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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Poll: Marylanders Back Religious School Choice**

ROCKVILLE, MD (April 25, 2018) — A majority of Marylanders (51 percent) support giving parents the freedom to use public school dollars to send their child to a private religious school. That is according to a recent statewide survey of likely voters commissioned by the Maryland Public Policy Institute. The poll also reveals Marylanders have vastly different priorities for public education depending on what region of the state they live in.

The survey, conducted for the Institute by Burton Research & Strategies, included 600 likely voters in Maryland between March 4-8 and 10-11, 2018 and has a margin of error of  $\pm 4.0$  percent.

Major survey findings include:

### **Support for Charter Schools is Bipartisan:**

Nearly two-thirds (**65 percent**) of Marylanders support allowing students in poor performing or unsafe schools to be allowed to attend a charter schools.

Democrats (**61 percent**), Independents (**70 percent**), and Republicans (**72 percent**) all support giving parents and children the freedom to choose charter schools instead of poor performing public schools.

“Marylanders of all political stripes support public charter schools, yet we have the weakest charter school law in the nation according to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools,” said Christopher B. Summers, president and chief executive officer of the Institute. “Our policymakers have failed to match the public’s support for charters with concrete policies that increase access to charter schools for families and children.”

### **More Support for Religious Schools:**

**Fifty-one percent** of Marylanders believe the government should allow parents to use their per pupil allowance to send their children to a private religious school. Support was lower, however, for secular private school choice. **Forty-one percent** of Marylanders support using the per pupil allowance for private schools, **46 percent** oppose, and **11 percent** say they do not know.

### **Different Regions Have Different Priorities:**

The survey also showed how different regions of the state have different priorities for public education.

In **Baltimore City**, respondents chose health care & social services as the top choice for new education spending (selected by 28 percent of respondents) followed by making schools safer (22 percent.)

In **Central Maryland**, making schools safer was the top choice (25 percent) followed by career and technical training (24 percent.)

In the **DC Suburbs**, raising teacher salaries was the most preferred choice (23 percent) followed by making schools safer (20 percent).

In **Western Maryland**, respondents chose more career and technical training as the top choice (32 percent) followed closely by making schools safer (31 percent).

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On the **Eastern Shore**, making schools safer was decisively the top choice (37 percent) followed by more career and technical training (23 percent).

A detailed memo for the Maryland Statewide Education Poll can be found at [www.mdpolicy.org](http://www.mdpolicy.org).

**About the Maryland Public Policy Institute:** Founded in 2001, the Maryland Public Policy Institute is a nonpartisan public policy research and education organization that focuses on state policy issues. The Institute's mission is to formulate and promote public policies at all levels of government based on principles of free enterprise, limited government, and civil society. Learn more at [mdpolicy.org](http://mdpolicy.org).

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