INSTITUTE OF POLITICS
UMBC Poll

Results embargoed until 12:01 a.m. on Tuesday, October 6, 2026

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Part 1 Topics:

- Maryland governor's race
- Strength of candidate support
- Enthusiasm about voting and method of voting
- Perceived ideology of the major party gubernatorial candidates
- Perceptions of the Maryland Democratic and Republican parties

Tuesday, October 6, 2026 (Baltimore): The UMBC Poll surveyed **776 (MOE=±3.5%)** Maryland likely voters from **Tuesday, September 22 to Sunday, September 27, 2026**. Please refer to the methodology statement for information on data collection and sample demographics, and to the topline results for question wording.

Click here for results by demographics and question order.

For previous UMBC Poll results and information about the UMBC Institute of Politics, visit https://politics.umbc.edu/.

Part 2 of this poll will be released on Wednesday, October 7, and Part 3 will be released on Thursday, October 8. Both releases will be available at 12:01 a.m.

Want the UMBC Poll delivered to your inbox? **Join our mailing list!**

The UMBC Poll identified likely voters from a sample of 842 registered voters using a standard screen based on self-reported likelihood of voting. Respondents who said they were "**absolutely certain**" or "**very likely**" to vote in the November 2026 general election were classified as likely voters.

- Not at all likely: **2 percent**
- Chances are 50-50: **5 percent**
- **Very likely: 25 percent**
- **Absolutely certain: 67 percent**
- Don't know: **1 percent**

2026 Maryland gubernatorial election

If the election for governor were held today, **51 percent of likely voters say they would vote for Democratic** candidate Wes Moore, and **24 percent say they would vote for Republican** candidate Dan Cox. Another **3 percent** would vote for Green Party candidate Andy Ellis, **3 percent** would vote for Working Class Party candidate Cathy White, and **5 percent** would vote for some other candidate, while **14 percent say they don't know** or haven't decided.

Support for Moore and Cox among likely voters, by party registration:

- Among Democrats: **72 percent** for Moore, **4 percent** for Cox, and **13 percent are undecided**
- Among Republicans: **6 percent** for Moore, **75 percent** for Cox, and **10 percent are undecided**
- Among Unaffiliated: **40 percent** for Moore, **14 percent** for Cox, and **27 percent are undecided**

Likely voters who selected a candidate were asked whether they are set on their choice for governor: **74 percent say they are set** on the candidate they selected, and **23 percent say they could change** their mind.

- Among Moore voters: **84 percent** are set on their choice, and **15 percent** could change their mind.
- Among Cox voters: **74 percent** are set on their choice, and **19 percent** could change their mind.

Enthusiasm about voting in 2026

Maryland likely voters were asked how enthusiastic they are about voting in the November 2026 elections:

Very or somewhat: **79 percent**
- Among Democrats: **81 percent**
- Among Republicans: **80 percent**
- Among Unaffiliated: **75 percent**

Not at all or a little: **20 percent**
- Among Democrats: **18 percent**
- Among Republicans: **18 percent**
- Among Unaffiliated: **25 percent**

Planned method of voting

Likely voters were asked how they plan to cast their ballot this November:

- Vote in-person before Election Day during the early voting period: **30 percent**
- Vote by mail, either by sending in their ballot or putting it in a drop box: **31 percent**
- Vote in-person on Election Day: **35 percent**

Perceived ideology of the major party gubernatorial candidates

Likely voters were asked which label best describes the politics of each major party candidate for governor.

	Wes Moore Democratic Candidate	**Dan Cox Republican Candidate**
Very conservative	2%	31%
Conservative	6%	29%
Moderate	36%	11%
Progressive	30%	2%
Very progressive	18%	1%
Don’t know	5%	26%

Perceptions of the Maryland Democratic and Republican parties

Likely voters were asked whether each of six characteristics describes the Maryland Democratic Party and the Maryland Republican Party. The table below shows the percentage of likely voters who say each characteristic describes the party.

	Maryland Democratic Party	Maryland Republican Party
Organized	47%	43%
Effective at winning elections in the state	72%	25%
Welcomes different viewpoints	47%	27%
Out-of-touch with average voters	54%	66%
Controlled by special interests or big donors	59%	71%
Too extreme in their policy positions	36%	64%

Methodology Statement

The UMBC Poll is conducted under the auspices of the UMBC Institute of Politics (IoP) and is funded by the UMBC College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences.

