

Press Release: October 23, 2013
Center for the Study of Local Issues
Anne Arundel Community College
101 College Parkway, Arnold MD, 21012-1895
Contact: Dan Nataf 410-777-2733

County Survey finds that Sequestration and Shutdown of Federal Government Has Broad Impact upon Residents

A survey of 503 Anne Arundel County residents conducted October 14-17 by students assisting the Center for the Study of Local Issues (CSLI) at Anne Arundel Community College asked respondents about any negative impact resulting from either sequestration or the partial shutdown of the federal government. A sizable majority (57 percent) said that either they or their household had experienced a negative impact. When asked to describe the impact, the most common was being furloughed, claimed by 44 percent, followed by a loss of income (10 percent), and inability to go to federal parks and/or lost vacations (7 percent), reductions in services (7 percent), lost business (4 percent) and being laid off or job loss (4 percent). Demographic characteristics of those affected are described later in the press release.

The survey also asked about perceptions of the local economy and its impact upon residents, public infrastructure priorities, perceived improvement or deterioration in how the county has dealt with certain problems, mental health services, job approval of President Obama and Congress as well as trust in political parties. A detailed review of these main themes as well as other results follows the summary of findings. The actual questionnaire and percentages can be found in Appendix A at the end of the press release.

Summary of Other Findings

Most important problem facing county residents: 16 percent cited the economy, 19 percent said taxes. Government as inefficient, corrupt or unethical was cited by 17 percent, up from 11 percent in March 2013.

Perceptions of the economy: Fifty-three percent viewed the county's economy as excellent or good – up a bit from last spring when it was 49 percent; 40 percent said the same for Maryland's economy (up 10 points) and 14 percent favorably rated the national economy, up 2 points.

Right direction/wrong direction: The percentage of those saying that the county was moving in the right direction was largely unchanged (from 49 to 50 percent). Smaller numbers felt that the state (35 percent - unchanged) or the country (10 percent – down 14 points) was heading in the right direction.

Economic conditions experienced by individuals: Various measures have been tracked since March 2008. The fall 2013 survey found only small changes: a 4 percentage point increase in concern about taxes and a 5 percentage point decrease in the number saying that they had received a salary or income increase lately. On a positive note, there was a 4 percentage point decrease in those saying that they were delaying a major purchase.

Consumer confidence: Continuing a pattern first seen last spring, indicators again pointed to a drop in consumer confidence, with all four indicators (unemployment, growth, inflation and personal financial situation) down compared to spring 2013.

County infrastructure priorities: The highest priorities were on schools and roads; the lowest priorities were on libraries and public parks.

County ability to deal with various problems: The public noted net negative percentages in most areas such as “improving ethics,” “reducing traffic congestion,” and “keeping taxes low.” Only “improving the academic performance of our children” and “improving the overall quality of life in the county” had net positive scores.

AACC's image and rating: Common word associations with Anne Arundel Community College's image included "good reputation" and "affordable." Eighty percent rated the college as either "excellent" (50 percent) or good (30 percent). Eleven percent had no opinion.

Mental health services: Only 16 percent claimed any experience with mental health services in Anne Arundel County. Similar percentages agreed and disagreed with positive statements such as "services are affordable" or "services are high quality."

Presidential job approval: President Obama's job approval dropped 4 points to 40 percent.

Congressional job approval: Only 6 percent approved of the job being done by Congress.

Which party do you trust? The percentage favoring Democrats dropped slightly from 37 to 34 percent since last spring. The percentage favoring Republicans dropped 9 points from 32 to 23 percent. A record number (37 percent) said "neither."

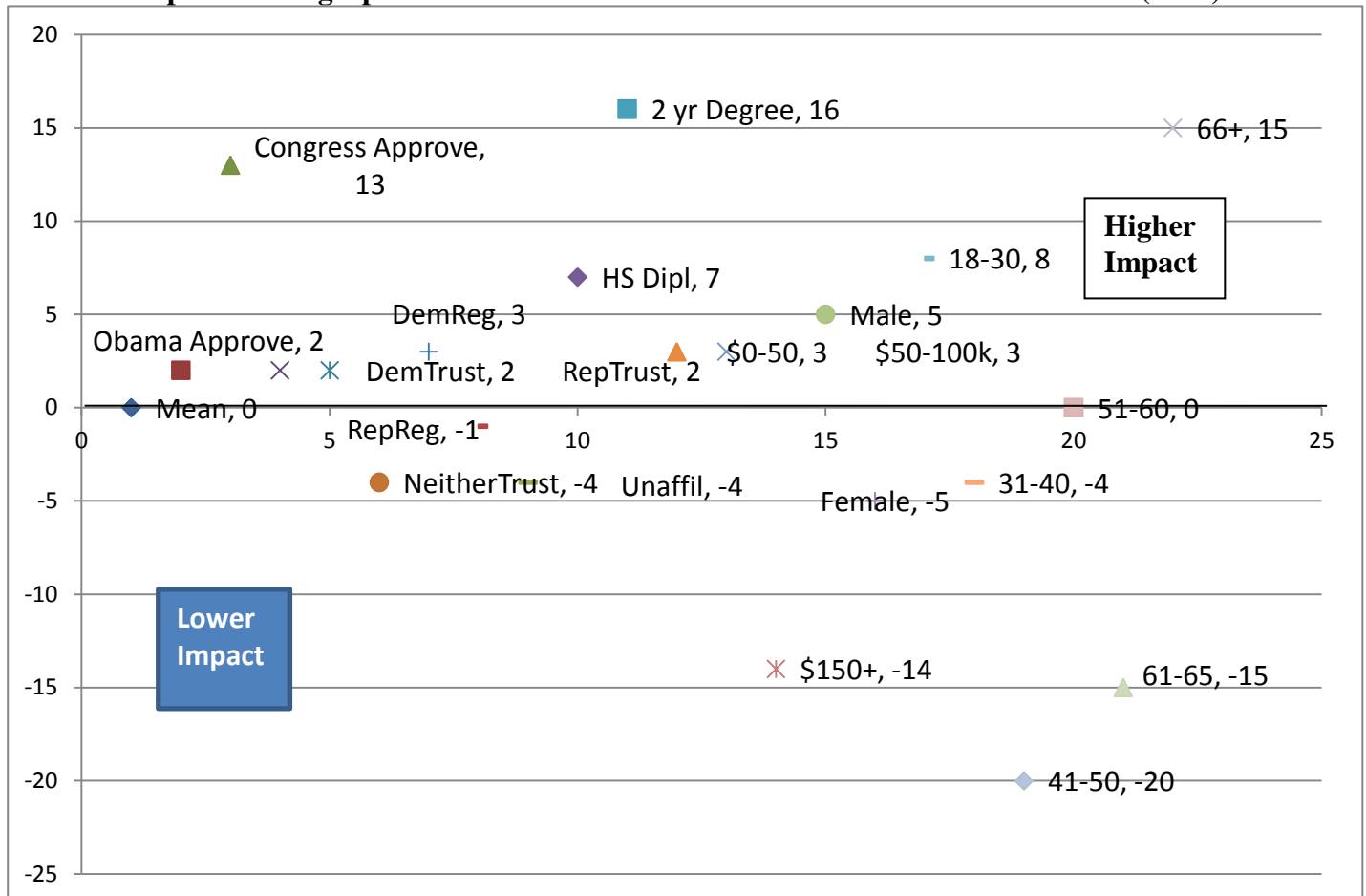
Methodology: The survey polled a random sample of 503 county residents who were at least 18 years old. It was conducted October 14-17, 2013 during evening hours. Phone numbers were derived from a database of listed landline numbers, cell phone numbers as well as computer chosen, randomly assigned numbers. There was about a 4.3 percent statistical margin of error for the overall sample; the error rate was higher for subgroups such as "Democrats." The dataset was weighted by gender and political party to better represent the general population. College students were trained and used as telephone interviewers.

Contact Dan Nataf, Ph.D., center director, for additional comments or questions at 410-777-2733 and ddnataf@aacc.edu. Check the CSLI website for results from this and previous surveys: www2.aacc.edu/csli.

Sequestration and Federal Government Shutdown: Demographic Correlates

The demographic profile of those more or less impacted by sequestration and the partial shutdown of the federal government is depicted on Graph 1. Only gender was statistically significant – men were somewhat more likely to have been impacted than women. While a variety of specific traits seemed to have been disproportionately impacted – those over 65, those with two year degrees and those approving of Congress – and others disproportionately less impacted – those with incomes of \$150,000 or more, those between 61-65 or 41-50 – these were not part of generally statistically significant relationships which indicates that the impact was experienced in a relatively similar manner across many demographic categories.

Graph 1: Demographic Characteristics – Percent Above or Below Mean Score (57%)



The Most Important Problem facing Residents

Recent CSLI surveys have consistently shown high levels of concern about the state of the economy in answer to the question, “What is the most important problem facing the residents of Anne Arundel County at the present time?”

The fall survey produced the lowest percentage citing “economy” since fall 2007, dropping 7 points since spring. Crime reached its highest level (9 percent) since fall 2007. Taxes continued its relatively high level of citation (19 percent).

Unbundling the “other” category shows a significant trend: increasing percentages citing government as unethical, corrupt or wasteful.¹ Table 1 and Graph 2 show changes over time in a few categories.

