**Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

# Post-Election LGBTQIA+ Community Insights Report

**January 15, 2025**

Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs
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## Introduction

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs is dedicated to promoting equity, safety, and well-being for the LGBTQIA+ community across the State. In the wake of the 2024 presidential election, the Commission initiated a community-focused questionnaire to capture the sentiments, concerns, and needs of LGBTQIA+ residents in Maryland.

## Background

The Commission hosted a Post-Election Listening Session on November 12, 2024, held virtually on Zoom. Over 80 community leaders and members registered and shared their feedback and concerns in a brief registration survey and during the listening session. The survey findings and discussions underscored widespread fears within Maryland's LGBTQIA+ communities about potential federal rollbacks on rights, access to gender-affirming care, funding cuts, and rising hostility. Participants emphasized the urgent need for state-level protections, mental health support, and resources to safeguard vulnerable populations and counter these anticipated threats effectively.

To build on these insights, we concluded the session with the dissemination of a Post-Election Community Survey aimed at capturing broader sentiments from LGBTQIA+ Marylanders.

## Key Findings

The key findings from the post-election questionnaire and listening session highlight significant concerns within Maryland's LGBTQIA+ communities, particularly regarding safety, access to healthcare, and the erosion of legal protections. Quantitative data revealed heightened distress levels, especially among transgender and gender expansive individuals, while qualitative feedback emphasized the need for expanded state-level protections, advocacy for gender-affirming care, and comprehensive support systems. To address these pressing challenges effectively, we recommend a robust community needs assessment to:

- Assess and identify challenges facing LGBTQIA+ communities
- Uplift and amplify community voices
- Guide policy solutions that ensure equity, safety, and well-being of LGBTQIA+ individuals across the State

## Data Collection

The Commission distributed a web-based survey to LGBTQIA+ community members in the State of Maryland from November 12, 2024 through December 6, 2024. Questions ranged from perceived impacts to safety and wellbeing to political impacts to anticipated changes to rights

and resources. Responses were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to identify key themes and trends.

## Demographics

The survey received 786 responses representing all 24 jurisdictions from across the State. The participants of the survey represented diverse age groups, racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and gender identities across Maryland, with responses spanning rural, suburban, and urban areas.

## Community Insights Summary

The post-election survey revealed a deeply impacted LGBTQIA+ community navigating heightened fears, uncertainty, and challenges. Respondents provided candid insights into their lived experiences, highlighting concerns about safety, access to healthcare, and the erosion of legal protections. Their voices underscore the importance of state-level action to address the unique and pressing needs of Maryland's LGBTQIA+ population.

## Quantitative Findings

The following summary presents key findings from questions to assess emotional and psychological responses among LGBTQIA+ individuals following the presidential election. The data was collected using the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, a validated tool for measuring emotional states and psychological well-being.

**Key Findings:**

- **Political Concerns:**
  - Respondents reported high concern about the impact of political shifts on LGBTQIA+ rights (Mean = 4.66 on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being "Strongly agree", 95% CI [4.59, 4.73]) and trans rights specifically (Mean = 4.70, 95% CI [4.63, 4.77]).
  - Concern about a rise in hate/bias incidents was also notable, with a mean score of 4.59 out of 5 (95% CI [4.52, 4.66]).
- **Safety and Security:**
  - Feelings of decreased safety in their community following the election were moderate (Mean = 3.82, 95% CI [3.73, 3.90]).

**Emotional Impact:**

- The Kessler scale items,[1] modified to capture feelings of emotional distress specifically after the election on a scale from 0 to 4 with higher scores indicating more frequent experiences indicate:
    - Feeling nervous: Mean = 2.65 (95% CI [2.58, 2.72]).
    - Feeling hopeless: Mean = 2.19 (95% CI [2.11, 2.27]).
    - Feeling restless or fidgety: Mean = 2.26 (95% CI [2.18, 2.35]).
    - Feeling so depressed that nothing could cheer them up: Mean = 1.40 (95% CI [1.32, 1.48]).
    - Feeling that everything was an effort: Mean = 1.90 (95% CI [1.81, 1.99]).
    - Feeling worthless: Mean = 0.94 (95% CI [0.85, 1.02]).
- **Overall Kessler Score:** The overall Kessler psychological distress score averaged 11.36 (95% CI [10.96, 11.75])[2]
- **Kessler Score for Transgender and Gender Expansive**: The Kessler psychological distress score averaged 12.93, notably higher than cisgender respondents.
- **Inferential analyses** were run to determine if there is a relationship between gender identity and Kessler score. Accordingly, a Chi-Square was conducted. The results of a Chi-square $p < .05$ were significant at the $< .001$ level (2-sided), indicating that a relationship between Kessler score and gender identity exists.

