

**To: Vincent DeMarco, President
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative, Inc.**

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

Date: September 15, 2020

Subject: Maryland Polling on Health Equity Resource Communities

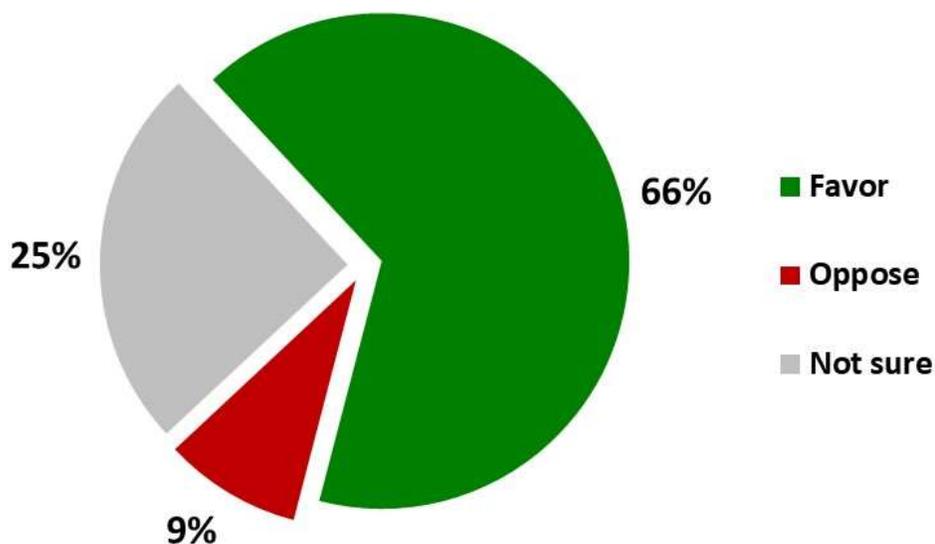
Our new statewide poll of Maryland voters shows overwhelming support for a proposal to create Health Equity Resource Communities (HERC). Two-thirds of voters favor the proposal, while opposition amounts to fewer than one in ten voters. Furthermore, a more than four-to-one supermajority of voters would support a 1% increase in the state's alcohol sales tax to pay for this new program.

These findings are based on our statewide poll of 838 registered voters, conducted both online and by telephone September 4-11, 2020. The poll has a potential margin of sampling error of $\pm 3.4\%$ at the 95% confidence level.

Widespread Support for Health Equity Resource Communities

By an overwhelming margin of 66% to 9%, Maryland voters support the creation of Health Equity Resource Communities to provide grants, tax incentives, and loans for health care providers in parts of the state with poor health outcomes. One-quarter of the state's voters said they were not sure.

Health Equity Resource Communities



There is a proposal to create Health Equity Resource Communities in Maryland to provide grants, tax incentives, and loans for health care providers in parts of the state with poor health outcomes to improve those health outcomes. Would you generally favor or oppose this proposal?

Support for this proposal crosses party lines, with Republicans supporting it with a 55% majority compared to only 16% opposed, Independents and third-party voters supporting the proposal by a margin of 63% to 7%, and Democrats by 74% to 6%.

Support by Political Party for Health Equity Resource Communities

	All Voters	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Favor	66%	74%	55%	63%
Oppose	9%	6%	16%	7%
Margin	+57%	+68%	+39%	+56%
Not sure	25%	20%	29%	30%

Support is never lower than the mid-60s across all parts of the state.