Table 1: “Most Important Problem Facing Residents” – Fall 2007 to Fall 2013²

	Fall '07	Spring '08	Fall '08	Spring '09	Fall '09	Spring '10	Fall '10	Spring '11	Fall '11	Spring '12	Fall '12	Spring '13	Fall '13
Economy	8	23	38	48	33	36	36	35	48	30	27	23	16
Taxes – too high	17	16	12	10	12	11	13	11	9	17	17	19	19
Growth / development	16	12	9	5	5	5	2	4	4	4	3	2	4
Education / school problems	12	12	10	8	7	8	9	10	5	7	8	8	6
Traffic congestion/ problems	12	7	6	4	5	6	6	3	5	5	6	5	4
Crime / drugs	10	6	4	6	8	6	6	6	8	4	7	5	9
Unsure/no answer	6	9	7	8	10	10	8	12	8	9	9	10	12
Other answer	19	15	14	11	21	17	21	19	13	24	23	29	30
Total	100	100	100	100	101	99	101	100	100	100	100	101	100

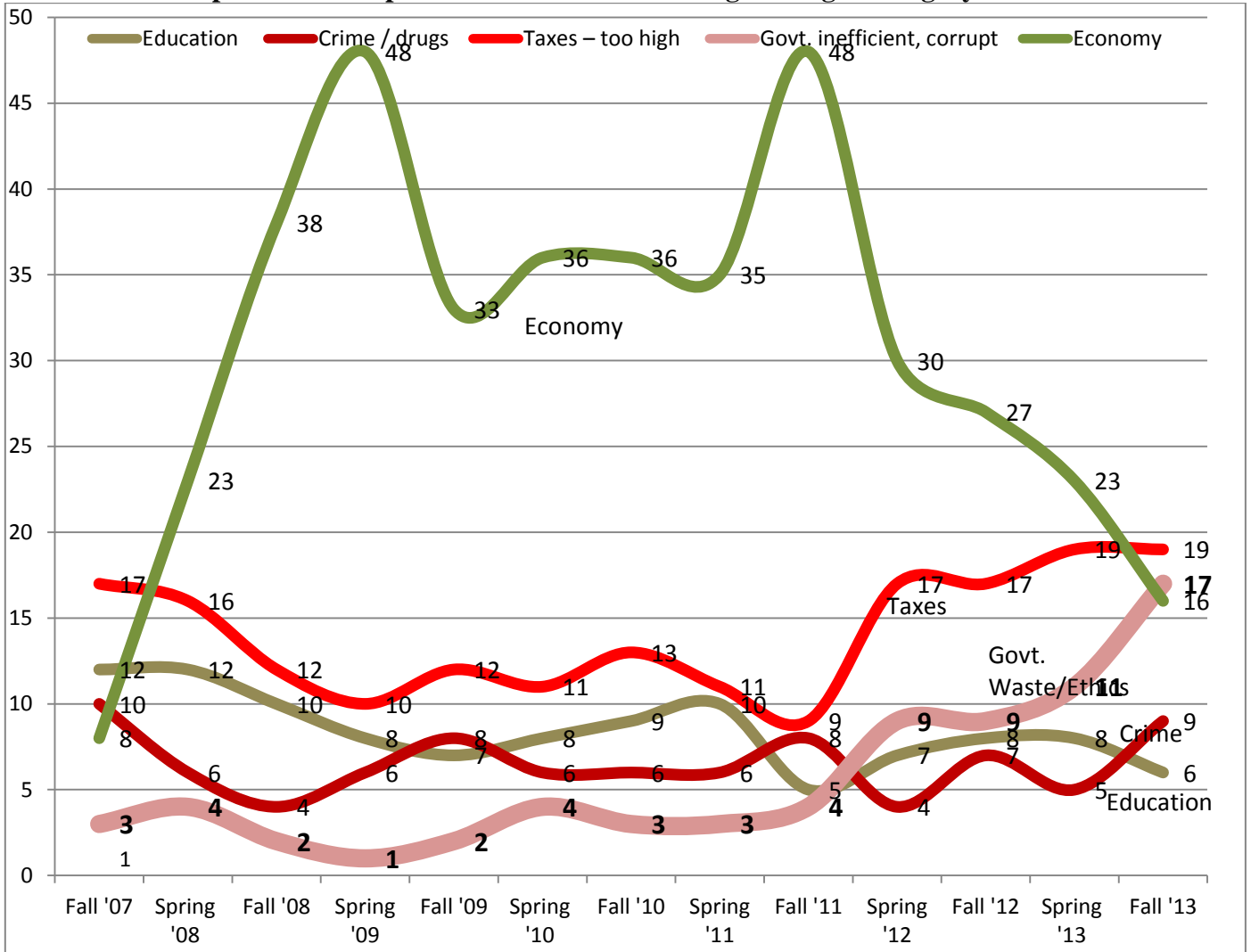
Note: In this and other tables, totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

The most pronounced trend has been an increase in the percentages of those citing government ethics/waste and those citing “taxes” as the most important problems. Generally, this may indicate a declining sense of trust and return on investment from government. The percentage of those citing “government wasteful” and saying that they had been impacted by sequestration/shutdown was 69 percent – about 12 points greater than the average (57 percent). Those who trusted neither party to handle major problems were the most likely to cite this category (46 percent) compared to Republicans (38 percent) or Democrats (17 percent). The timing of the survey – coming during the last week of the federal government shutdown – may have raised the saliency of this answer category in such a manner that it reflected less on local government than on the federal government.

¹ A variety of items are included in the “other answer” category including government corrupt/unethical, government wasteful or inefficient (17 percent cited), government lacks resources (1 percent), environment (4 percent), healthcare (2 percent) as well as other random answers.

² From spring 2007 to spring 2010, surveys’ answer categories for “most important problem” included “lack of affordable housing” for interviewers to check off. Previously, that answer to the open-ended question would have been categorized under “economy” a practice which was resumed in fall 2010. The running totals in Table 1 combine both answers into the single “Economy” category. Similarly, crime includes those saying “crime” and “illegal drugs.”

Graph 2: Most Important Problem – Percentage Citing a Category



Rating Economic Conditions – Anne Arundel County

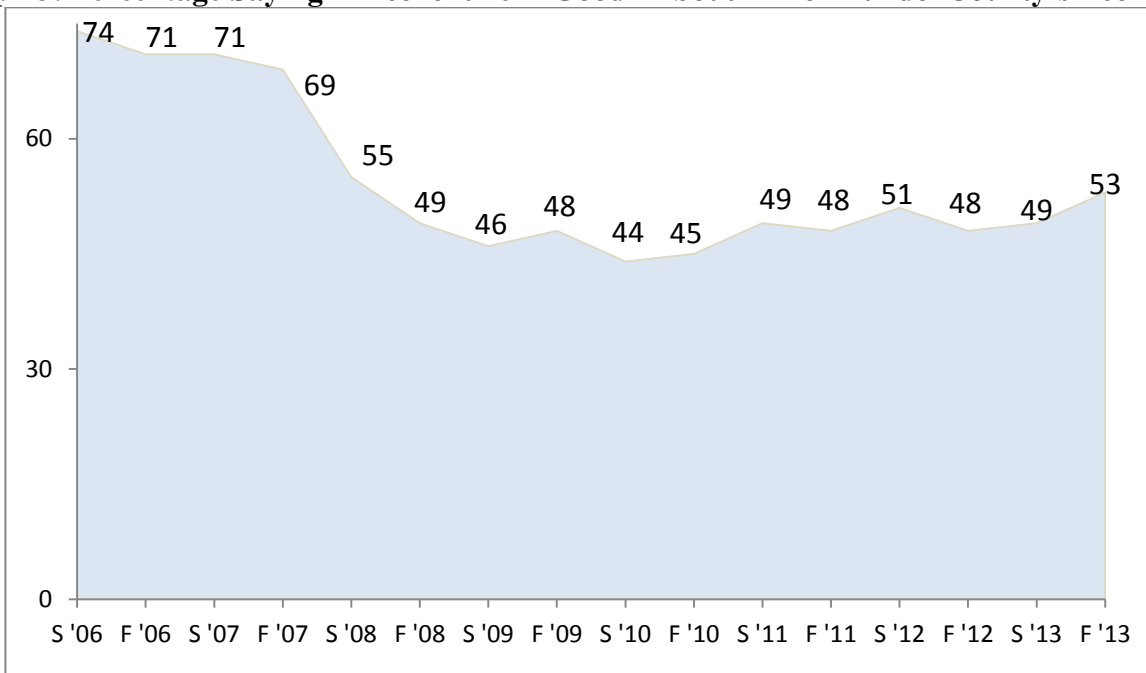
Since March 2002, the CSLI semi-annual survey has asked a benchmark question about the economy: “How would you rate economic conditions in Anne Arundel County – ‘excellent,’ ‘good,’ ‘only fair’ or ‘poor?’ ”

As shown on Table 2, since March 2007 the county’s historical average saying that the economy was a combined “excellent” or “good” was 52 percent. For the first time since spring 2008, the percentage saying excellent or good exceeded the historical average by reaching 53 percent (as shown on Graph 3).

Table 2: Perceptions of County Economic Conditions

Condition	Spring '07	Fall '07	Spring '08	Fall '08	Spring '09	Fall '09	Spring '10	Fall '10	Spring '11	Fall '11	Spring '12	Fall '12	Spring, '13	Fall '13	Mean
Excellent +good	71	69	55	49	46	48	44	45	49	48	51	48	49	53	52
Excellent	12	10	6	6	2	4	3	3	3	4	2	5	3	6	5
Good	59	59	49	43	44	44	41	42	46	44	49	43	46	47	47
Fair	22	25	36	37	43	38	41	45	38	40	37	39	38	35	37
Poor	4	5	8	12	10	11	13	8	12	11	11	12	11	10	10
Don't know	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	3	3	2
Total	100	101	101	100	101	100	100	100	101	101	100	101	101	101	101

Graph 3: Percentage Saying “Excellent” or “Good” About Anne Arundel County’s Economy



Rating Economic Conditions – Maryland and the National Economy

Since spring 2009, the question about rating economic conditions has been extended to the state of Maryland and the country overall.

Regarding the state of Maryland, Table 3 points to a major improvement in perceptions, as the percentage saying excellent or good rose from 30 to 40 percent. Coming in the context of sequestration and federal government shutdown, this result was surprising.³

³ The relationship between this question about the state of Maryland’s economic conditions and the question asking whether sequestration or shutdown had a negative impact was not statistically significant.

