2	6.3 %
No answer	1	3.1 %
Total	32	100.0 %

Black Voters – Baltimore Suburbs

<u>HOMICIDE DROP - DESERVES MORE CREDIT</u>	Number	Percent
Brandon Scott	33	44.6 %
Ivan Bates	32	43.2 %
Neither	5	6.8 %
No answer	4	5.4 %
Total	74	100.0 %

Black Voters – Washington Suburbs

<u>HOMICIDE DROP - DESERVES MORE CREDIT</u>	Number	Percent
Brandon Scott	80	66.1 %
Ivan Bates	24	19.8 %
Neither	3	2.5 %
No answer	14	11.6 %
Total	121	100.0 %

White Voters

White Voters – Baltimore City

<u>HOMICIDE DROP - DESERVES MORE CREDIT</u>	Number	Percent
Brandon Scott	10	50.0 %
Ivan Bates	6	30.0 %
Neither	2	10.0 %
<u>No answer</u>	2	10.0 %
Total	20	100.0 %

White Voters – Baltimore Suburbs

<u>HOMICIDE DROP - DESERVES MORE CREDIT</u>	Number	Percent
Brandon Scott	50	24.9 %
Ivan Bates	65	32.3 %
Neither	43	21.4 %
<u>No answer</u>	43	21.4 %
Total	201	100.0 %

White Voters – Washington Suburbs

<u>HOMICIDE DROP - DESERVES MORE CREDIT</u>	Number	Percent
Brandon Scott	47	32.9 %
Ivan Bates	28	19.6 %
Neither	22	15.4 %
<u>No answer</u>	46	32.2 %
Total	143	100.0 %

Appendix B: Maryland Poll Sample Demographics

<u>PARTY REGISTRATION</u>	Number	Percent
Democrat	442	54.7 %
Republican	204	25.2 %
<u>Unaffiliated</u>	162	20.0 %
Total	808	100.0 %

<u>AGE</u>	Number	Percent
18 to 34	159	19.7 %
35 to 49	194	24.0 %
50 to 64	218	27.0 %
<u>65 and older</u>	237	29.3 %
Total	808	100.0 %

<u>RACE/ETHNICITY</u>	Number	Percent
White	468	57.9 %
African American	241	29.8 %
<u>Other/No answer</u>	99	12.3 %
Total	808	100.0 %

<u>GENDER</u>	Number	Percent
Female	434	53.7 %
<u>Male</u>	374	46.3 %
Total	808	100.0 %

<u>REGION</u>	Number	Percent
Rural Maryland	127	15.7 %
Baltimore City	62	7.7 %
Baltimore Suburbs	313	38.7 %
<u>Washington Suburbs</u>	306	37.9 %
Total	808	100.0 %

Regional Groupings

Rural Maryland – includes Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Garrett, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester counties.

Baltimore City – includes Baltimore City.

Baltimore Suburbs – includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties.

Washington Suburbs – includes Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties.