

To: Maryland Rise

**From: Steve Raabe, President
OpinionWorks LLC**

Date: January 8, 2021

Subject: Maryland Poll Findings: Paid Family & Medical Leave

Maryland Rise commissioned this statewide poll of Maryland registered voters to assess public opinion on a legislative proposal to create a paid family and medical leave insurance program. These findings are based on our most recent statewide poll of 1,011 registered voters, conducted both online and by telephone, December 11-26, 2020. The poll has a potential margin of sampling error of $\pm 3.1\%$ at the 95% confidence level.

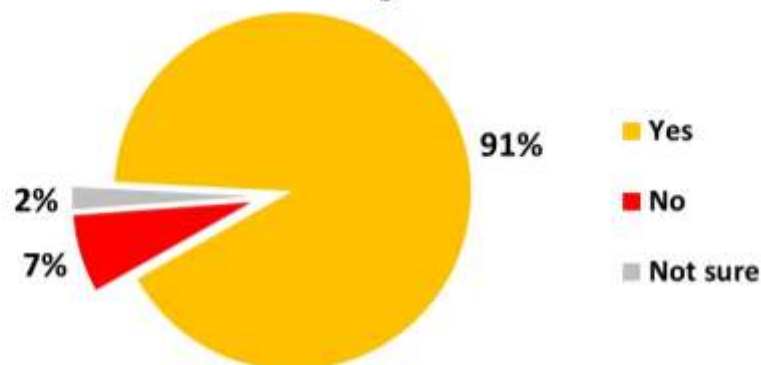
Summary of Findings

Maryland voters resoundingly support this legislation. Almost eight in ten voters support the proposal when they hear details, including knowing the cost of the program. This strong support crosses all partisan and geographic lines, never dropping below 75% in any of the state's regions or large jurisdictions. There is evidence in the poll that the pandemic may be creating a higher level of urgency and support for this proposal, as families – and particularly women – are having to grapple with the need to take leave from work to deal with difficult challenges. Most voters are not inclined to see this proposal as a tax on families, as some have said. Instead, two thirds see the cost of the program as about what they would expect, or even less than they would expect. Taken together, all of these factors lead to a positive electoral impact for legislators who support this proposal, with almost four times as many voters saying they are more likely to vote for such a legislator as say they are less likely. Details follow.

A Consensus to Allow People to Take Leave from Work When They Have a Serious Need

As a starting point for this discussion, there is a consensus among Maryland voters on the general principle that people should be able to take time away from work for major needs like the birth of a child or serious illness. More than nine out of ten Maryland voters (91%) believe people should be able to take such time away from work.

Should People be Able to Take Time Away from Work for Major Needs?

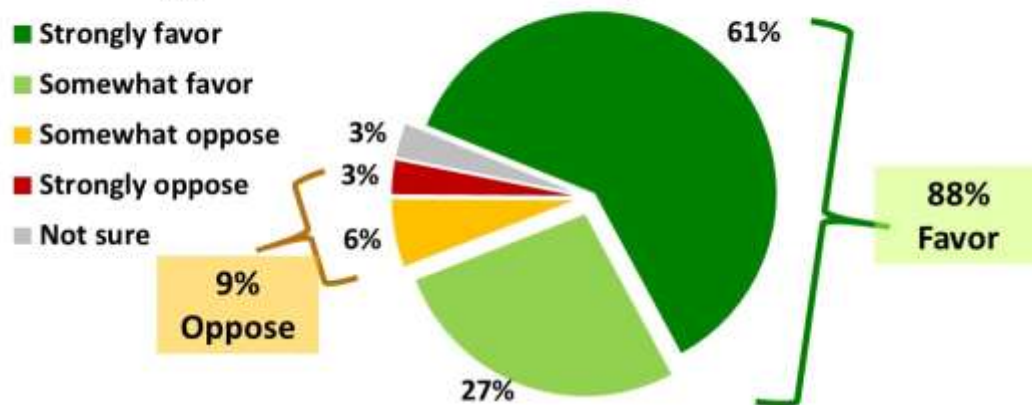


In general, do you think people should be able to take time away from work for major needs like the birth of a new child or serious illness?

Overwhelming Voter Support

Current Maryland law allows many workers up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for family or serious medical needs. Proposed legislation would make that *paid* leave by creating a family and medical leave insurance program that would provide partial wage replacement. Hearing about this proposal, an overwhelming 88% of Maryland voters favor it, with a 61% majority saying they do so *strongly*. Fewer than one in ten voters (9%) oppose creating a paid family and medical leave insurance program.

Voter Support for Paid Family & Medical Leave



Current law allows many workers to take up to 12 weeks of leave to care for a newborn or newly adopted child, a seriously ill family member, or their own serious health condition. But that leave is unpaid.

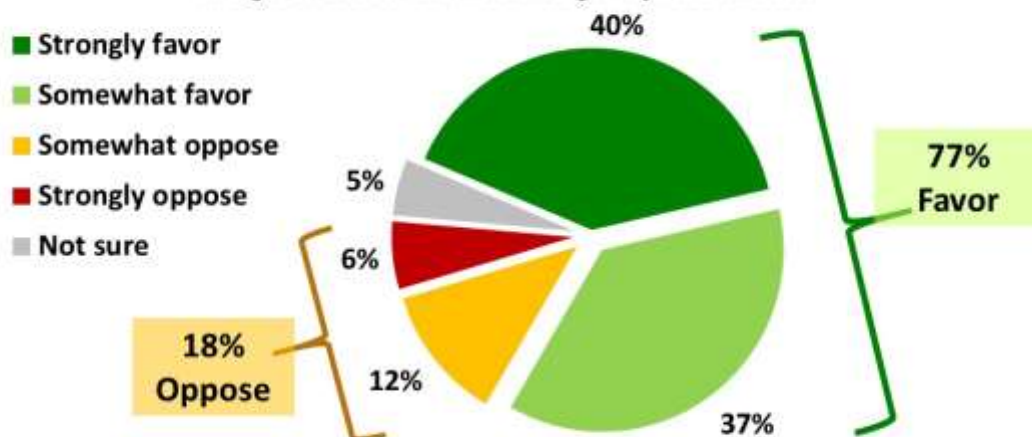
The Maryland General Assembly is considering a proposal to create a family and medical leave insurance program that would provide workers with partial wage replacement for up to 12 weeks when they need time away from work to provide care for a new child, a seriously ill family member, or their own serious health condition.

Would you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this proposal?

The poll then tested support for the proposal again, adding the fact that the program would be funded through a payroll deduction, with an average cost to workers of \$3 to \$6 per week. Even after learning about this cost factor, support is resounding, with more than three-quarters (77%) of voters in favor. Only 18% are opposed.

Voter Support for Paid Family & Medical Leave

In Light of Cost to Workers through Payroll Deduction



The family and medical leave insurance program would be funded by a premium collected through payroll deductions. The average cost to workers could be in the range of \$3 to \$6 per week.

Knowing this, would you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the proposal to create a family and medical leave insurance program for Maryland workers?

Support That Crosses All Political Lines

Voter support for this paid family and medical leave proposal, with a payroll deduction of \$3 to \$6 per week, commands solid majorities across party lines. Sixty-eight percent of Republicans, 81% of Democrats, and 76% of unaffiliated and third-party voters support it.

Voter Support for Paid Family & Medical Leave

In Light of Cost to Workers through Payroll Deduction, Segmented by Political Party

	All Voters	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Strongly favor	40%	46%	31%	38%
Somewhat favor	37%	35%	38%	38%
Total Favor	77%	81%	68%	76%
Somewhat oppose	12%	10%	15%	12%
Strongly oppose	7%	4%	11%	8%
Total Oppose	18%	14%	27%	20%
Margin	+59%	+67%	+41%	+56%
Not sure	5%	5%	5%	4%

Numbers may not always appear to add correctly due to rounding.

Support is consistent in all corners of the state, as well. Support holds firm between 75% and 83% in every major jurisdiction and region of Maryland.

Voter Support for Paid Family & Medical Leave

In Light of Cost to Workers through Payroll Deduction, Segmented by Geography

	Balt City	Balt County	Anne Arundel	Greater Baltimore ¹	Montgomery	Prince George's	Greater Washngtn ²	Eastern Shore	Southern MD	Western MD
Strongly favor	44%	33%	45%	38%	38%	46%	39%	47%	42%	36%
Somewhat favor	33%	42%	38%	38%	42%	33%	37%	33%	34%	38%
Total Favor	77%	75%	73%	76%	80%	80%	76%	80%	76%	75%
Somewhat oppose	9%	10%	8%	12%	12%	9%	14%	10%	16%	4%
Strongly oppose	8%	8%	6%	7%	3%	6%	6%	6%	7%	15%
Total Oppose	17%	18%	14%	19%	15%	15%	19%	16%	22%	19%
Margin	+60%	+57%	+59%	+57%	+65%	+65%	+57%	+64%	+54%	+56%
Not sure	6%	6%	3%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	2%	6%

¹Greater Baltimore = Baltimore City plus Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard Counties.

²Greater Washington = Charles, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's Counties.

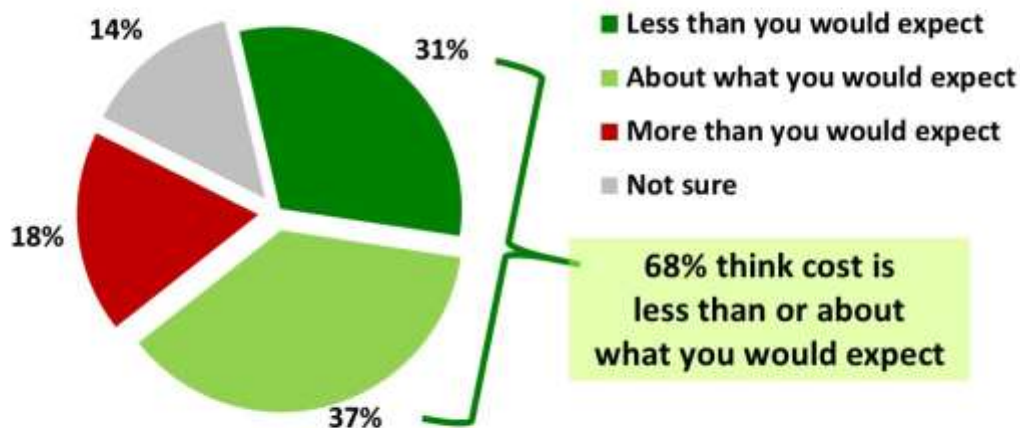
Understanding This High Level of Support

Informed that the weekly cost for the average worker in Maryland would be \$3.62, two-thirds (68%) of voters said that is less than they would expect or about what they would expect this program to cost. Only 18% of voters, fewer than one in five, felt the cost was more than they would expect, while 14% were not sure.