Table 3: Perceptions of State Economic Conditions

Condition	Spring '09	Fall '09	Spring '10	Fall '10	Spring '11	Fall '11	Spring '12	Fall '12	Spring '13	Fall '13
Excellent+good	27	30	31	32	35	33	38	33	30	40
Excellent	1	2	2	1	3	1	4	3	1	4
Good	26	28	29	31	32	32	34	30	29	36
Fair	49	45	46	47	43	41	40	42	41	36
Poor	22	21	21	19	21	24	21	23	24	21
Don't know	2	4	2	2	1	2	2	2	4	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	101	100	99	101

Regarding the national economy, residents have not been very positive in their views; the fall survey showed a small 2 point rise in the 'excellent/good' score (14 percent). The national mood as measured by the Gallup polling organization was similar – also 14 percent.⁴ It might be noted that the percentage saying "poor" rose from 47 to 55 percent, the highest point since the previous effort to challenge the debt ceiling in fall 2011.

Table 4: Perceptions of National Economic Conditions

Condition	Spring '09	Fall '09	Spring '10	Fall '10	Spring '11	Fall '11	Spring '12	Fall '12	Spring '13	Fall '13
Excellent+Good	5	11	11	11	11	9	13	16	12	14
Excellent	0	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1
Good	5	10	10	9	9	7	12	14	10	13
Fair	30	39	42	41	43	28	47	37	38	31
Poor	63	48	46	47	45	62	39	46	47	55
Don't know	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	3	1
Total	99	100	101	100	101	101	101	100	100	101

Economic Conditions Applying to Respondents

Respondents were asked: "Thinking about your personal circumstances, please tell me whether any of these economic conditions apply to you or your household." Table 5 shows the results for recent CSLI surveys. Since fall 2011, surveys have included two new questions asking about a "salary increase or other increase in income recently" and whether the respondent had "found a new or better job recently."

⁴ See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/110821/gallup-daily-us-economic-conditions.aspx> for Gallup's running totals for this question.

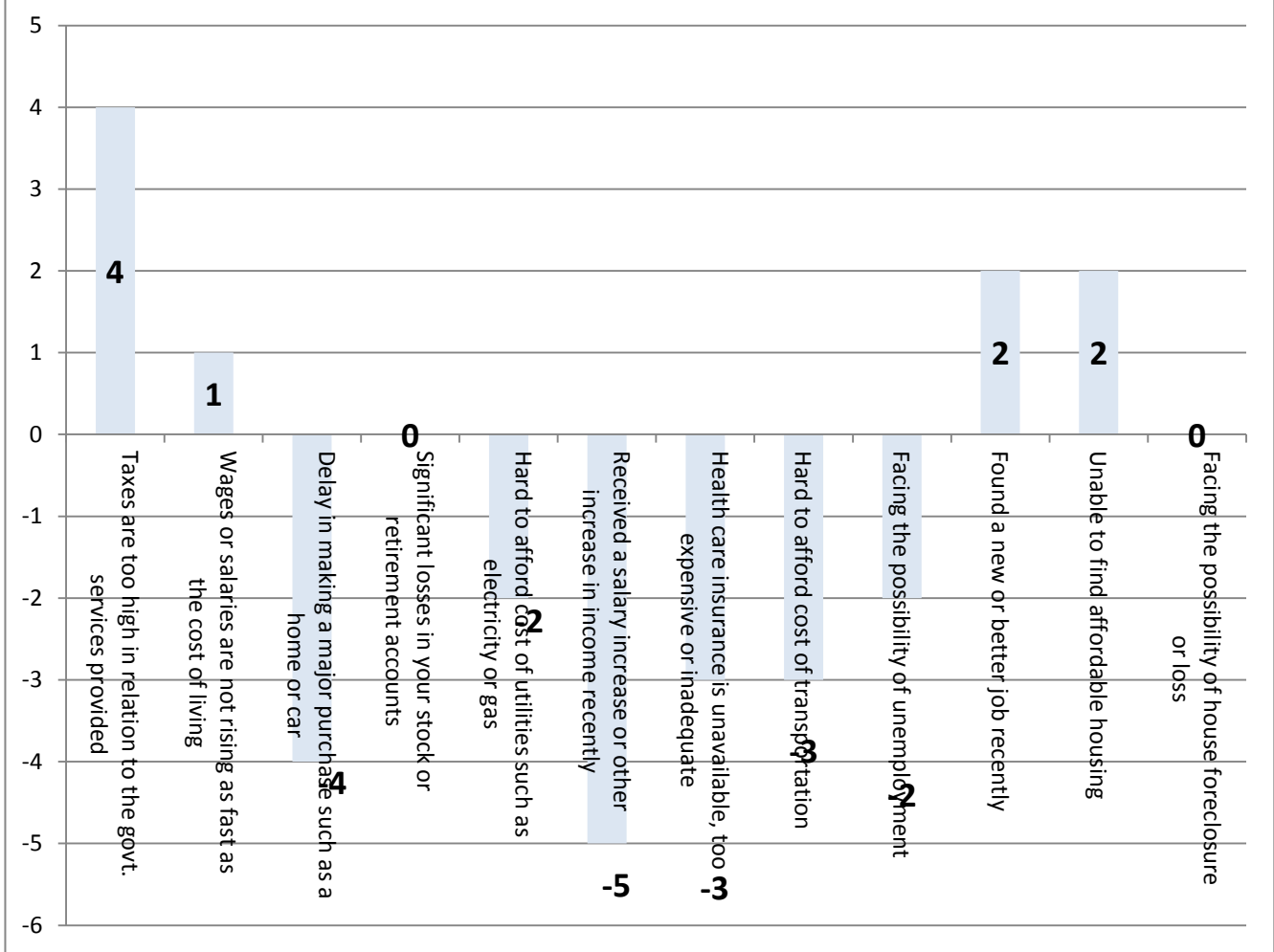
Table 5: Economic Conditions Applying to Personal Circumstances

Condition	Fall '08	Spring '09	Fall '09	Spring '10	Fall '10	Spring '11	Fall '11	Spring '12	Fall '12	Spring '13	Fall '13
Taxes are too high in relation to the govt. services provided	58	59	59	63	60	63	58	63	63	62	66
Wages or salaries are not rising as fast as the cost of living	59	55	55	56	56	63	59	66	59	59	60
Delay in making a major purchase such as a home or car	n.a.	51	46	47	44	47	51	45	38	42	38
Significant losses in your stock or retirement accounts	71	75	70	56	60	52	60	44	38	32	32
Hard to afford cost of utilities such as electricity or gas	50	53	42	44	43	46	39	39	32	31	29
Received a salary increase or other increase in income recently	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	26	35	31	34	29
Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate	30	29	33	32	34	35	32	32	27	32	29
Hard to afford cost of transportation	32	21	17	21	24	41	30	36	30	27	24
Facing the possibility of unemployment	15	24	24	19	21	20	21	17	14	19	17
Found a new or better job recently	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	14	16	11	14	16
Unable to find affordable housing	11	12	13	15	10	14	11	15	9	12	14
Facing the possibility of house foreclosure or loss	4	6	8	7	7	9	8	8	4	7	7

Table 5 is ordered by the highest percentage of respondents saying a condition applies in fall 2013. Anxiety about the loss of buying power was suggested by the high scores received by “taxes are too high” and “wages/salaries are not rising as fast as the cost of living.” These far surpassed the next most commonly cited items such as “delay in making a major purchase” or “significant losses in stock or retirement accounts.”

Graph 4 shows the changes this year from spring to fall. Among the negative changes were a 4 point increase in the percentage saying that taxes were too high and a 5 point decrease in the percentage saying that they had received a rise in salary or income recently. Positives include a 4 percentage point reduction in the number saying that they are delaying a major purchase and small declines in the percentages saying that the cost of utilities or transportation “is hard to afford.”

Graph 4: Changes in Percentages Saying that an Economic Condition Applies – Spring to Fall 2013



Consumer Confidence

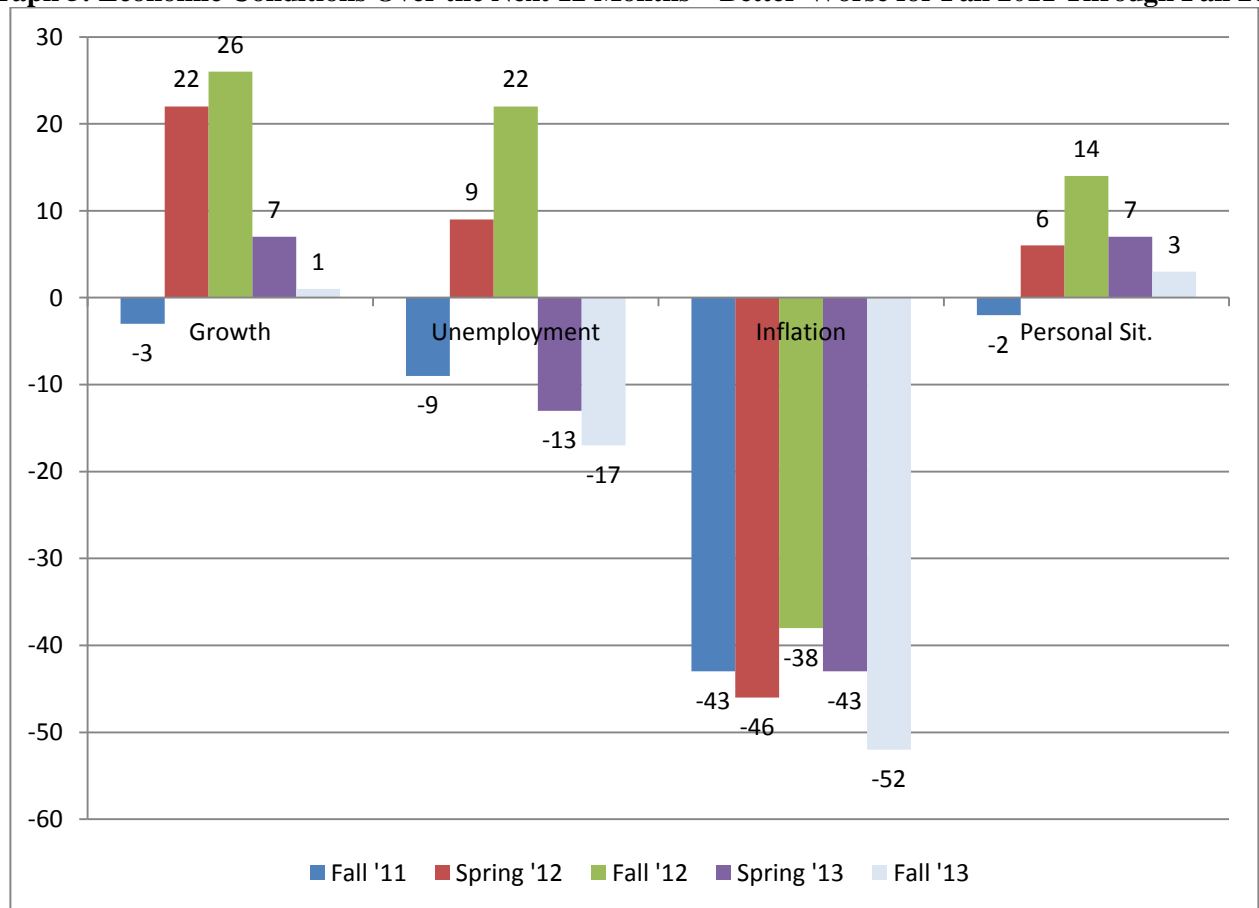
Since fall 2011, four questions have been used to measure the public’s confidence in the future of the economy. These questions reference economic growth, unemployment, inflation and the respondent’s personal financial situation, asking the respondent to think about the next 12 months and say whether a particular condition will be better, the same or worse. Table 6 shows the results just for fall 2013; Graph 5 shows the results since fall 2011, calculated by subtracting the value of “worse” from the value of “better” (with a higher number indicating greater economic optimism).

