

**To: Vincent DeMarco, President  
Maryland Health Care For All Coalition**

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

**Date: September 13, 2023**

**Subject: Maryland Poll: Attitudes about Federal Legislation  
Affecting Prescription Drug Affordability**

## OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

The Maryland Health Care For All Coalition commissioned this statewide poll of Maryland registered voters to assess public opinion on issues surrounding prescription drug affordability and support for several recent or proposed Federal government actions intended to help limit prescription drug costs for patients.

These findings are based on our statewide poll of 1,090 registered voters, conducted online and by telephone from August 10 to 17, 2023. The poll has a potential sampling error of  $\pm 3.0\%$  at the 95% confidence level. A more detailed methodology statement is found at the end of this memorandum.

### Summary of Findings

The proposed We PAID Act, introduced by Senator Chris Van Hollen, enjoys very strong support from Maryland voters, with more than three-quarters of voters in favor of this proposed legislation. Support transcends partisanship, commanding large majorities regardless of party affiliation.

Three other provisions of the recent Inflation Reduction Act – limiting insulin costs to \$35 per month for Medicare patients, allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug costs, and limiting Medicare patients' annual out-of-pocket expense for prescription drugs to \$2,000 – all enjoy large majorities of support from Maryland voters, and all of this support cuts across party lines, geography, and other voter characteristics. Among these measures, support is particularly resounding for allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug costs.

Details follow.

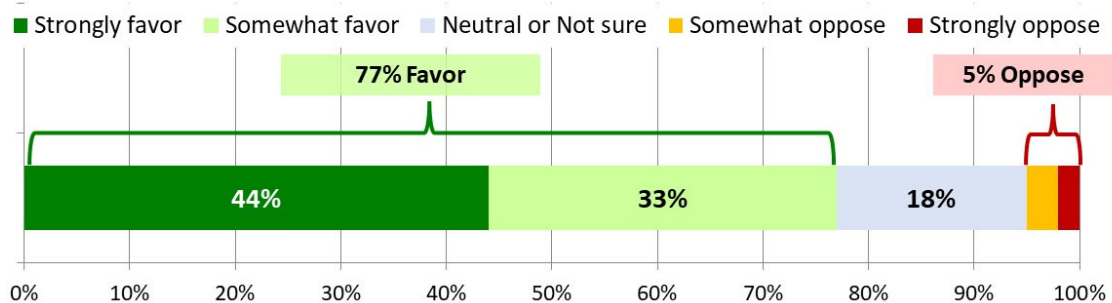
## DETAILED FINDINGS

### Strong Support for the Federal We PAID Act

Maryland voters strongly support Federal legislation known as the We PAID Act. This proposal would create a national Drug Affordability and Access Committee modeled after Maryland's Prescription Drug Affordability Board, which would limit the price of some prescription drugs that were developed through taxpayer-funded research.

More than three-quarters of voters (77%) favor the We PAID Act, with 44% *strongly* in favor. Opposition is almost negligible at 5%. Eighteen percent of voters are neutral about the proposal.

## Strong Support for Federal We PAID Act



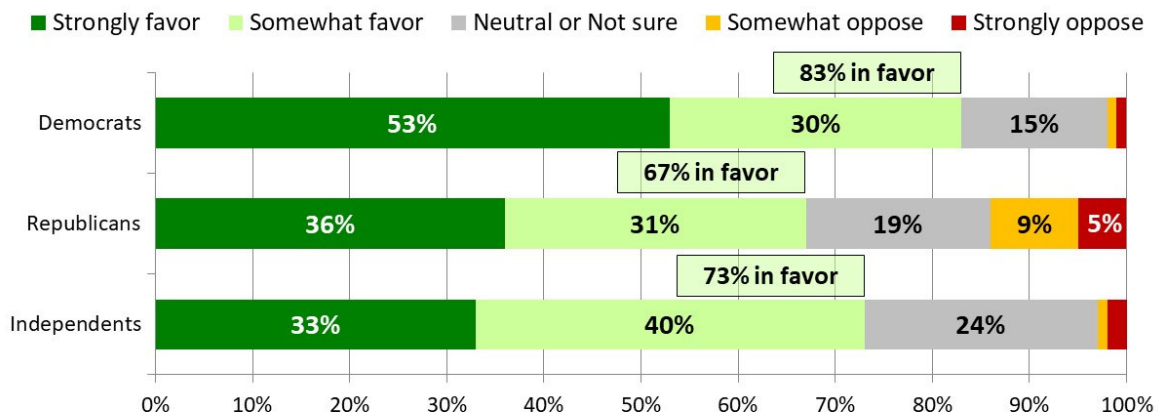
There is a proposal in Congress called the We PAID Act, which would limit the price of some prescription drugs that were developed through taxpayer-funded research. This Act would set up a national Drug Affordability and Access Committee, modeled after Maryland’s Prescription Affordability Board, to help control drug costs nationally.

