



# March 18, 2013

## Anzalone Liszt Grove Research

### National Polling Summary

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Friends,

Below you will find the Anzalone Liszt Grove Research National Polling Summary, which provides a pollster's take on data and trends that affect political campaigns.

This week we focus on the public's shifting perceptions about the death penalty.

Following our analysis are additional news items and data we thought you'd enjoy.

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The United States has a long and complicated relationship with capital punishment. In the 19th century, capital offenses included counterfeiting, aiding a runaway slave, and horse stealing. Prisoners have been executed by means of hanging as late as 1996 and by firing squad as late as 2010. Last week, however, the Maryland House of Delegates voted 82-56 to end [capital punishment](#), moving Maryland a step closer to joining 17 other states and the District of Columbia in abolishing the death penalty.

The move by Maryland isn't as politically risky as it might seem. Although 51% of Marylanders are [opposed](#) to ending the death penalty, Marylanders are more supportive of life in prison as a punishment for murder (48%) than the death penalty (40%). Moreover, 55% of Marylanders don't think the death penalty acts as a deterrent to murder. And when asked to estimate the number of people executed in the state in the past 10 years, nearly half of Marylanders overestimated the amount, while another 18% couldn't venture a guess. In fact, no one has been executed in Maryland since 2005.

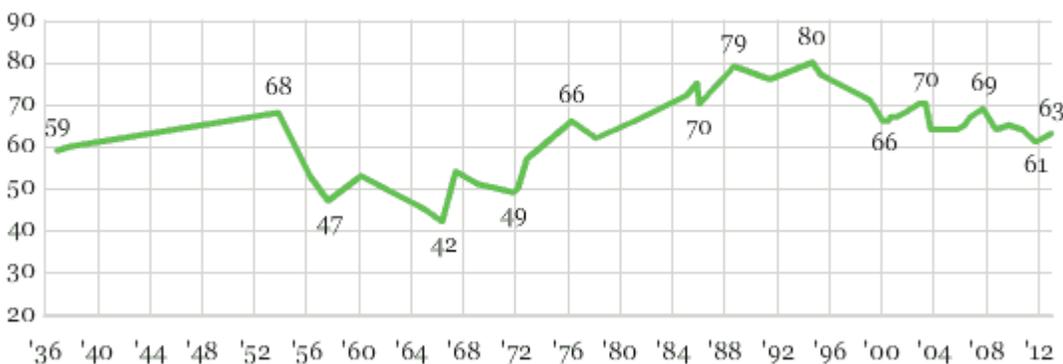
Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley, a vocal opponent of the death penalty, is expected to sign the bill in the coming weeks. His long-sought success comes at a time when a growing number of Americans are starting to oppose capital punishment and disagree with its effectiveness as a crime deterrent.

## Support for death penalty declining

Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, opposition to the death penalty was the third rail of American politics. Politicians like presidential candidate Michael Dukakis, who opposed capital punishment, were lambasted for being “soft on crime.” Public support for capital punishment rose fairly consistently during this time, peaking at 80% in 1994, according to [Gallup](#).

*Are you in favor of the death penalty for a person convicted of murder?*

■ % Favor



GALLUP®

A recent [Gallup poll](#), however, shows support for the death penalty is on a downward trend and now at 63%. In [particular](#), support has declined among young adults aged 18 to 34 and self-identified Democrats. There is a sharp difference between whites (68% approve / 28% disapprove) and nonwhites (41% approve / 56% disapprove) as well as gun owners (80% approve) and those who do not own a weapon (55% approve).

## When people are given other options, support for the death penalty plummets

While support for capital punishment is high in the abstract, Americans are just as supportive of life without the possibility of parole being the ultimate criminal penalty. When asked in a CNN poll which was the [better penalty](#) for murder, a majority of adults chose life imprisonment (50% life without parole / 48% death penalty). As late as 2005, a 56% majority thought the death penalty was a better penalty for murder, compared to 39% who preferred life without parole.

## More Americans see flaws in the death-penalty system

Support for the death penalty has been declining as more Americans are becoming aware of its flaws. Forty-one percent (41%) of people in a 2011 [Gallup poll](#) believe the death penalty is



applied unfairly, which is up 6 points since 2006 (35%). People more broadly believe that the criminal justice system doesn't treat whites and non-whites equally: a 2012 [ABC News/Washington Post poll](#) found that 55% of people think that “blacks and other minorities do not receive equal treatment to whites in the criminal justice system.”

Americans also don't think the death-penalty system is especially accurate or effective. For one, [72%](#) of people believe that an innocent person has probably been executed within the past five years. And Americans agree by a 2:1 margin that the death penalty does not act as a [deterrent](#) to committing murder.

### **OTHER NEWS FROM THE POLLING AND POLITICAL WORLD**

Republicans are trying to [reboot](#) their polling operation after disastrous 2012 cycle

The Fix lays out the [top 10](#) Senate races of 2014

Pew Research finds that more than 6 in 10 Americans feel the [Republican Party](#) is out of touch

Think you can talk for over 24 hours straight? Real Clear Politics lists the five longest [filibusters](#) in history

A fascinating video on [wealth inequality](#) in America went viral...as did a Taylor Swift parody on the 22 Senators who voted against [VAWA](#)

“[Disaster](#)”: Gallup asks Americans what word comes to mind when thinking about the sequester

Support for [marriage equality](#) hits a new high in the latest Washington Post – ABC News poll



**Public Polling**

**PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING**

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
<b>RCP Average</b>	2/21 - 3/17	--	<b>48</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Gallup</b>	3/15 - 3/17	1500 A	49	45
<b>Rasmussen</b>	3/15 - 3/17	1500 LV	51	47
<b>Democracy Corps</b>	3/9 - 3/12	840 LV	48	49
<b>ABC/ Wash Post</b>	3/7 - 3/10	RV	51	46
<b>McClatchy/Marist</b>	3/4 - 3/7	1068 RV	45	48
<b>Quinnipiac</b>	2/27 - 3/4	1944 RV	45	46

**CONGRESSIONAL JOB APPROVAL**

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Democrats App/Disapprove	Republicans App/Disapprove
<b>Quinnipiac</b>	2/27 - 3/4	1944 RV	32 / 60	20 / 71
<b>USA Today/Pew</b>	2/13 - 2/18	1504 RV	37 / 55	25 / 67
<b>PPP</b>	1/31 - 2/3	800 RV	39 / 53	22 / 68
<b>ABS/WaPo</b>	1/10 - 1/13	1001 A	37 / 59	24 / 71

**PARTY SELF ID**

Polling Firm	Date	Dem	Rep	Ind/Other
<b>Pollster.com Trend</b>	March 14	36.4%	27.1%	31.0%

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