Graph 5 shows that a negative trend first witnessed last spring was continued in fall. Decreases in optimism about growth, unemployment, inflation and personal situation were present, generally coming closer to the situation in fall 2011 – the previous low point.

Table 6: Economic Conditions Over the Next 12 Months

	Better	Same	Worse	Unsure/NA	Total
Economic growth	26	44	25	5	100
Unemployment	23	33	40	5	100
Inflation	6	31	58	5	101
Your personal financial situation	21	56	18	5	101

Graph 5: Economic Conditions Over the Next 12 Months – Better-Worse for Fall 2011 Through Fall 2013



Spending on County Infrastructure: Priorities

The fall 2013 survey asked the respondent to indicate whether a category of infrastructure spending was a high, medium or low priority. Table 7 ranks the items by the percentage saying that it is a high priority. Previous CSLI surveys have shown the public to strongly value educational spending – the fall 2013 survey proved consistent since “rebuilding or replacing the schools in your community” was rated a “high” priority by 50 percent of all respondents. This was followed by roads (43 percent), public transportation (36 percent) and police/fire stations (31 percent).

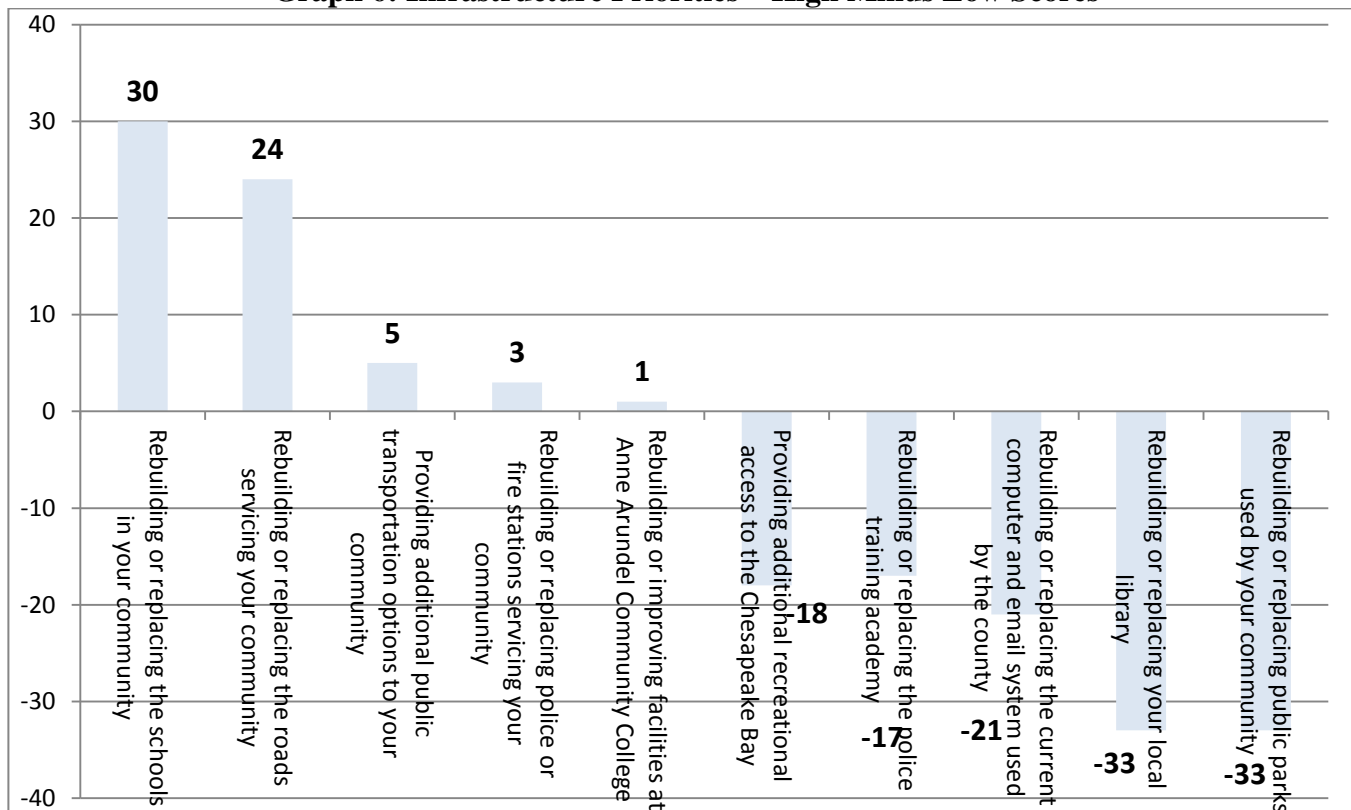
Table 7: County Infrastructure – Priorities

	High	Medium	Low	Unsure/NA
Rebuilding or replacing the schools in your community	50	27	20	3
Rebuilding or replacing the roads servicing your community	43	37	19	1
Providing additional public transportation options to your community	36	28	31	4
Rebuilding or replacing police or fire stations servicing your community	31	35	28	6
Rebuilding or improving facilities at Anne Arundel Community College	25	39	24	12
Providing additional recreational access to the Chesapeake Bay	23	29	41	7
Rebuilding or replacing the police training academy	18	35	35	12
Rebuilding or replacing the current computer and email system used by the county	16	26	37	21
Rebuilding or replacing your local library	15	33	48	4
Rebuilding or replacing public parks used by your community	13	39	46	2

Note: Some items had large “Unsure/NA” values, indicating low levels of public information about these items.

The public’s priorities can also be seen in Graph 6, which shows the results of subtracting the “low” percentage from the “high” percentage. Graph 6 shows the wide gap between schools/roads and all other possible infrastructure projects, with several items having larger “low” priority scores than “high” scores.

Graph 6: Infrastructure Priorities – High Minus Low Scores



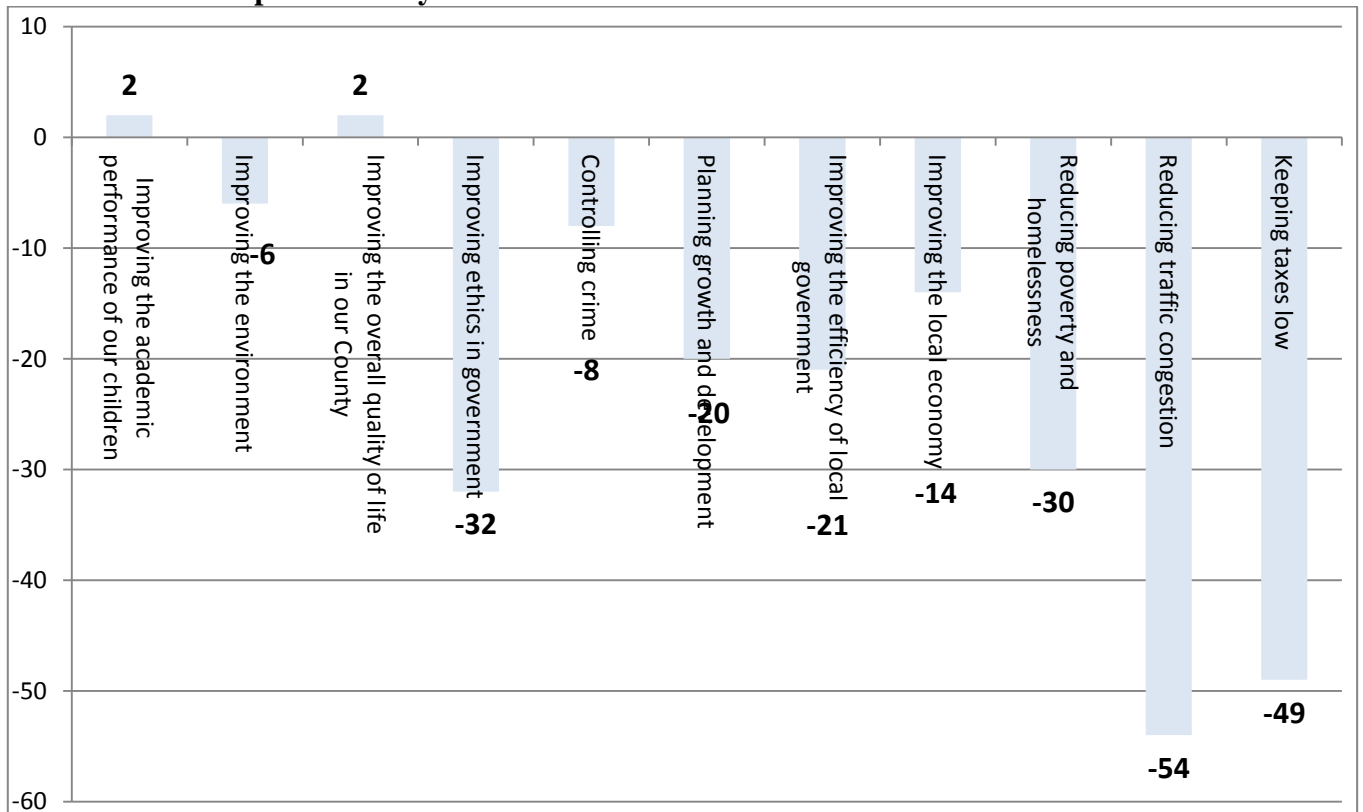
How Well the County Dealt with Various Problems Over the Last Year

The fall 2013 survey asked respondents to indicate how well the county has dealt with various problems asking whether each had “gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse.” Table 8 is ordered by the percentage in each answer category saying “gotten better.”

Table 8: How Well has the County Dealt with Various Problems Over the Last Year

Problem	Gotten better	Stayed about the same	Gotten worse	Unsure/ NA
Improving the academic performance of our children	28	35	26	11
Improving the environment	21	45	27	7
Improving the overall quality of life in our County	19	60	17	3
Improving ethics in government	17	27	49	8
Controlling crime	16	54	24	7
Planning growth and development	15	38	35	12
Improving the efficiency of local government	15	40	36	9
Improving the local economy	13	55	27	6
Reducing poverty and homelessness	7	40	37	16
Reducing traffic congestion	7	29	61	3
Keeping taxes low	5	37	54	4
Average	15	42	36	8

Graph 7: County and Various Problems: Better Minus Worse Scores



As seen on Graph 7, all but two items (“improving academic performance of our children” and “improving the overall quality of life in our county”) were in negative territory, with the most extreme values for “reducing traffic congestion” (54 percent) and “keeping taxes low” (49 percent). While also in negative territory, “improving the environment” (6 percent) and “controlling crimes” (8 percent) were only in single digits.

Anne Arundel Community College’s Image and Rating

The survey asked respondents to identify words that come to mind “when you think about the college’s image.” This was an open-ended question, but student interviewers had a set of preset choices available in the event that the respondent said something similar to those choices.

Table 9 shows the list of choices available to student interviewers and the percentage of respondents saying something that was coded among the choices.

Table 9: Words Describing Anne Arundel Community College

Phrase	Percent citing
Good reputation	48
Affordable	23
Community oriented	12
Friendly staff	4
Wide selection of courses	8
Good selection of course times	4
Technologically on the cutting edge	2
Top notch professors	5
Helpful for advancing my career	5
Fosters good citizenship	3
Provides students with “real –world” experiences	2
Total	116*

*Note: Multiple entries were possible, resulting in a total exceeding 100 percent.

Among uncoded open-ended comments, most were positive and emphasized the following: excellent reputation, well regarded, affordable, accessible, convenient, good course or program choices. A few negative comments mentioned the lack of courses or programs, cancelled courses and expense.

Respondents were asked to rate AACC as either excellent, good, okay or poor. Table 10 shows that half of the sample chose excellent, with an additional 30 percent choosing good. Only 9 percent chose okay or poor (11 percent had no answer).

Table 10: AACC Rating

Rating	Percent citing
Excellent	50
Good	30
Fair	8
Poor	1
No answer	11
Total	100

Mental Health Services in Anne Arundel County

The survey asked whether respondents had any experience with mental health services in Anne Arundel County. Only 16 percent affirmed having any such experience (79 percent said “no,” while 5 percent gave no answer). All respondents were then asked to agree or disagree with a set of propositions about such services, as seen on Table 11. Most respondents had insufficient knowledge to offer an opinion. Regarding accessibility, affordability and quality, similar percentages agreed and disagreed with the positive statements. General agreement was highest that “providers are compassionate.”

Table 11: Agreement with Statements about Mental Health Services in Anne Arundel County

Description	Agree	Disagree	No knowledge	No answer
Services are accessible and easily available	23	21	49	7
Services are affordable	21	19	54	7
Services are high quality	19	16	58	7
Providers are compassionate	29	6	58	6

Presidential and Congressional Job Approval

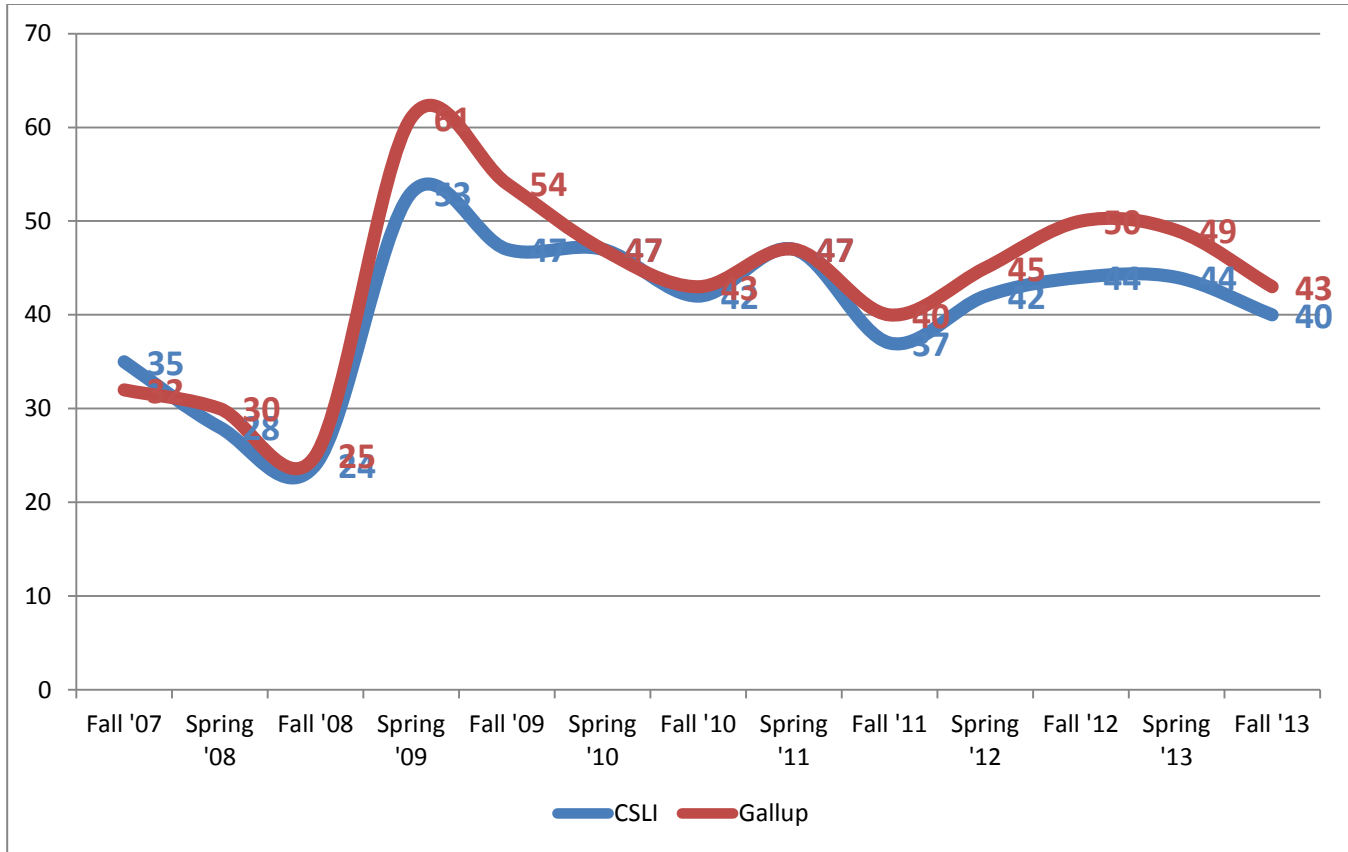
Since fall 2007, CSLI polls of county residents have closely tracked national presidential job approval trends as indicated by Gallup surveys.⁵ For the period closest to that during which CSLI was calling residents, Gallup’s presidential job approval surveys conducted October 15-17 indicated that 43 percent approved of the president’s performance. CSLI’s own polling revealed a percentage that was somewhat lower: 40 percent (see Table 12 and Graph 8). That finding is consistent with a tendency for President Obama’s job approval in Anne Arundel County to run a few points lower than in the country as a whole.

Table 12: Presidential Job Approval

Issue	Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Fall 2013
Approve	35	28	24	53	47	47	42	47	37	42	44	44	40
Disapprove	57	62	69	31	42	45	49	44	56	49	50	51	53
No answer	9	10	8	16	11	8	10	9	7	8	6	4	7
Total	101	100	101	100	100	100	101	100	100	99	100	99	100

⁵ See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/113980/gallup-daily-obama-job-approval.aspx> for Obama job approval findings cited here. Congressional approval was derived from a YouGov poll conducted Oct. 12-14, 2013 (see http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/pls7krg8de/trackingreport.pdf).