| Question | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | Confidence @95% Lower | Confidence @95% Upper |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am concerned about the impact of political shifts on LGBTQIA2S+ rights. | 781 | 4.66 | 1.025 | 4.59 | 4.73 |
| I am concerned about the impact of political shifts on trans rights. | 780 | 4.7 | 1.003 | 4.63 | 4.77 |
| I feel less safe in my community following the election. | 775 | 3.82 | 1.200 | 3.73 | 3.90 |
| I am concerned about a rise in hate/bias incidents following the election. | 773 | 4.59 | 1.002 | 4.52 | 4.66 |

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[1] Kessler, R. C., Andrews, G., Colpe, L. J., Hiripi, E., Mroczek, D. K., Normand, S.-L. T., Walters, E. E., & Zaslavsky, A. M. (2002). Short screening scales to monitor population prevalences and trends in non-specific psychological distress. *Psychological Medicine*, *32*(6), 959–976. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0033291702006074

[2] In the original K6 measure, which captures psychological distress over the last two weeks, a score of 13 or greater, is often used as a cutoff point for potential significant mental health concerns

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Following the outcome of the presidential election, about how often did you feel... [...nervous?]** | 782 | 2.65 | 1.025 | 2.58 | 2.72 |
| Following the outcome of the presidential election, about how often did you feel... [...hopeless?] | 784 | 2.19 | 1.143 | 2.11 | 2.27 |
| **Following the outcome of the presidential election, about how often did you feel... [...restless or fidgety?]** | 777 | 2.26 | 1.195 | 2.18 | 2.35 |
| Following the outcome of the presidential election, about how often did you feel... [...so depressed that nothing could cheer you up?] | 787 | 1.40 | 1.138 | 1.32 | 1.48 |
| **Following the outcome of the presidential election, about how often did you feel... [...that everything was an effort?]** | 768 | 1.9 | 1.282 | 1.81 | 1.99 |
| Following the outcome of the presidential election, about how often did you feel... [...worthless?] | 772 | 0.94 | 1.208 | .85 | 1.02 |
| **Kessler Score** | 764 | 11.36 | 5.67 | 10.96 | 11.75 |

| Chi square | Value | df | Asymptotic significance 2-sided | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi Square | 876.000 | 81 | <.001 | |
| Likelihood Ratio | 128.479 | 81 | <.001 | |
| Cases | 789 | | | |

## I am concerned about the impact of political shifts on LGBTQIA2S+ rights.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | | 111 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 12.4 |
| | N/A or I do not wish to answer | 5 | .6 | .6 | 12.9 |
| | Nuetral | 7 | .8 | .8 | 13.7 |
| | Somewhat Agree | 39 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 18.1 |
| | Somewhat Disagree | 3 | .3 | .3 | 18.4 |
| | Strongly Agree | 681 | 75.9 | 75.9 | 94.3 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 51 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 897 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

## I am concerned about the impact of political shifts on trans rights.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | | 111 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 12.4 |
| | N/A or I do not wish to answer | 6 | .7 | .7 | 13.0 |
| | Nuetral | 7 | .8 | .8 | 13.8 |
| | Somewhat Agree | 18 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 15.8 |
| | Somewhat Disagree | 1 | .1 | .1 | 15.9 |
| | Strongly Agree | 704 | 78.5 | 78.5 | 94.4 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 50 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 897 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