From this description, would you favor or oppose the We PAID Act?

Support for the We PAID Act cuts a wide swath across party lines. Supporting the proposal are two-thirds (67%) of Republicans, 73% of Independents, and 83% of Democrats.

## Federal We PAID Act

Support by Political Party



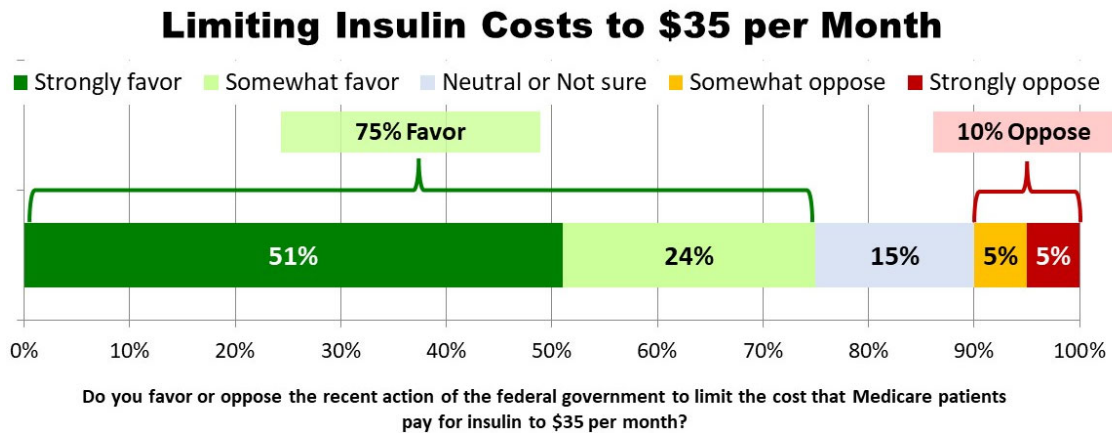
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From this description, would you favor or oppose the We PAID Act?

Support for the Act rises as high as 85% in Montgomery County and never falls below 69% in any region of the state. The We PAID Act is supported by an overwhelming 80% of voters who take one or more prescription drugs, as well as 70% of voters who take no prescription drugs.

### Broad Support for \$35 Monthly Limit on Insulin Costs for Medicare Patients

As part of the Inflation Reduction Act, the Federal government limited the amount that Medicare patients must pay for insulin to \$35 a month. This measure is very popular with Maryland voters, with three-quarters (75%) favoring it, and only 10% opposed. In fact, a 51% majority of voters *strongly* favor the insulin cost cap.



The insulin cost cap is broadly popular:

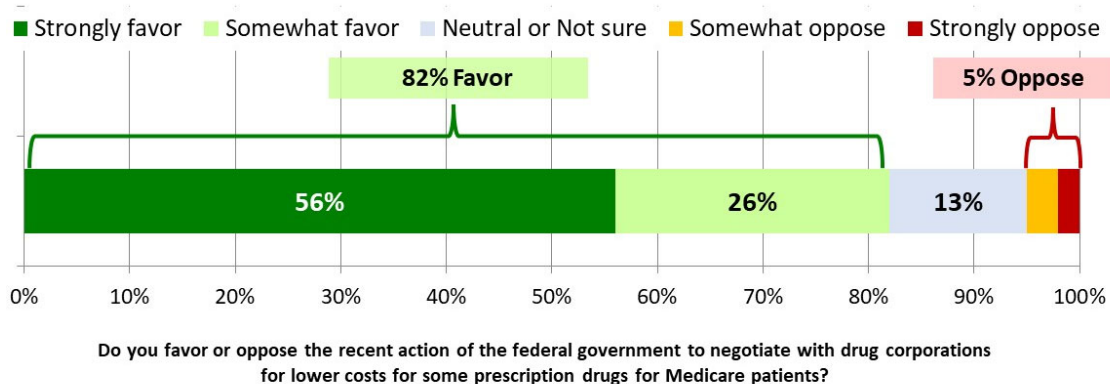
- It is supported by 71% of Republicans, 73% of Independents, and 77% of Democrats.
- More than four out of five Medicare-eligible voters (81%) support it, as do 73% of younger voters.
- It is supported by 79% of voters who have been told by a health professional they have diabetes, pre-diabetes, or borderline diabetes, and 74% of voters who have never received that diagnosis.

*(continued, next page)*

### Very Deep Support for Enabling Medicare to Negotiate with Drug Corporations for Lower Costs

Among the federal actions tested in the poll, the *most* popular was giving the Federal government the ability to negotiate prescription drug prices on behalf of Medicare patients. This action, part of the Inflation Reduction Act, is favored by 82% of voters. A solid 56% majority are *strongly* in favor. Only 5% of voters statewide are opposed to this provision, while 13% are neutral.

### Medicare Negotiating for Lower Prescription Drug Costs

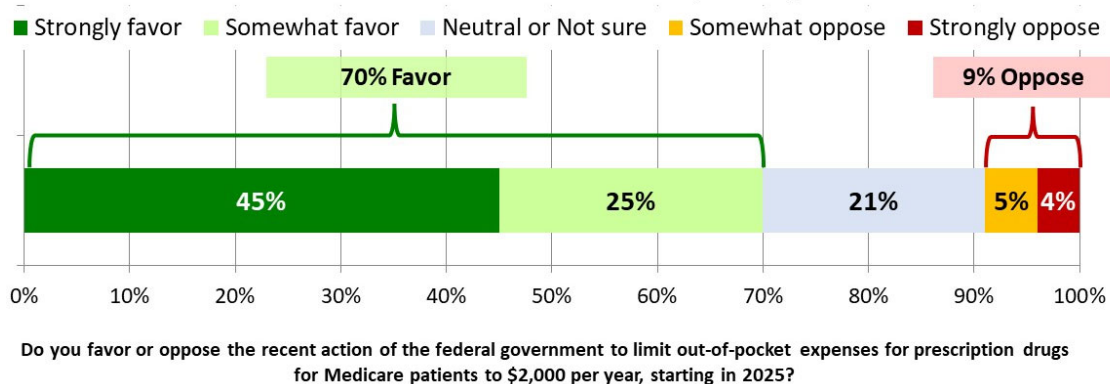


While Democrats are overwhelmingly in favor (86%), negotiating prescription drug prices is also deeply popular with Maryland Republicans (78% in favor) and Independents (77%). Support for this measure sweeps across the state, never dropping below 78% in any jurisdiction or region of Maryland.

### Limiting Out-of-Pocket Prescription Drug Expenses for Medicare Patients

The fourth Federal action tested with voters was a \$2,000 limit on out-of-pocket prescription drug expenses for Medicare patients that was included in the Inflation Reduction Act. A large 70% majority favor this action, while only 9% of Maryland voters oppose it. One-fifth of the State’s voters (21%) are neutral or not sure about this provision.