Graph 8: Presidential Job Approval – CSLI and Gallup 2007-2013

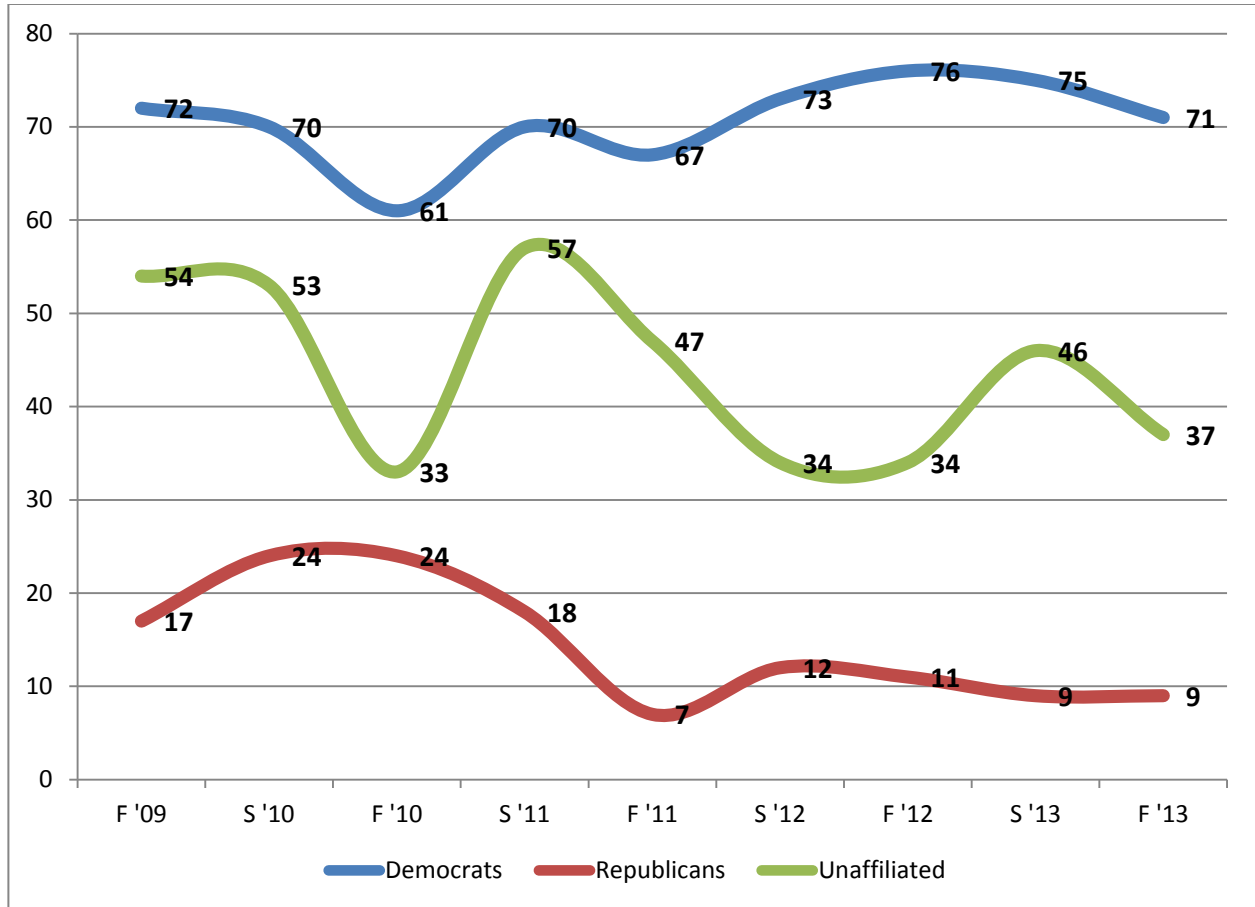


Congressional job approval was much lower than President Obama’s as only 6 percent approved. A YouGov poll taken around the same time placed the national Congressional job approval at 7 percent.

As seen on Graph 9, Obama’s popularity among Democrats diminished a bit since spring – down 4 points. There was no change in support among Republicans (staying at 9 percent). Unaffiliated voters showed greater disapproval moving from 46 percent in spring to only 37 percent this fall.⁶

⁶ The number of unaffiliated voters is quite small; any estimates for this group are subject to much larger margins of error.

Graph 9: Presidential Job Approval by Party Registration



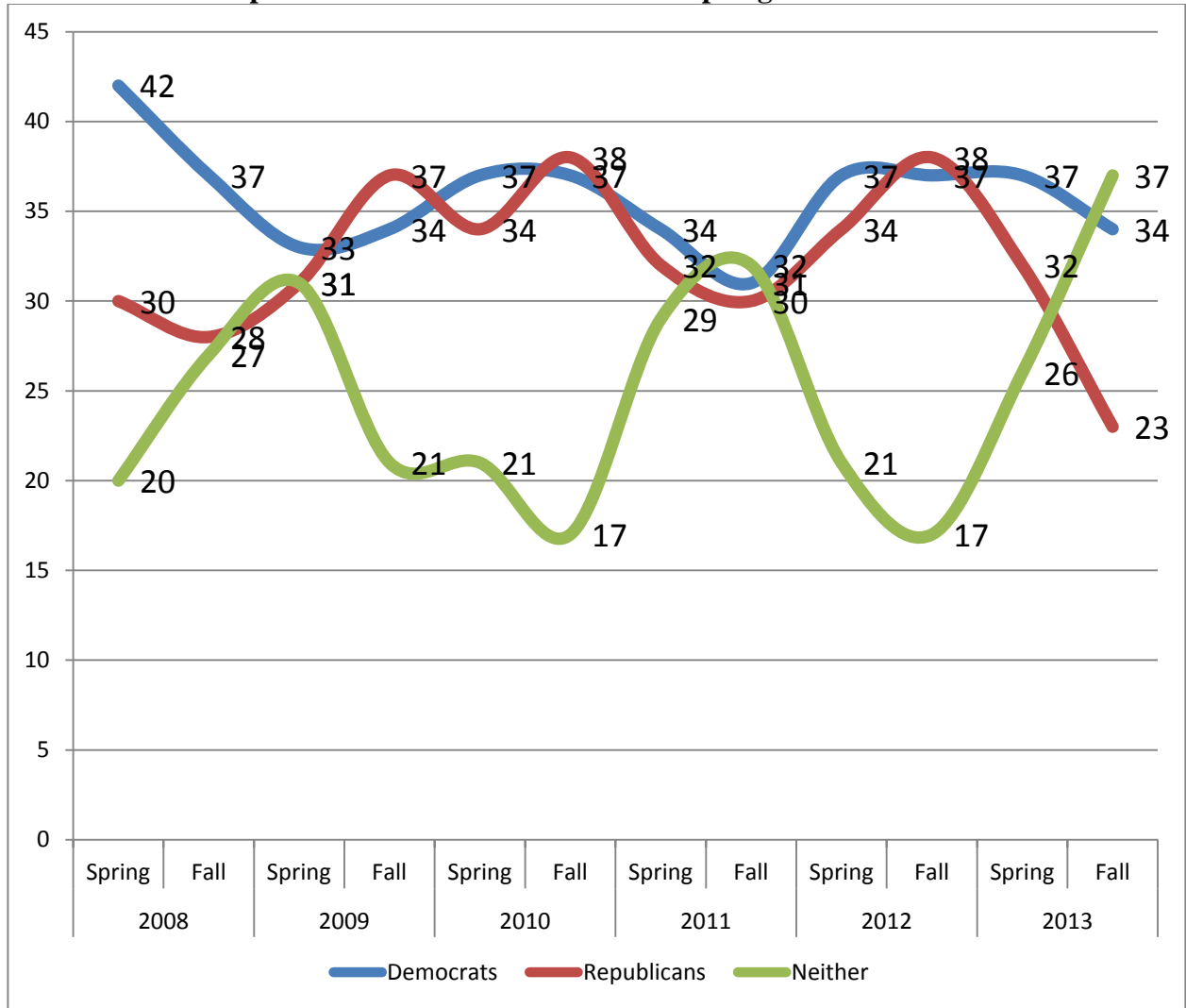
Trust in Political Parties

Since 2008, the CSLI survey has asked which party “do you trust to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years.” Table 13 and Graph 10 show that Democrats experienced a small drop in trust (from 37 to 34 percent), while the Republican score dropped 9 points to 23 percent, the lowest figure ever obtained by either party in a CSLI survey. The “neither” option (which is volunteered by the respondent without prompting by the interviewer) continued a rise that started last spring reaching 37 percent this fall – more than doubling since fall 2012. This was the highest total ever obtained by the “neither” option suggesting growing frustration with the major parties within the public.

Table 13: Which Party do you Trust?

	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall
Democrats	42	37	33	34	37	37	34	31	37	37	37	34
Republicans	30	28	31	37	34	38	32	30	34	38	32	23
Neither	20	27	31	21	21	17	29	32	21	17	26	37
No opinion /other	8	7	6	8	7	9	4	7	7	9	4	6
Total	100	99	101	100	99	101	99	100	99	101	99	100

Graph 10: Trust in Political Parties – Spring 2008 to Fall 2013



County – Right or Wrong Direction?