## feel less safe in my community following the election.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | | 111 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 12.4 |
| | N/A or I do not wish to answer | 11 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 13.6 |
| | Nuetral | 119 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 26.9 |
| | Somewhat Agree | 269 | 30.0 | 30.0 | 56.9 |
| | Somewhat Disagree | 62 | 6.9 | 6.9 | 63.8 |
| | Strongly Agree | 269 | 30.0 | 30.0 | 93.8 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 56 | 6.2 | 6.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 897 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**I am concerned about a rise in hate/bias incidents following the election.**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | | 111 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 12.4 |
| | N/A or I do not wish to answer | 13 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 13.8 |
| | Nuetral | 9 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 14.8 |
| | Somewhat Agree | 93 | 10.4 | 10.4 | 25.2 |
| | Somewhat Disagree | 8 | .9 | .9 | 26.1 |
| | Strongly Agree | 617 | 68.8 | 68.8 | 94.9 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 46 | 5.1 | 5.1 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 897 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Following the outcome of the presidential election, about how often did you feel... [...hopeless?]**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | | 111 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 12.4 |
| | A little of the time | 124 | 13.8 | 13.8 | 26.2 |
| | All of the time | 106 | 11.8 | 11.8 | 38.0 |
| | Most of the time | 206 | 23.0 | 23.0 | 61.0 |
| | N/A or I do not wish to answer | 2 | .2 | .2 | 61.2 |
| | None of the time | 74 | 8.2 | 8.2 | 69.5 |
| | Some of the time | 274 | 30.5 | 30.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 897 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Following the outcome of the presidential election, about how often did you feel... [...restless or fidgety?]**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | | 111 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 12.4 |
| | A little of the time | 102 | 11.4 | 11.4 | 23.7 |
| | All of the time | 122 | 13.6 | 13.6 | 37.3 |
| | Most of the time | 233 | 26.0 | 26.0 | 63.3 |
| | N/A or I do not wish to answer | 9 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 64.3 |
| | None of the time | 85 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 73.8 |
| | Some of the time | 235 | 26.2 | 26.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 897 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Following the outcome of the presidential election, about how often did you feel... [...so depressed that nothing could cheer you up?]**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | | 111 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 12.4 |
| | A little of the time | 211 | 23.5 | 23.5 | 35.9 |
| | All of the time | 37 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 40.0 |
| | Most of the time | 90 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 50.1 |
| | N/A or I do not wish to answer | 5 | .6 | .6 | 50.6 |
| | None of the time | 210 | 23.4 | 23.4 | 74.0 |
| | Some of the time | 233 | 26.0 | 26.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 897 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Following the outcome of the presidential election, about how often did you feel... [...that everything was an effort?]**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | | 111 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 12.4 |
| | A little of the time | 162 | 18.1 | 18.1 | 30.4 |
| | All of the time | 102 | 11.4 | 11.4 | 41.8 |
| | Most of the time | 154 | 17.2 | 17.2 | 59.0 |
| | N/A or I do not wish to answer | 18 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 61.0 |
| | None of the time | 136 | 15.2 | 15.2 | 76.1 |
| | Some of the time | 214 | 23.9 | 23.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 897 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Following the outcome of the presidential election, about how often did you feel... [...worthless?]**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | | 111 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 12.4 |
| | A little of the time | 151 | 16.8 | 16.8 | 29.2 |
| | All of the time | 39 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 33.6 |
| | Most of the time | 65 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 40.8 |
| | N/A or I do not wish to answer | 14 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 42.4 |
| | None of the time | 406 | 45.3 | 45.3 | 87.6 |
| | Some of the time | 111 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 897 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Following the outcome of the presidential election, about how often did you feel... [...worthless?]**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | | 111 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 12.4 |
| | A little of the time | 151 | 16.8 | 16.8 | 29.2 |
| | All of the time | 39 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 33.6 |
| | Most of the time | 65 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 40.8 |
| | N/A or I do not wish to answer | 14 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 42.4 |
| | None of the time | 406 | 45.3 | 45.3 | 87.6 |
| | Some of the time | 111 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 897 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

## Qualitative Findings

Analysis of the responses regarding advocacy strategies that should be prioritized to counter anticipated threats to LGBTQIA+ rights reveal a strong focus on protecting gender-affirming care and reproductive rights, alongside widespread support for civil rights protections and anti-discrimination measures. Many respondents emphasized the importance of creating sanctuary policies and support systems for those relocating to Maryland, as well as safeguarding marriage, adoption, and family rights. Education policies that promote inclusion and accurate representation, along with efforts to counter disinformation and public bias, were also frequently highlighted. Additionally, respondents expressed the need for stronger protections against hate crimes, local community organizing, and policies that address housing security, workplace protections, and mental health support. The table included in this report provides a detailed breakdown of the categories and their relative emphasis among survey responses.

**Table: Categorized responses regarding advocacy strategies that should be prioritized to counter anticipated threats to LGBTQIA+ rights**

| Category | Occurrences | Percentage of Valid Responses (n = 607) |
|---|---|---|
| Protections for Gender-Affirming Care and Reproductive Rights | 212 | 34.93% |
| Civil Rights (General) | 89 | 14.66% |
| Sanctuary State and Supports for People Moving to Maryland (Migration and Immigration) | 51 | 8.40% |
| Marriage, Adoption, and Family Protections | 47 | 7.74% |
| Education Policies, Climate, and Curricula | 44 | 7.25% |
| Awareness, Disinformation, and Public Opinion | 41 | 6.75% |
| Discrimination and Hate Crimes Protections | 28 | 4.61% |
| Local Efforts and Community Organizing | 22 | 3.62% |
| Intersectionality and Cross-Group Solidarity | 16 | 2.64% |
| Housing and Basic Needs Security | 11 | 1.81% |
| Workplace and Employment Protections | 10 | 1.65% |
| Identity Documents, Name Changes, and Data Privacy | 9 | 1.48% |
| Resources (General) | 9 | 1.48% |
| Mental Health Support | 8 | 1.32% |
| Other | 8 | 1.32% |