Support by Jurisdiction and Region for Health Equity Resource Communities

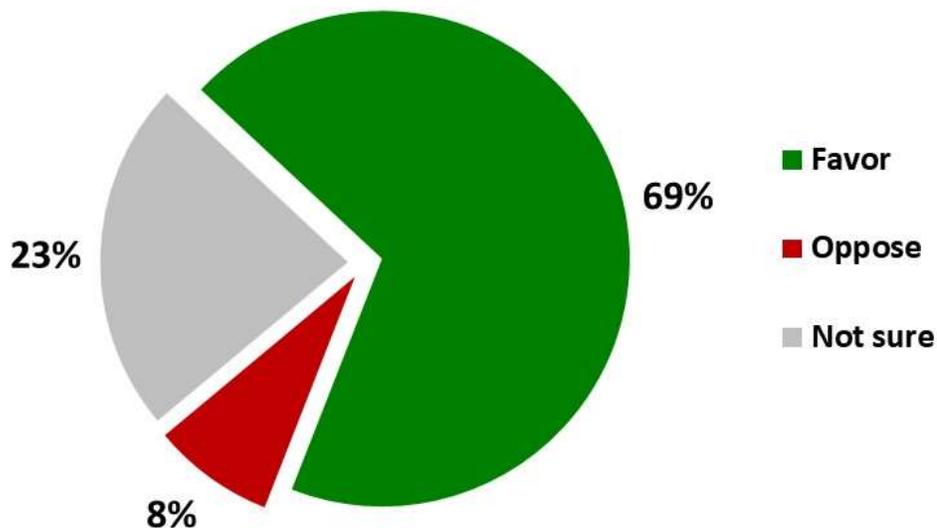
	Baltimore City	Baltimore County	Greater Baltimore ¹	Montgomery	Prince George's	Greater Washington ²	Shore/Southern MD	Western MD
Favor	66%	65%	66%	74%	68%	68%	63%	64%
Oppose	7%	12%	10%	6%	6%	8%	8%	12%
Margin	+59%	+53%	+56%	+68%	+62%	+60%	+55%	+52%
Not sure	28%	22%	24%	19%	26%	24%	30%	24%

¹Greater Baltimore includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll, Harford, Howard.

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

Informed that “this proposal is based on an earlier program that successfully increased access to healthcare, improved residents’ health, reduced hospital admissions, and created cost savings, but was allowed to expire in 2016,” support climbs slightly higher. Knowing this information, 69% support the proposal and only 8% oppose it, with 23% unsure.

Support for HERC Knowing That an Earlier Program was Successful

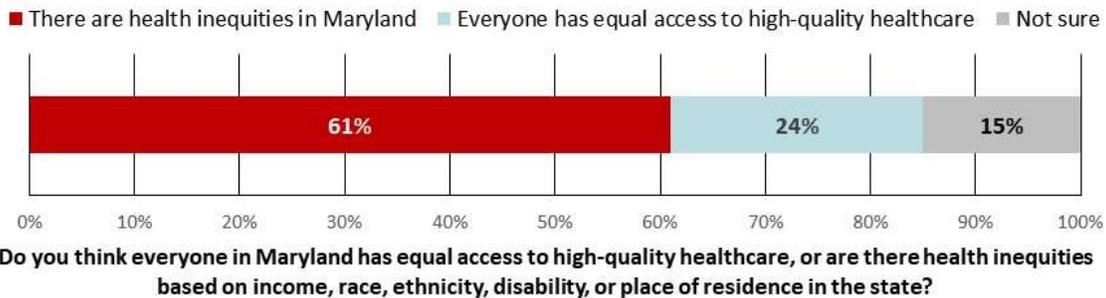


This proposal is based on an earlier program that successfully increased access to healthcare, improved residents’ health, reduced hospital admissions, and created cost savings, but was allowed to expire in 2016. Knowing this, would you favor or oppose this proposal to create Health Equity Resource Communities in Maryland?

Awareness of Health Inequities in Maryland

This high level of support is explained in part by the realization by most Marylanders that not everyone has equal access to high-quality healthcare across the state. More than six out of ten Marylanders (61%) acknowledge that there are “health inequities based on income, race, ethnicity, disability, or place of residence in the state.” Only 24% believe “everyone in Maryland has equal access to high-quality healthcare,” while 15% are not sure.

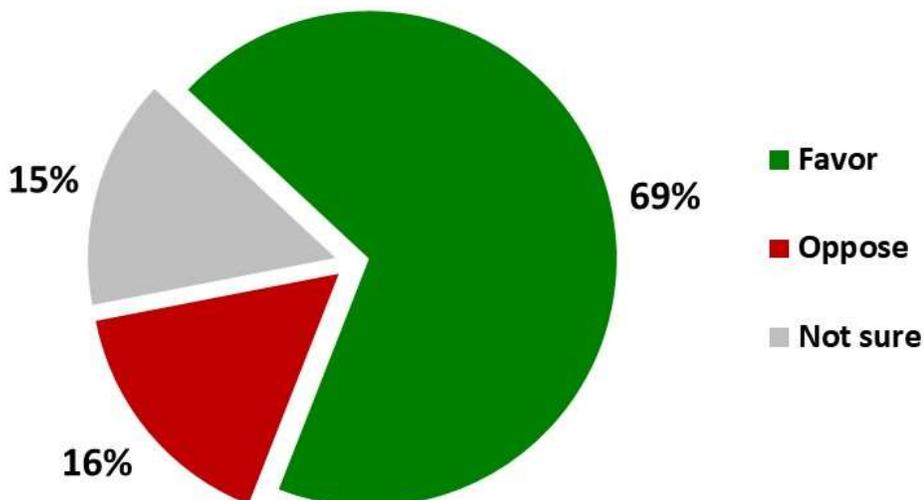
Health Inequities in Maryland



Support for a 1% Increase in the Alcohol Sales Tax to Pay for Health Equity Resource Communities

A more than two-thirds majority of voters would raise the state’s alcohol sales tax from 9% to 10% to pay for this program. By a margin of more than four-to-one – with 69% of voters in favor and only 16% opposed – Maryland registered voters favor “a 1% increase in the alcohol sales tax in Maryland if the money was dedicated to the Health Equity Resource Communities program.” Fifteen percent are unsure.