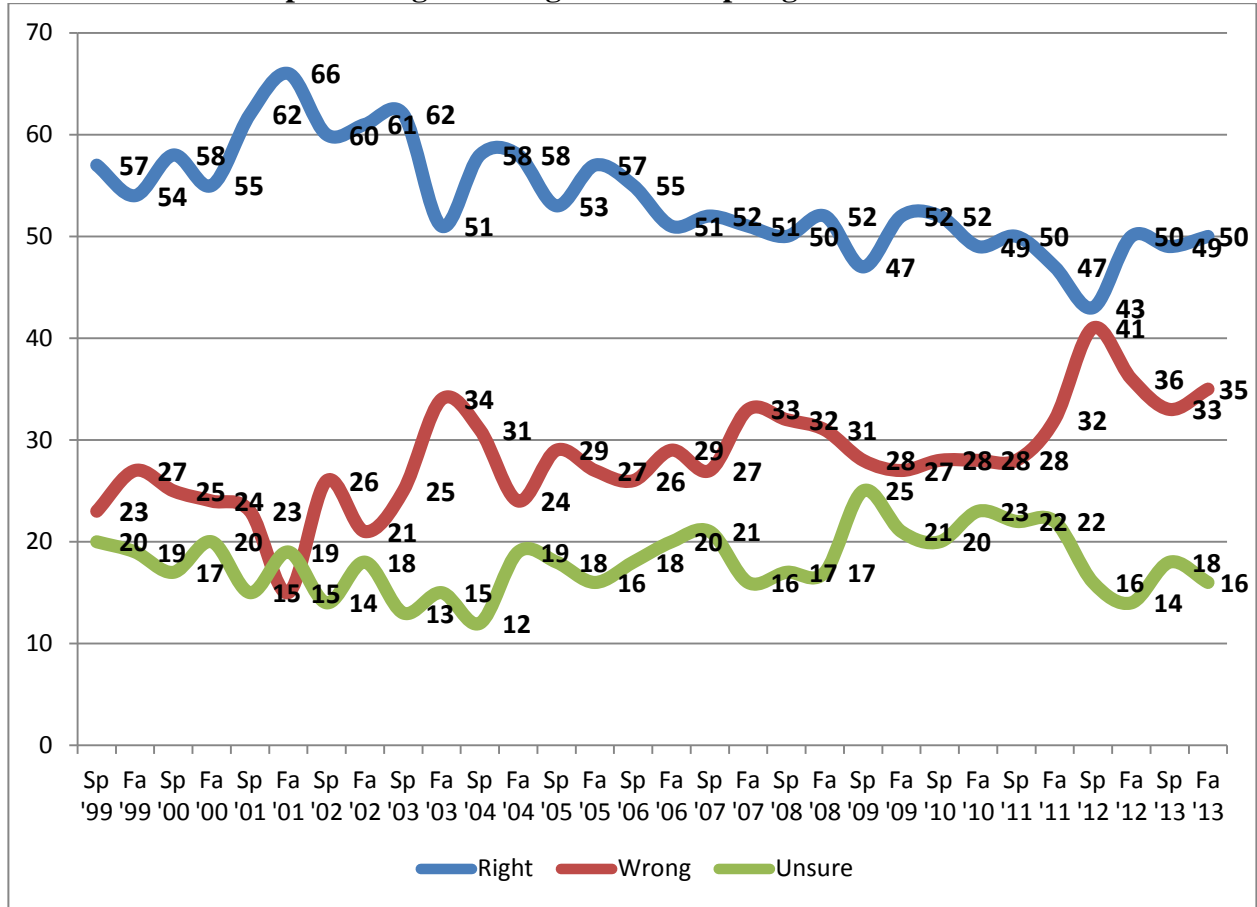
The survey included a CSLI benchmark question whose results are seen on Table 14 and Graph 11: “Overall, would you say that the county is headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction?”

Table 14 and Graph 11 show little change since fall 2012. Since spring 2013, there has been a slight increase in the percentage saying “right” direction, but a larger increase in the percentage saying “wrong” resulting in a slightly less favorable “right-wrong” value of 15 percentage points (vs. 16 points last spring).

Table 14: Anne Arundel County - Right vs. Wrong Direction Fall 2009 to Fall 2013

Response	F '09	S '10	F '10	S '11	F '11	S '12	F '12	S '13	F '13	Average
Right direction	52	52	49	50	47	43	50	49	50	49
Wrong direction	27	28	28	28	32	41	36	33	35	33
Unsure	21	20	23	22	22	16	14	18	16	19
Right-wrong	25	24	21	22	15	2	14	16	15	16
Total	100	100	100	100	101	100	100	100	101	100

Graph 11: Right/Wrong Direction Spring 1999 to Fall 2013



The survey also asked individuals to indicate right/wrong views about the state and the nation. Table 15 shows the results along with those for the county.

The Gallup organization varies in the frequency with which it asks about satisfaction with the country’s direction – asking different questions at different times. On October 13, the organization asked “on the whole are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the nation is being governed.” That poll showed that 18 percent of Americans were satisfied – about 8 percent points more than the CSLI score for national “right direction.”⁷

Graph 12 shows the trend for the last three CSLI surveys at each level of government, highlighting the stability of findings at the county and state levels, but the collapse of support at the national level.

Table 15: Right/Wrong Direction for County, State and Nation

	Right	Wrong	Unsure/ Don’t know
County	50	35	16
State	35	59	6
Nation	10	84	6

⁷ See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/165371/americans-satisfaction-gov-drops-new-low.aspx> for details about the Gallup poll. In spring 2013, the comparison was made with another satisfaction poll (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/160598/democrats-push-satisfaction.aspx>). Unfortunately, that poll was not specifically repeated for October.

Graph 12: Right Direction Percentage for County, State and Nation, Spring 2012-Fall 2013

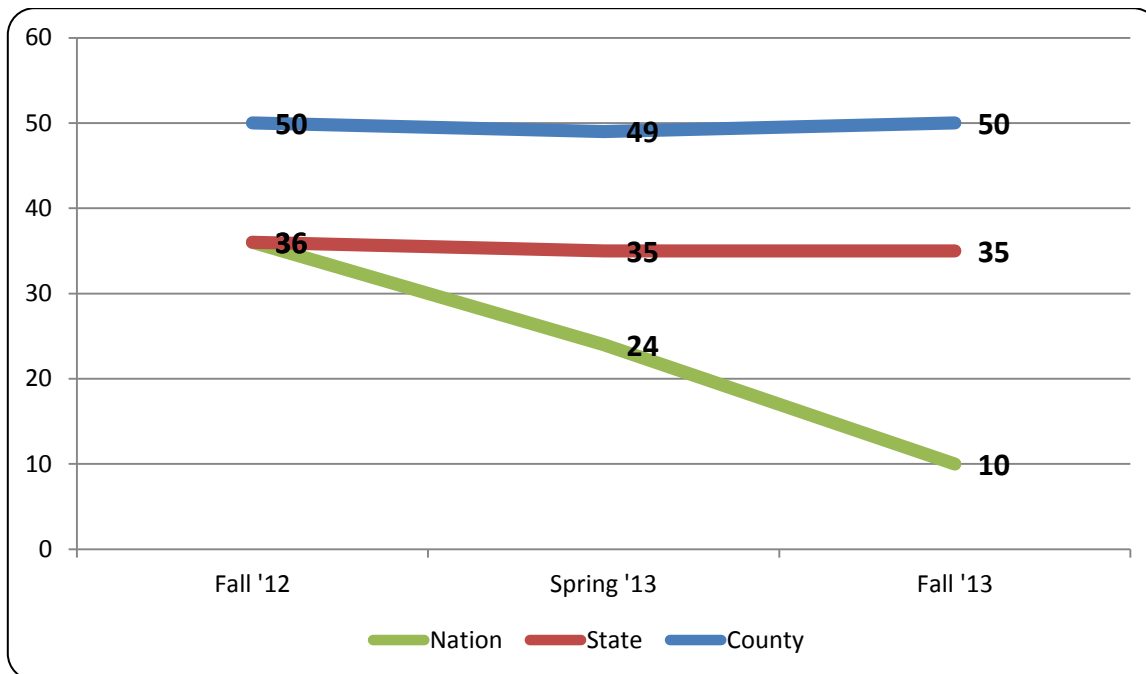


Table 16 shows how the respondent’s party registration affected perceptions. For the county and state, the trend was unchanged – Democrats were more likely to cite “right direction” over Republicans by sizable percentages. While there were some minor changes in specific percentages between spring and fall, these were small. However, the figures for the national level showed a substantial drop in support among all three groups – Democrats, Republicans and unaffiliated respondents.⁸

Table 16: Right/Wrong Direction – Party Registration by County, State, Nation

Levels	Dem.		Rep.		Unaffiliated	
	Sp '13	Fa '13	Sp '13	Fa '13	Sp '13	Fa '13
County	58	55	38	43	50	52
State	54	47	12	20	37	34
Nation	38	15	8	3	27	9

Note: The values below the party labels indicate the percentages of those within each category who said “right direction” for the county, state and national levels.

⁸ Relationships between party and views of the state and nation were statistically significant ($p < .05$). The relationship between party and county was not. The Gallup poll from earlier this year also found sharp partisan divides regarding satisfaction with the way things are going in the United States, with 47 percent of Democrats, 24 percent of unaffiliated, and 9 percent of Republicans claiming to be satisfied – see <http://www.gallup.com/poll/160598/democrats-push-satisfaction.aspx>.

Methodology

The survey polled a random sample of 503 county residents who were at least 18 years old. It was conducted October 14-17, 2013 during evening hours. Phone numbers were derived from a database of listed landline numbers, cell phone numbers as well as computer chosen, randomly assigned numbers. There was about a 4.3 percent statistical margin of error for the overall sample; the error rate was higher for subgroups such as “Democrats.” The dataset was weighted by gender and political party to better represent the general population. College students were trained and used as telephone interviewers.

Contact Dan Nataf, Ph.D., center director, for additional comments or questions at 410-777-2733 and ddnataf@aacc.edu. Check the CSLI website for results from this and previous surveys: www2.aacc.edu/csl.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

CSLI Semi-Annual Survey – Fall, 2013

1. What do you think is the most important problem facing the residents of Anne Arundel County at the present time? (DON'T READ THE LIST! Have them *volunteer* an answer)

Problem	Circle ONE
Crime/Drugs	9
Economy – (e.g., no jobs, high cost of living, business closing or losses)	16
Education, problems with schools	6
Environment (e.g., air or water pollution, saving the Bay)	4
Government – corrupt, unethical	11
Government – inefficient, wasteful, spends too much	6
Government – lacks resources for roads, schools, services	1
Growth/overpopulation- too much development	4
Healthcare (cost, access)	2
Taxes – too high	19
Transportation problems/traffic congestion	4
Other answer - write in:	6
Unsure/No Answer	12

2.0 The next questions ask you to say whether things are going in the right or wrong direction. First, would you say that the county is headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction? How about the state of Maryland? How about the nation as a whole?

