



Congressman Ben Cardin

Maryland's Third District



Congressman Ben Cardin - Maryland's Third District

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Dear <:firstname:>,

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my 2004 questionnaire. I send out a questionnaire to my constituents each year so that I may better understand their views on the key issues before Congress. This year, in addition to distributing the questionnaire by mail, I also made it available via Internet. I am very pleased that this year we received a record response level--nearly 10,000.

This year's twenty-two questions covered issues ranging from our military involvement in Iraq to the environment to health care. While this is not a scientific poll, I have found over the years that the results often reflect what I hear during town hall meetings and other conversations with residents of Maryland's Third Congressional District.

Your answers to foreign policy questions reflected our nation's ambivalence about the United States' involvement in Iraq. A 56% majority opposes President Bush's request for \$25 billion in supplemental appropriations to pay for the War in Iraq. Regarding the U.S. handling of captured Iraqis, an overwhelming 80% oppose using private contractors to guard or interrogate enemy prisoners.

Given the extent of our military presence around the world, many Americans are increasingly concerned that the U.S. government may have to reinstitute the draft. A strong majority of you -- 66% -- signaled your opposition to the draft; however, in a separate question, a slight majority -- 55% -- supports including women if the draft were to resume. More than four out of five respondents, 82%, support guaranteed year-round health care coverage for National Guard and Reserve members through the military health care system.

Regarding the war on terrorism, by a slight majority of 53% to 47%, respondents support reauthorizing the PATRIOT Act, which Congress passed after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to modernize wiretap and investigative laws. A larger majority, 78%, supports a law that would require the use of biometric identification, such as eye scans, fingerprints, or voice recognition, on all passports.

In health care, three-fourths of respondents - 77% - support the enactment of federal legislation to protect individuals from discrimination as a result of genetic testing. Sixty-four percent believe that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) should make emergency contraception available to consumers without a prescription, and 77% want Congress to require stricter country-of-origin labeling on produce.

By a closer count -- 53% to 47% -- a majority believes that working Americans under the age of 45 should be permitted to put a percentage of their payroll taxes into private retirement accounts rather than into the Social Security system.

On the environmental front, nearly four out of five respondents -- 79% -- oppose the Bush Administration's plan to ease Clean Air Act standards for coal-burning power plants. Nearly two-thirds -- 65% -- would support a new federal fee on wastewater, similar to the Maryland fee, to fund environmental priorities at the national level.

Regarding transportation policy, slightly less than half of respondents -- 46% -- would support tolls to expand Baltimore's beltway over an increase in the gas tax. However, nearly two-thirds -- 65% -- favor continuing federal support for Amtrak operations and equipment. Another two-thirds, 67%, believe NASA should support a manned servicing mission to the Hubble Space Telescope to keep it operational.

Questions on education evoked a strong response. An overwhelming 81% support tax incentives to encourage highly qualified teachers to work in schools that fail the "No Child Left Behind" standards. Another strong majority -- 76% -- supports increasing the maximum Pell Grant amounts for the neediest undergraduate college students.

Interestingly, 72% of respondents want the U.S. to lift the trade embargo against Cuba. A little more than half -- 56% -- believe that Congress should ban the practice of racial profiling by state and local law enforcement. By a margin of 61% to 39%, respondents oppose a constitutional amendment to prohibit states from recognizing same-sex marriages. Finally, 74% favor using the Internet to answer my questionnaire next year.

Once again, thank you for completing my 2004 Questionnaire. I also want to thank you for sending me your e-mail address. If you would like to get periodic E-News Updates from me about what is happening in Congress, please [click here](#). I hope you will find these Updates informative.

Best wishes,

Benjamin L. Cardin
Member of Congress

Yes, please send me these informational E-News Updates in the future.

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