Support for Health Equity Resource Communities Funded by a 1% Alcohol Sales Tax Increase



The proposed program would be funded with a 1% increase in the state’s alcohol tax, raising it from 9% to 10%. A prior increase in the alcohol tax was shown to reduce drinking by underage Marylanders and heavy drinkers, which saved lives and reduced healthcare costs. Knowing this, would you favor or oppose a 1% increase in the alcohol tax in Maryland if the money was dedicated to the Health Equity Resource Communities program?

Support for a 1% increase in the alcohol sales tax to fund this program crosses all lines, with 61% of Republicans, 65% of Independents, and 75% of Democrats supporting it. Politically, this proposal is a winner all across the political spectrum.

Support by Political Party for a 1% Alcohol Sales Tax Dedicated to HERC

	All Voters	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Favor	69%	75%	61%	65%
Oppose	16%	11%	25%	17%
Margin	+53%	+64%	+36%	+48%
Not sure	15%	14%	13%	18%

Support by Jurisdiction and Region for a 1% Alcohol Sales Tax Dedicated to HERC

	Baltimore City	Baltimore County	Greater Baltimore ¹	Montgomery	Prince George's	Greater Washington ²	Shore/Southern MD	Western MD
Favor	70%	72%	70%	78%	65%	71%	62%	65%
Oppose	17%	12%	17%	12%	15%	14%	19%	10%
Margin	+53%	+60%	+53%	+66%	+50%	+57%	+43%	+55%
Not sure	13%	15%	13%	11%	20%	15%	17%	25%

¹Greater Baltimore includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll, Harford, Howard.

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

Political Impact of Legislators' Position on Health Equity Resource Communities

This overwhelming support for the HERC proposal translates into a potential political impact on future General Assembly races. A hypothetical legislative candidate's position on this proposal could have a significant influence over whether voters would support that candidate – even causing voters to oppose legislative candidates of their own party.

As the table on the following page indicates, on the so-called generic ballot, Democratic legislative candidates start off with a 29-point advantage based on partisan preferences across the state, if the election were held today. (Note that this Democratic advantage is 10 percentage points higher than it was in November 2017, when Democrats enjoyed a 19-point margin in the generic legislative ballot.)

Learning that a hypothetical Democrat in their district supports creating Health Equity Resource Communities while the Republican candidate opposes it, the margin for the Democrat increases to 37 points.

Surprisingly in this partisan age, the advantage for Democrats is erased and reversed if the *Republican* supports the proposal while the Democrat opposes it. In this scenario, the Republican legislative candidate wins by a six percentage points, representing an enormous 43-point swing in voter support. This proposal to address healthcare inequities is a potent political issue, and helpful to legislative candidates of both parties.

Support for Legislative Candidates Based on Their Position on HERC

	Support the Democratic Candidate	Support the Republican Candidate	Margin
Generic Ballot in State Legislative Elections	56%	27%	Democrat +29%
Democrat Supports HERC Proposal Republican Opposes It	58%	21%	Democrat +37%
Republican Supports HERC Proposal Democrat Opposes Legislation	31%	37%	Republican +6%
<p>“In the next state legislative elections, are you more likely to vote for... (rotate): the Democratic candidates or the Republican candidates?”</p> <p>(Rotate order of next two questions):</p> <p>“If you learned that <u>the Democratic candidate in your legislative district supported</u> creating Health Equity Resource Communities while <u>the Republican candidate opposed</u> it, who would you be more likely to vote for (rotate): the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate?”</p> <p>“If you learned that <u>the Republican candidate in your legislative district supported</u> creating Health Equity Resource Communities while <u>the Democratic candidate opposed</u> it, who would you be more likely to vote for (rotate): the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate?”</p>			

How This Poll was Conducted

A total of 838 interviews were conducted statewide September 4-11, 2020 among randomly selected Maryland registered voters. A cross-section of Marylander 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 ±3.4% 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.