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A Reasonable Cost

\$3.62 Weekly for the Average Worker



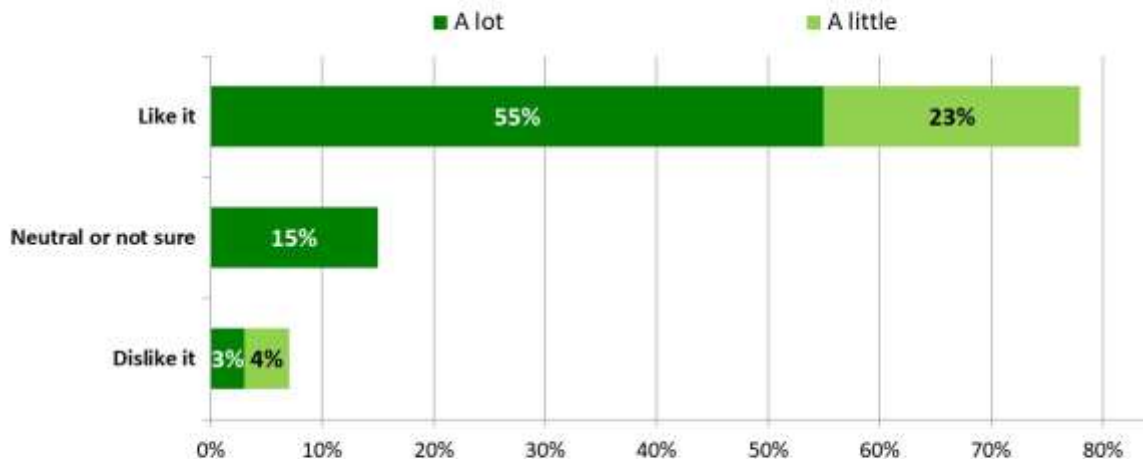
The weekly cost to the average worker in Maryland would be \$3.62. Is this amount...?

In various ways today throughout our work, we are seeing the influence that the pandemic is having on voter attitudes and expectations. This poll is no exception. The COVID-19 pandemic is an ever-present reality for people across the state, and that is impacting the level of urgency voters are feeling for public policy solutions to help improve conditions and provide support for people.

Here, 78% of voters said they like the fact that this legislation would help alleviate some of the disproportionate burden that has been put on so many women, who have been forced by the pandemic to take unpaid leave to care for children or other family members. Fifty-five percent of voters said they like that characteristic of this program *a lot*.

Addressing the Pandemic's Disproportionate Impact on Women

Helping Them Take the Leave They Need to Care for Children and Family Members



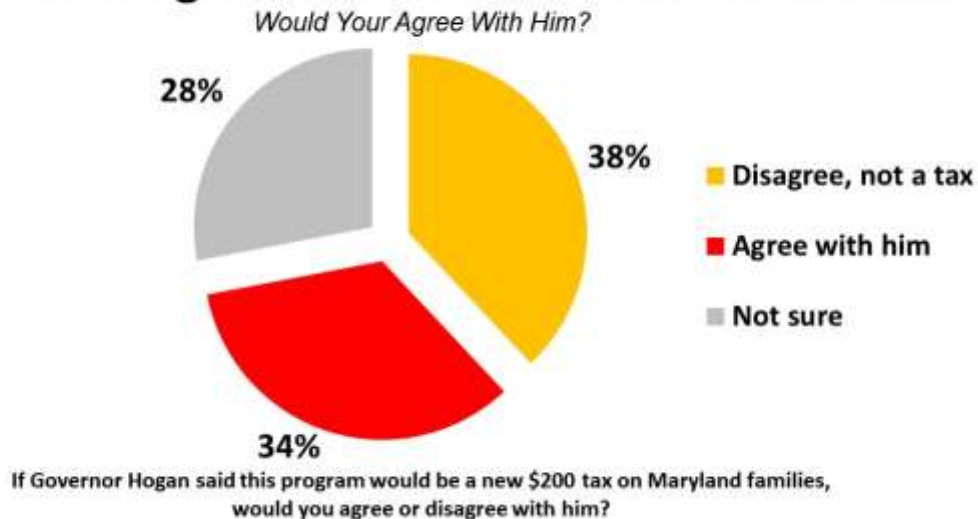
The pandemic is disproportionately affecting women, who have to leave the workforce to care for children and family members. This program would allow women to take the leave they need and then return to work.

(Here are some additional facts about this proposal. For each fact, please say if you like it a lot, like it a little, are neutral, dislike it a little, or dislike it a lot.)

Voters' Views on Calling This Proposal a "Tax" on Families

Opponents of this proposal have called it a "tax" on Maryland families. Asked directly if they would agree that "this program would be a new \$200 tax on Maryland families" if Governor Hogan said it, only one-third (34%) would agree with him. The remainder disagreed or were not sure.