	Right	Wrong	Unsure/Don't know
2.1 County	50	35	16
2.2 State	35	59	6
2.3 Nation	10	84	6

3.0 Next I would like to know how you would rate economic conditions in Anne Arundel County, in Maryland, and in the United States generally. First how would you rate economic conditions in Anne Arundel County -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor? How about the state? How about the nation?

	Excellent	Good	Only fair	Poor	Unsure/Don't know
3.1 County	6	47	35	10	3
3.2 State	4	36	36	21	4
3.3 Nation	1	13	31	55	1

4.0 Thinking now about your personal circumstances, please tell me whether any of these economic conditions apply to you or your household.

	Applies	Doesn't apply	Unsure, no answer
4.1 Wages or salaries are not rising as fast as the cost of living	60	37	2
4.1a Received a salary increase or other increase in income recently	29	70	1
4.2 Facing the possibility of unemployment	17	80	2
4.2a Found a new or better job recently	16	83	2
4.3 Significant losses in your stock or retirement accounts	32	64	4
4.4 Facing the possibility of house foreclosure or loss	7	92	1
4.5 Unable to find affordable housing	14	85	1
4.6 Hard to afford the cost of transportation	24	75	1
4.7 Hard to afford the cost of utilities such as electricity or gas	29	71	1
4.8 Delay in making a major purchase such as a home or car	38	60	1
4.9 Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate	29	69	2
4.10 Taxes are too high in relation to government services provided	66	31	3

5.0 Thinking about the next twelve months and the county's economy, please answer the following questions by saying whether a particular condition will be better, the same or worse:

	Better	Same	Worse	Unsure/NA
5.1 Economic growth	26	44	25	5
5.2 Unemployment	23	33	40	5
5.3 Inflation	6	31	58	5
5.4 Your personal financial situation	21	56	18	5

6.0 As you may know, automatic cuts in the federal budget – known as sequestration – went into effect March 1 of this year. More recently, a budget impasse has resulted in a partial shutdown of the federal government. Have you or your family been negatively impacted by these actions?

(1) No 38% or (0) No answer 5% (skip to next question)

(2) Yes 57% 6.01 "If so, in what ways?" _____

Changing our focus...

7.0 The county's elected officials must determine local spending on infrastructure such as roads, schools and parks.

When I read a type of infrastructure spending, indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority.

	High	Medium	Low	Unsure/NA
7.1 Rebuilding or replacing the police training academy	18	35	35	12
7.2 Rebuilding or replacing the schools in your community	50	27	20	3
7.3 Rebuilding or replacing the roads servicing your community	43	37	19	1
7.4 Rebuilding or replacing public parks used by your community	13	39	46	2
7.5 Rebuilding or replacing police or fire stations servicing your community	31	35	28	6
7.6 Rebuilding or replacing the current computer and email system used by the county	16	26	37	21
7.7 Providing additional public transportation options to your community	36	28	31	4
7.8 Rebuilding or replacing your local library	15	33	48	4
7.9 Rebuilding or improving facilities at Anne Arundel Community College	25	39	24	12
7.10 Providing additional recreational access to the Chesapeake Bay	23	29	41	7

8.0 Please tell me how well you think the County has dealt with each of the following problems over the last year - has it gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?

Problem	Gotten better	Stayed about the same	Gotten worse	Unsure/ NA
8.1 Controlling crime	16	54	24	7
8.2 Improving the local economy	13	55	27	6
8.3 Reducing poverty and homelessness	7	40	37	16
8.4 Reducing traffic congestion	7	29	61	3
8.5 Planning growth and development	15	38	35	12
8.6 Improving the environment	21	45	27	7
8.7 Improving ethics in government	17	27	49	8
8.8 Keeping taxes low	5	37	54	4
8.9 Improving the efficiency of local government	15	40	36	9
8.10 Improving the academic performance of our children	28	35	26	11
8.11 Improving the overall quality of life in our County	19	60	17	3

9.0 This question is about Anne Arundel Community College. When you think about the college’s image, what words come to mind? (DON’T READ THE LIST!)

Phrase	Circle # of any word mentioned
9.1 Good reputation	48
9.2 Affordable	23
9.3 Community oriented	12
9.4 Friendly staff	4
9.5 Wide selection of courses	8
9.6 Good selection of course times	4
9.7 Technologically on the cutting edge	2
9.8 Top notch professors	5
9.9 Helpful for advancing my career	5
9.10 Fosters good citizenship	3
9.11 Provides students with “real –world” experiences	2
9.12 OTHER WORDS (Write in):	

9.13 Overall, would you rate Anne Arundel Community College as doing an excellent, good, okay or poor job serving the county’s residents?

1. Excellent 50% 2. Good 30% 3. Okay 8% 4. Poor 1% 0. No answer, don’t know 11%

The next set of questions concern mental health services in Anne Arundel County.

10.0 First, do you have any experience with such services for you or your family here in the county?

- (1) Yes 16% (2) No 79% (0) No answer 5%

Whether or not you have any direct experience, please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following descriptions of mental health services as they exist in this county.

Description	Agree	Disagree	No knowledge	No answer
10.1 Services are accessible and easily available	23	21	49	7
10.2 Services are affordable	21	19	54	7
10.3 Services are high quality	19	16	58	7
10.4 Providers are compassionate	29	6	58	6

The last set of questions asks about some of your views and background characteristics that help us better understand our respondents.

11. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

(1) Approve 40% (2) Disapprove 53% (0) No answer 7%

12. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?

(1) Approve 6% (2) Disapprove 93% (0) No answer 1%

13. Overall, which party, the (Democrats) or the (Republicans), do you trust to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years?

(1) Democrats 34% (2) Republicans 23% (3) Neither (volunteered) 37% (4) Other (volunteered) 3% (0) No answer 3%

14. With which political party, if any, are you registered?

(1) Democratic 42%
 (2) Republican 34%
 (3) Unaffiliated (or “independent”) 17%
 (4) Other (e.g., Green, Libertarian parties) 2%
 (5) None (NOT REGISTERED TO VOTE) 5%
 (0) No Answer 3%

15. Which of the following best describes your political beliefs: Conservative, Moderate or Liberal?

(1) Conservative 29% (2) Moderate 49% (3) Liberal 18% (0) Other, No Answer 5%

16. What is your age? _____ (Write in)

18-30 = 10%
 31-40 = 15%
 41-50 = 17%
 51-60 = 18%
 61-65 = 10%
 Over 65 = 30%

17. I am going to read some categories relating to education. Please stop me when I reach the category in which the highest level of your formal education falls.

(1) less than a high school diploma 1%	(5) Completed a 4 year bachelor's degree 25%
(2) a high school diploma 10%	(6) post graduate work 29%
(3) some college 19%	(7) Something else? 3%
(4) Completed a 2 year associate college degree 12%	(0) No Answer 1%

18. I am going to read some categories relating to income. Please stop me when I reach the category in which your household income falls.

- (1) Less than \$30,000 6%
- (2) \$30,000 to \$50,000 11%
- (3) \$50,001 to \$75,000 16%
- (4) \$75,001-\$100,000 17%
- (5) \$100,001-\$150,000 19%
- (6) \$150,001-\$250,000 11%
- (7) Over \$250,000 4%
- (0) No Answer 17%

19. Stop me when I reach the employment category that best describes your situation

Answer choice	Choose one
Retired and not working	24
Retired and working	11
Self-employed	6
Employed full time for a company in the private sector	24
Employed full time for government in a non-defense related activity such as education, public works or public safety	14
Employed full time in a defense related activity	6
Employed in a private non-profit organization	3
Employed part time	3
Student (and possibly working part-time)	3
Unemployed and seeking a job	3
Unemployed and not seeking a job	2
No answer	2

20. Regarding race or ethnicity, how would you describe yourself?

- (1) Asian 1%
- (2) Black or African American 11%
- (3) Hispanic or Latino 2%
- (4) White 76%
- (5) Other or "mixed" 5%
- (0) No answer 5%

21. Regarding religion, how would you describe yourself?

- (1) None (e.g., *atheist, agnostic*) 10%
- (2) Non-practicing 8%
- (3) Evangelical or born again Christian (*possibly Baptist, Pentecostal*) 14%
- (4) Catholic 29%
- (5) Jewish 2%
- (6) Protestant (*possibly Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterian, Anglican, Episcopalian*) 21%
- (7) Some other Christian (*possibly Mormon*) 4%
- (8) A 'spiritual person' not associated with an organized religion 3%
- (9) Other (e.g., *Hindu, Muslim*) 4%
- (0) No Answer 5%

22. What is your current marital status?

- (1) Single 14% (2) Married 68% (3) Separated/divorced 7% (4) Widowed 8% (5) Other 1% (0) No answer 2%

23. I have one last request: In an attempt to provide students with more opportunities to survey the public, the Center is asking respondents if they would like to be contacted no more than once or twice a semester by email to participate in short surveys. Can we count on your help? (1) Yes 42% (2) No 58%

23.1 IF YES: What email address shall we use to contact you?

(CLEAR SPELLING/HANDWRITING PLEASE!)

SAY: That concludes our survey, thanks for participating.

Once the respondent hangs up, make sure to enter GENDER and ZIP CODE

24. Gender of respondent to whom you were speaking: (1) Male 47% (2) Female 53% (0) Unknown

25. Zipcode (from calling sheet)

Zipcode	Percent
20711	2
20724	2
20732	0
20733	1
20751	0
20755	0
20758	0
20764	1
20765	0
20776	0
20778	0
20779	0
21012	6
21032	2
21035	2
21037	2
21049	0
21051	0
21054	1
21060	5
21061	8
21075	0
21076	2
21090	2
21108	3
21113	7
21114	5
21122	12
21140	1
21144	8
21146	6
21222	0
21225	1
21401	9
21402	0
21403	6
21405	1
21409	6
21706	0

Note: All listed zipcodes had at least one citation, but rounding may have resulted in a percentage of “0.”