

Marylanders Describe Deep Impact from Coronavirus in New Statewide OpinionWorks Poll ***Widespread Financial Hardship, Profound Worry, and Postponement of Major Decisions***

For more information, contact: Steve Raabe, President, OpinionWorks
410-271-3795
steve@opinionworks.com

(Annapolis, May 22) A new statewide survey of Marylanders conducted by OpinionWorks on the impacts of COVID-19 shows that residents across the state are deeply worried that they or someone in their immediate family will contract the illness, half of Marylanders are impacted financially, and large numbers are postponing or canceling major milestones like weddings, schooling, retiring, or relocating. The representative online survey of 612 Maryland adults was conducted April 28 through May 4, 2020. It has a margin of error of $\pm 4.0\%$.

“The impacts of COVID-19 that people describe are profound and heartbreaking,” said Steve Raabe, OpinionWorks President and the author of the poll. “Though economic hardship is widespread, the impact on Marylanders goes far beyond the economy. People describe a level of stress and sadness over the unknowns of this pandemic, the loss of precious time with parents or grandchildren, and the postponement or cancellation of lifetime milestones like retirement or graduation,” he said.

These are the highlights of the survey:

- Nearly one-third of Marylanders (31%) know someone personally who has tested positive for the coronavirus. Another 5% know someone who could not get a test but may have had COVID-19.
- More than two-thirds (70%) have a significant level of worry “that you or someone in your immediate family could become ill with COVID-19.” Almost one-third (31%) are “very worried” about that, and another 39% said they are simply “worried.”
- Most of the remainder are “only a little worried” that someone in their immediate family will contract the disease, leaving only 8% – fewer than one in ten – who said they are not worried at all.
- Nearly half (47%) of Marylanders said their economic livelihood has been affected by the pandemic. One in six (17%) said they have lost their job or their primary source of income. Another 30% said their income is reduced.
- Very few Marylanders think “social distancing can be ended and things will begin to get back to normal where you live” anytime soon. Only 12% think that will happen in the next few weeks. One-third (35%) think it will be sometime this summer, while one-quarter (23%) said it will not be until fall or winter. One-fifth of Marylanders (20%) think it will be 2021 or later before things begin to get back to normal.
- Governor Hogan receives a 75% approval rating for his handling of the coronavirus crisis (with 7% disapproving and the rest “mixed or not sure”), while President Trump earns approval from only 26% of Marylanders, with a 56% majority disapproving and 17% mixed or not sure.
- In a strange twist, the Republican Governor’s approval rating for his handling of the COVID situation is 17 points higher among Democrats (83%) than it is among Republicans (66%). 79% of unaffiliated voters approve of his handling of the crisis.

- Among Maryland Republicans in the survey sample, 70% approve of the President’s handling of the coronavirus crisis, 17% disapprove, and 13% are mixed or not sure. Democrats predictably disapprove of his performance overwhelmingly (79%), as do a solid majority of unaffiliated voters (55%).

In an open-ended question, survey participants were asked, “Is this crisis impacting any major decisions in your life, whether those are career plans, personal plans, or intentions to pursue additional education? If yes, please describe the impact on your plans.” Two-thirds (66%) of Maryland residents described experiencing that kind of a major impact.

Inability to travel is the most common impact people mention, but there are many other significant impacts, detailed in the attached survey questionnaire.

“Reading their comments, one gets a sense of the emotional toll people are feeling, and the severe impact on the course of people’s lives,” Raabe said. “For many people, it could be years before they are able to move beyond this, and for some people, the losses may never be recovered.”

The full questionnaire is attached, including the open-ended comments that people offered, or may be downloaded from our website, www.OpinionWorks.com.

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