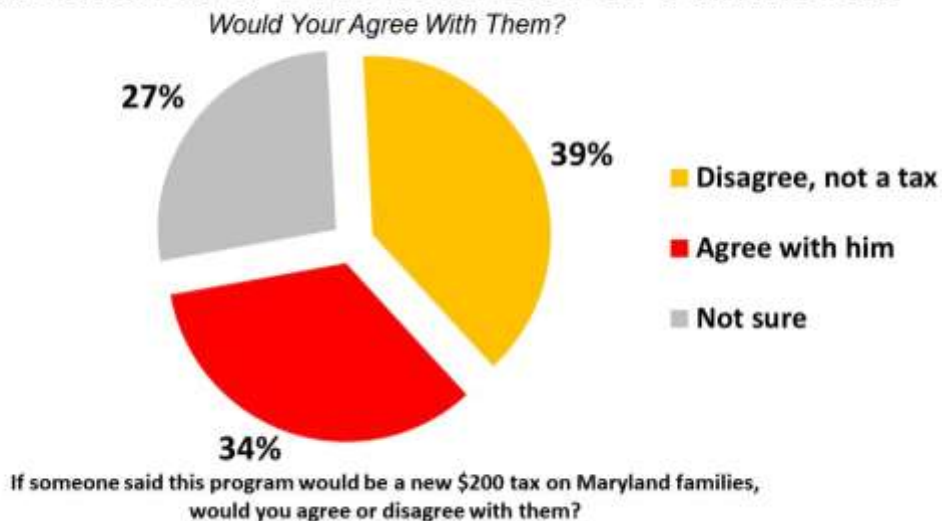
If Governor Hogan Said This is a Tax on Families...



That question was asked of a random one-half of the 1,011 poll respondents. The other half was asked the same question, but rather than "If Governor Hogan said..." this half of the sample was asked more generically, "If someone said..." The result was the same 34% who would see this as a tax, suggesting that opposition by the Governor would not move public opinion on this issue.

It is well-known that Governor Hogan is personally popular and has been throughout his time in office. In this poll, we measured his personal favorability rating at 68%. But while well-liked, his personal popularity does not seem to translate into persuasiveness on this issue.

If Someone Said This is a Tax on Families...

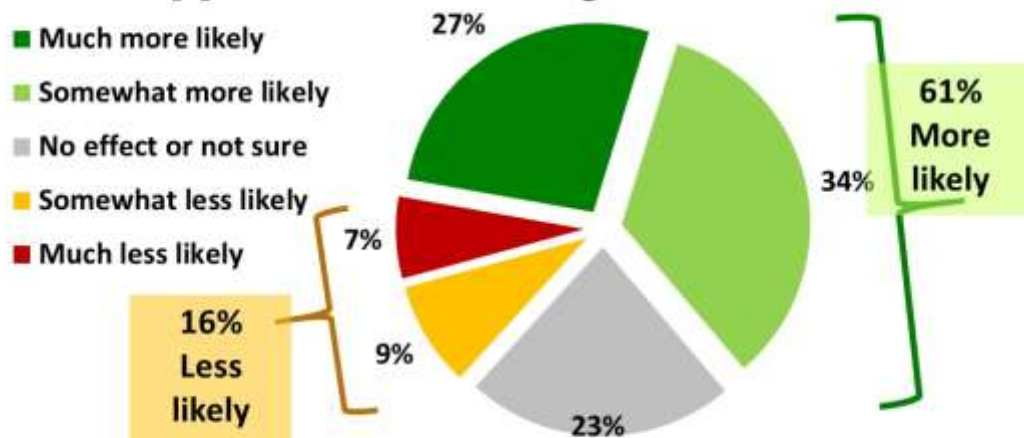


Political Impact for a Legislator Who Supports This Proposal

The paid family and medical leave proposal is widely popular with voters. As shown above, support cuts across party lines and geography. It is not denied if the popular Governor dubs it a “tax.” What is the impact on a legislator who supports this legislation?