### Limiting Out-of-Pocket Prescription Drug Expenses for Medicare Patients to \$2,000 per Year



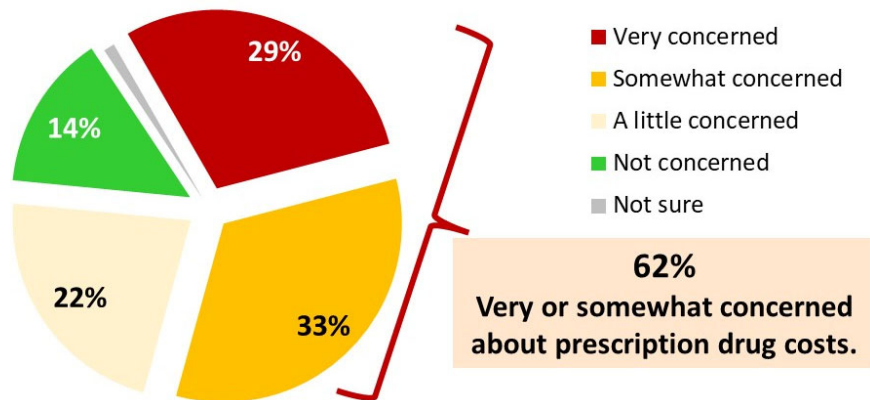
Just like the other Federal actions on prescription drugs, support cuts across party lines, with 76% of Democrats, 64% of Independents, and 62% of Republicans in favor.

### Great Concern About Affording Prescription Drugs

Several factors help explain this broad support for government action. One of these is a strong concern among Marylanders about prescription drug costs.

Nearly two-thirds (62%) are very or somewhat concerned “personally” about the cost of prescription drugs. More than a quarter of Maryland voters (29%) said they are “very concerned personally.” Only a small minority (14%) are not concerned about drug costs.

## Personal Concern about Prescription Drug Costs

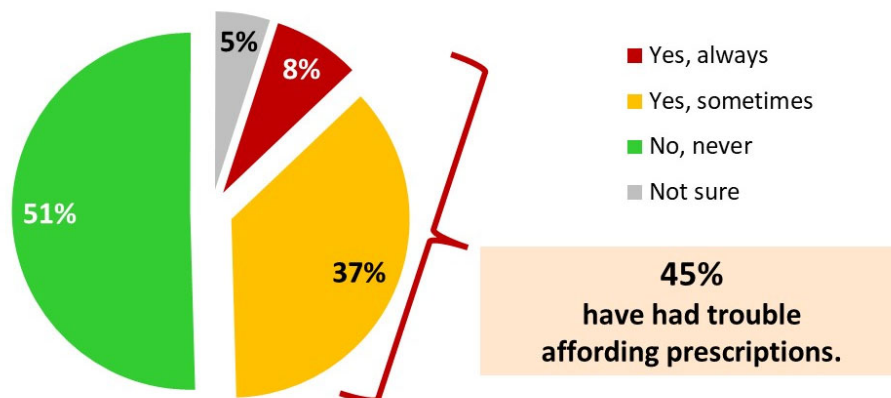


How much does the cost of prescription drugs concern you, personally? Would you say you are very concerned personally, somewhat concerned, a little concerned, or not personally concerned about it?

### Trouble Affording Prescription Drugs

This concern about prescription drugs is often founded on personal experience. A sobering 45% of Marylanders – nearly half – indicated that they always or sometimes have had trouble affording prescription medications.

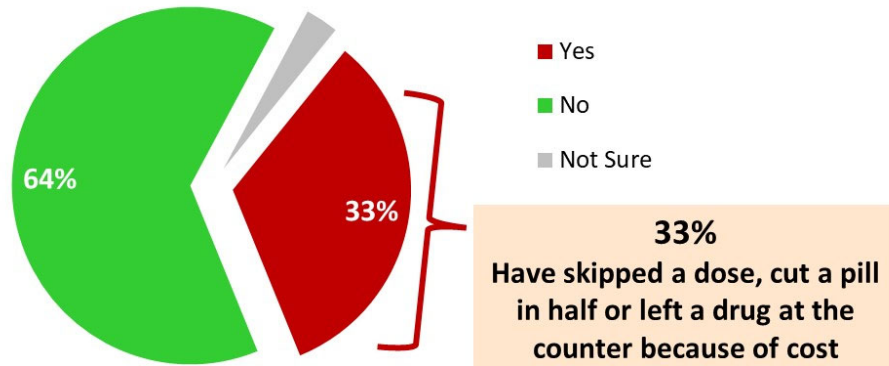
## Trouble Affording Prescription Medications



Do you or other members of your household ever have trouble affording prescription medications?

This is manifested in the real-life outcome that one-third (33%) of Marylanders said they have “skipped a dose, cut a pill in half, or left a drug at the counter” *because of cost*.

### Skipping a Dose Due to Cost

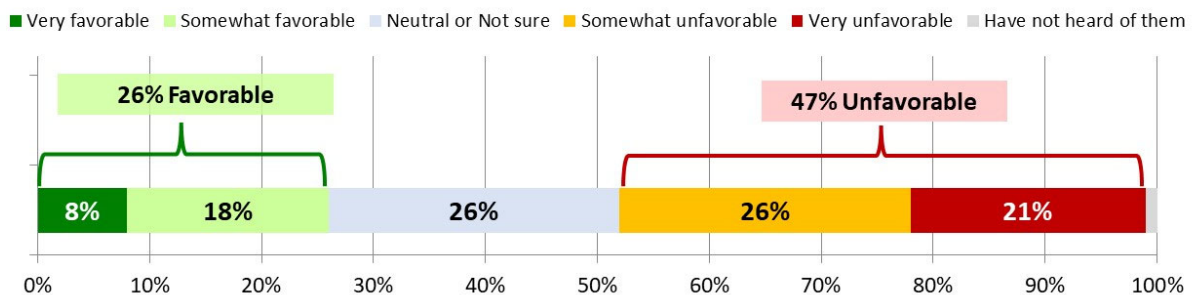


Because of cost, have you ever skipped a dose, cut a pill in half, or left a drug at the pharmacy counter?

### How Marylanders Feel About Pharmaceutical Companies

Another factor that may help explain strong support for Federal action on prescription drug costs is voters’ attitude toward the pharmaceutical industry. Only 26% of voters view the industry favorably, while nearly twice as many (47%) view it unfavorably. About one-quarter (26%) of Marylanders have neutral views about the pharmaceutical industry.

### Pharmaceutical Industry Favorability



Following is a list of people and groups. For each one, please say if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, neutral, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion. If you have not heard of them, just say so.

...The pharmaceutical industry.

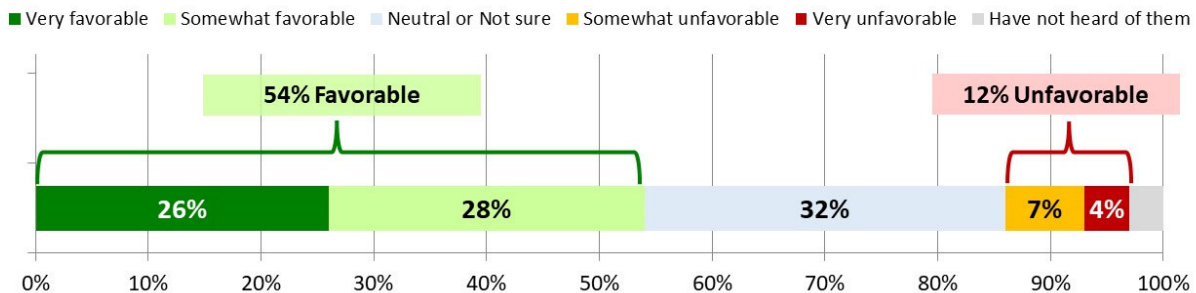
The low favorability for pharmaceutical companies cuts across party lines. Democrats and Republicans view the industry nearly identically, with 28% of Democrats and 29% of Republicans with favorable views. Unfavorability towards the industry is 45% among Democrats and 44% among Republicans. Interestingly, Independents were much less favorable towards pharmaceutical companies, with only 15% of viewing them favorably and 53% viewing them unfavorably.



### A Contrast with AARP

For purposes of comparison, the AARP has a vastly more favorable standing with voters. Over half of respondents have a favorable view of the AARP (54%). Very few voters have an unfavorable view (12%), while 32% were neutral.

## AARP Favorability



Following is a list of people and groups. For each one, please say if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, neutral, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion. If you have not heard of them, just say so.

...AARP.

### Methodology

#### How This Poll was Conducted

A total of 1,090 interviews were conducted statewide August 10-17, 2023 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, 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  $\pm 3.0\%$  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 is a non-partisan firm that 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 nation. 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.