The UMBC Poll surveyed **776** Maryland likely voters from **Tuesday, September 22 to Sunday, September 27, 2026**. The poll was conducted by live interviewers and text-to-web utilizing a dual-frame (landline and cell phone) random sample stratified by county.

Text-to-web: **65 percent**
Live-caller cell phone: **28 percent**
Live-caller landline: **7 percent**

Interviews were conducted from **12 p.m. to 8 p.m.**, and interviewers attempted to reach respondents with working phone numbers up to **3 times**. ReconMR provided the sample and data collection.

There is a 95 percent probability that the survey results have the following percentage point sampling error from the actual population distribution for any given survey question: **MOE=±3.5%** for the sample of **776** Maryland likely voters.

The margin of sampling error is higher for subgroups and is not adjusted for design effects. Like all public opinion polls, the UMBC Poll is also subject to non-sampling error, including non-response bias, question-order effects, and question-wording effects.

The topline tables include the questions as worded. The order in which the questions were administered to respondents can be found here.

Mileah Kromer, Director of the UMBC Institute of Politics (IoP), designs the survey questionnaires and analyzes the data collected by the UMBC Poll. Research assistants Trisha Sirsat, Audrey Grutzik, Sofia Cabrera, and Khizar Qazi assist with each stage of the process under her direction. Their involvement reflects the IoP's mission to facilitate student learning in applied politics and to produce public-facing research on political, policy, and social issues for the betterment of Maryland.

The UMBC Poll is committed to methodological transparency. If you have questions about the poll's methodology, contact Mileah Kromer, Director, UMBC Institute of Politics, at mkromer@umbc.edu.

Sample Demographics (in percent)

		Maryland Likely Voters n=776 (MOE=±3.5%)
Gender	Male	48
	Female	52
Age	18-24	6
	25-34	17
	35-44	18
	45-54	17
	55-64	18
	65+	24
Race	White	47
	Black	31
	Hispanic/Latino	12
	Asian	7
	All other	3
Education	High school diploma or less	30
	Some college or associate's degree	21
	Bachelor's degree	25
	Graduate or professional degree	24
Geography	Montgomery County	17
	Prince George's County	14
	Baltimore County	15
	Anne Arundel County	9
	Baltimore City	9
	Central Region	12
	Western Region	9
	Eastern Shore Region	8
	Southern Region	7

Central region: Carroll, Harford, and Howard Counties
Western region: Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington Counties
Eastern Shore region: Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties
Southern region: Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties

Weighting

The UMBC Poll data are weighted by gender, age, race, geography, and educational attainment to represent the Maryland voter targets established by the combination of sources from ReconMR including Maryland State Board of Elections (2026), Current Population Survey data (2024), and the American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates (2025) for the state of Maryland. Results are reported as column percentages and may not sum to exactly 100 due to weighting and rounding.

Other Sample Demographics (in percent)

		Maryland Likely Voters n=776 (MOE=±3.5%)
Party	Democrat	60
	Republican	25
	Unaffiliated	14
	Other party	1
Ideology	Conservative	22
	Moderate	37
	Progressive	41
Income	Under $40,000	14
	$40,000 to under $75,000	20
	$75,000 to under $125,000	29
	$125,000 or more	37

The UMBC Poll data are not weighted by these characteristics.

The UMBC Institute of Politics is a member of the Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations and the American Association for Public Opinion Research's Transparency Initiative.

Identifying Likely Voters

The UMBC Poll identified likely voters from a sample of registered voters using a standard screen based on self-reported likelihood of voting. Respondents who said they were "**absolutely certain**" or "**very likely**" to vote in the November 2026 general election were classified as likely voters.

Q: LV	What are the chances that you will vote in the November 2026 general election for governor, Congress, and other state offices — are you absolutely certain to vote, very likely to vote, are the chances 50-50, or not at all likely to vote?	Count	Percent
	Not at all likely	17	2
	Chances are 50-50	40	5
LV	**Very likely**	**210**	**25**
LV	**Absolutely certain**	**566**	**67**
	Don't know	9	1
	Refused	0	0

Topline Results

The topline results below represent the sample of 776 likely voters**.** **Click here for results by demographics**. Results are reported as column percentages and may not sum to exactly 100 due to weighting and rounding. The questionnaire below reflects the text-to-web version of the survey. Question wording and response options were the same across modes, with minor adaptations for live-caller vs. web-based administration. Items in brackets appeared in a randomized order.