By a margin of almost four-to-one, voters said they are more likely to vote for that legislator the next time there is an election (61% said so), compared to those who said they are less likely to vote for that legislator (16%). In fact, more than a quarter of the electorate (27%) across the state said they are *much more likely* to vote for such a legislator.

Likelihood to Vote for a Legislator Who Supports Paid Family & Medical Leave



If your state legislator voted yes to pass the Maryland family and medical leave proposal into law, would that make you much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, or much less likely to vote for that legislator the next time there is an election?

Like support for the legislation itself, this positive voter impact reaches across party lines and into all corners of the state, demonstrating just how popular this concept is with voters.

Likelihood to Vote for a Legislator Who Supports Paid Family & Medical Leave

Segmented by Political Party

	All Voters	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Much more likely	27%	33%	18%	19%
Somewhat more	34%	36%	29%	37%
Total More Likely	61%	69%	47%	56%
Somewhat less	9%	8%	13%	9%
Much less likely	7%	4%	10%	10%
Total Less Likely	16%	12%	23%	18%
Margin	+45%	+57%	+24%	+38%
No effect/Not sure	23%	19%	30%	26%

Numbers may not always appear to add correctly due to rounding.

Likelihood to Vote for a Legislator Who Supports Paid Family & Medical Leave

Segmented by Geography

	Balt City	Balt County	Anne Arundel	Greater Baltimore ¹	Montgomery	Prince George's	Greater Washngtn ²	Eastern Shore	Southern MD	Western MD
Much more likely	30%	25%	33%	29%	23%	29%	24%	23%	31%	24%
Somewhat more	39%	38%	28%	33%	37%	30%	32%	42%	30%	35%
Total More Likely	69%	63%	61%	61%	60%	60%	56%	65%	61%	59%
Somewhat less	6%	9%	8%	8%	10%	9%	11%	4%	15%	10%
Much less likely	6%	9%	3%	7%	5%	6%	8%	5%	6%	10%
Total Less Likely	12%	17%	11%	15%	15%	15%	19%	9%	21%	20%
Margin	+57%	+46%	+50%	+46%	+45%	+45%	+37%	+56%	+40%	+39%
No effect/Not sure	19%	20%	28%	24%	25%	25%	25%	26%	18%	21%

¹Greater Baltimore = Baltimore City plus Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard Counties.

²Greater Washington = Charles, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's Counties.

How This Poll was Conducted

A total of 1,011 interviews were conducted statewide December 11-26, 2020 among randomly selected Maryland registered voters. A cross-section of Maryland registered voters were surveyed online, and live telephone interviewers reached additional voters on both wireless and landline telephones, to ensure the poll best represented all segments of the electorate. Sampling targets were adhered to throughout the interviewing process to ensure that the sample represented the statewide electorate geographically, by political party, and for key demographic indicators such as gender, age, and race or ethnicity. Following interviewing, statistical weights were applied to ensure the sample most closely mirrored the characteristics of the statewide electorate. This poll produces a margin of sampling error no greater than $\pm 3.1\%$ at the 95% confidence level, meaning that at least 19 times out of 20 the actual results would differ by no more than that margin if every registered voter in the state had been interviewed.

Brief Background on OpinionWorks

OpinionWorks conducts frequent opinion studies at the state and local level across the country. Since 2007 we have been the polling organization for *The Baltimore Sun* newspaper in Maryland and have polled for numerous other media and advocates throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. We are engaged by state and local government agencies from Delaware to Oregon to assess public needs and preferences. We measure health attitudes and practices for public health departments and advocates, assess alumni engagement and prospective student expectations for colleges and universities, evaluate donor and volunteer relationships for non-profit organizations, and study human decision-making to inform behavior change efforts on environmental and health questions.