Label	Question	Maryland Likely Voters n=776 (MOE=±3.5%)

Questions held for future release.

Q: MDDEMS	The next two sets of questions are about how voters sometimes describe political parties. First, please indicate whether each of the characteristics below describes the Maryland Democratic Party:

Q: D_ORGANIZED to Q: D_EXTREME appeared in a randomized order.

Label	Question	Does NOT describe	Describes	Don't know	Refused
Q: D_ORGANIZED	Organized	34	47	19	0
Q: D_EFFECTIVE	Effective at winning elections in the state	18	72	9	1
Q: D_WELCOME	Welcomes different viewpoints	41	47	11	1
Q: D_TOUCH	Out-of-touch with average voters	34	54	12	1
Q: D_CONTROL	Controlled by special interests or big donors	23	59	17	1
Q: D_EXTREME	Too extreme in their policy positions	55	36	7	1

Q: MDGOP	Please indicate whether each of the characteristics below describes the Maryland Republican Party:

Q: R_ORGANIZED to Q: R_EXTREME appeared in a randomized order.

Label	Question	Does NOT describe	Describes	Don't know	Refused
Q: R_ORGANIZED	Organized	40	43	16	2
Q: R_EFFECTIVE	Effective at winning elections in the state	61	25	13	1
Q: R_WELCOME	Welcomes different viewpoints	65	27	7	1
Q: R_TOUCH	Out-of-touch with average voters	27	66	6	1
Q: R_CONTROL	Controlled by special interests or big donors	18	71	10	1
Q: R_EXTREME	Too extreme in their policy positions	27	64	8	1

Questions held for future release.

Q: ENTHUSIASM	How enthusiastic are you about voting in the elections in November 2026:	**Percent**
	Not at all	12
	A little	8
	Somewhat	18
	Very	61
	Don't know	0
	Refused	0

Q: METHOD	Maryland voters can cast their ballots in several ways this November. Which one will you most likely use in the upcoming election:	**Percent**
	Vote in-person before Election Day during the early voting period	30
	Vote by mail either by sending in my ballot or putting it in a drop box	31
	Vote in-person on Election Day	35
	Don't know/haven't decided how I will cast my ballot yet	4
	Refused	0

Q: GOV26	If the 2026 election for Governor of Maryland were held today, would you vote for:	Percent
	Wes Moore, the Democratic candidate	51
	Dan Cox, the Republican candidate	24
	Andy Ellis, the Green Party candidate	3
	Cathy White, the Working Class Party candidate	3
	Some other candidate	5
	Don't know/haven't decided	14
	Refused	1

Q: CHANGE	Is there a chance that you could change your mind, or are you set on this candidate for Maryland governor?	Percent
	Set on this candidate	74
	Could change my mind	23
	Don't know	4
	Refused	0

Q: MOORE_IDEO	In your opinion, which label best describes Democratic Governor Wes Moore's politics? Is he:	Percent
	Very conservative	2
	Conservative	6
	Moderate	36
	Progressive	30
	Very progressive	18
	Don't know	5
	Refused	3

Q: COX_IDEO	Which label best describes Republican nominee for Maryland governor Dan Cox's politics? Is he:	**Percent**
	Very conservative	31
	Conservative	29
	Moderate	11
	Progressive	2
	Very progressive	1
	Don't know	26
	Refused	1

Questions held for future release.

University Mission

UMBC is a dynamic public research university integrating teaching, research and service to benefit the citizens of Maryland. As an Honors University, the campus offers academically talented students a strong undergraduate liberal arts foundation that prepares them for graduate and professional study, entry into the workforce, and community service and leadership.

UMBC emphasizes science, engineering, information technology, human services and public policy at the graduate level. UMBC contributes to the economic development of the State and the region through entrepreneurial initiatives, workforce training, K- 16 partnerships, and technology commercialization in collaboration with public agencies and the corporate community. UMBC is dedicated to cultural and ethnic diversity, social responsibility and lifelong learning.

INSTITUTE OF POLITICS
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Our Mission

The UMBC Institute of Politics (IoP) produces and supports public-facing and community-engaged research and events on political, policy, and social issues for the betterment of Maryland.

The IoP operates under the auspices of the UMBC College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences.