

**M**ayor Brandon Scott, a Democrat, won the primary election in May. In Baltimore, the mayor’s race is all but decided in the primary because the city is made up mostly of Democrats. You will find Scott on your ballot with Republican Shannon Wright.

Baltimore is a “strong mayor” city. That means that the person who holds the position holds a lot of power. For example, in addition to his own vote, the mayor appoints two of the five people who make decisions on the Board of Estimates (that’s the body that decides how money is spent).

However, Scott doesn’t hold all the power. The Baltimore City Charter refers to the Baltimore City Council as the city’s Legislative Department. There are 14 members who represent different parts of the city (known as districts), attend to the needs of their constituents, and propose ordinances or resolutions (rules that we use to run the city).

Sometimes, the mayor and city council clash over policy decisions. Other times, as was the case with this year’s city budget, the two move in lockstep agreement.

In politics, money, institutional power (the power granted to city officials) and people power all help create the conditions in which we live.

**Recommended Reading:**

**BALTIMORE COUNCIL PASSES \$4B SPENDING PLAN, WRAPPING BUDGET WITH FEW FIREWORKS**

Author: Adam Willis and Emily Sullivan  
Published: 6/17/2024  
The Baltimore Banner

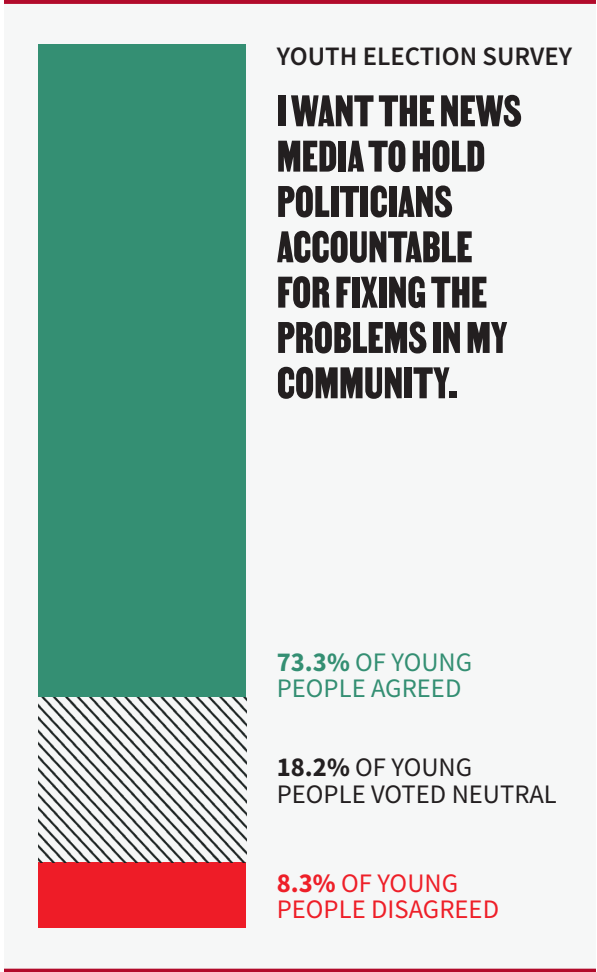
Baltimore City Council members unanimously approved a \$4.2 billion spending plan Monday without touching the version introduced by Mayor Brandon Scott this spring.

Baltimore voters will be asked to vote for eight ballot questions. Two of them directly link to the way power is wielded in Baltimore City. Voters almost always approve any measures that make it on the ballot.

**WHAT IS QUESTION H?** Question H is for the purpose of amending Art. III, Sections 2 and 7 of the Charter to reduce the number of Baltimore City Council districts from 14 to 8. If the number of City Council districts is

modified by an approved Charter amendment, the Mayor shall prepare a plan for Council redistricting based on the most recent census. The Mayor shall present the plan to the City Council not later than the first day of February of the first municipal election year following the approval of the Charter amendment.

Elected officials and citizens have united to try to defeat this controversial measure, which is backed by conservative media mogul David Smith. On its surface, it is designed to meet the needs of a city that is shrinking in population size. However, activists and elected officials argue that this measure is actually aimed at weakening institutional power in Baltimore. Mayor Brandon Scott, along with other electeds, is helping fund Stop Sinclair, a political committee created to stop Question H.



**WHAT IS QUESTION E?** Question E is for the purpose of establishing the Baltimore City Police Department as an agency of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore. The Police Commissioner is established as the head of the Department and is appointed by the Mayor subject to confirmation under Art. IV, Sec. 6 (a) of the Charter. The Commissioner’s powers are enumerated and include determining and

establishing the form and organization of the Department; assigning staff and resources, instituting systems for evaluations of members and setting policy with respect to the general operations of the Department.

The purpose and powers of the Department are also determined. The Department shall have the duty to preserve the peace, detect and prevent crime, enforce the laws of the State and the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore as well as apprehend and arrest individuals who violate or are lawfully accused of violating the law. The Department will preserve the order at public places but must discharge its duties and responsibilities with dignity and in a manner that will inspire public confidence and respect.

The duties of police officers are also established and the procedure for the creation of police districts is established.

This measure closes the loop on a years-long project to put control of the Baltimore police department into the hands of city residents.

**Recommended Reading:**

**LANGUAGE PROHIBITING LOCAL CONTROL OF BALTIMORE CITY POLICE GONE JUNE 1**

Author: Emily Hofstaedter  
Published: 5/31/24  
WYPR

Baltimore City has not had full control over its police since before the Civil War. The city is the only municipality in Maryland that does not have full oversight of its law enforcement.

**Additional Resources:**

For a complete list of ballot questions, go to:  
[elections.maryland.gov/elections/2024/All\\_Local\\_Questions\\_PG24.pdf](https://elections.maryland.gov/elections/2024/All_Local_Questions_PG24.pdf)

Go to the Baltimore Banner’s voter guide for more on ballot questions: [thebaltimorebanner.com/voter-guide-2024/](https://thebaltimorebanner.com/voter-guide-2024/)

# ALSOBROOKS VS. HOGAN

Currently, Democrats hold a powerful majority in the U.S. Senate. The seat is open because longtime Senator Ben Cardin, a Democrat, is retiring. So, the contest between former Maryland Governor Larry Hogan and County Executive for Prince George’s County Angela Alsobrooks is one that many people are watching closely.

Democrat leadership in Baltimore and statewide say an Alsobrooks win is necessary to maintain a flow of federal money that goes toward violence reduction, environmental initiatives, transportation initiatives, and more. Also important is the issue of reproductive rights. Nationally, Republicans have dismantled laws protecting the reproductive rights of birthing people. Alsobrooks and others have questioned whether Hogan, if elected, would help Republicans continue this trend.

**Recommended Reading:**

**MARYLAND SENATE DEBATE STARTS CIVILLY, THEN VEERS INTO CHARGES OF ‘LIES’**

Author: Katie Shepherd and Erin Cox  
Published: 10/11/24  
Washington Post

The question of which party will control the Senate in 2025 has played a central role for both sides. Alsobrooks argued that a vote for Hogan would nullify a vote for Harris by giving Republicans the ability to hamstring a Democratic presidency. Hogan, meanwhile, cast himself as an independent-minded moderate willing to work with both parties, though he has previously also promised to caucus with Republicans.

**“WHILE I CANNOT VOTE IN THIS ELECTION, I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO SERVING AS AN ELECTION JUDGE, AND ENCOURAGE ALL STUDENTS AGED 16+ TO SIGN UP TO SERVE AS ELECTION JUDGES THROUGH BALTIMORE VOTES.”**

**JAMES MCLAUGHLIN, 16**

*Continues on next page →*



# SPACE AND PLACE

Who has access to spaces and places in Baltimore? Who grants that access to some and takes it away from others?

## WHAT IS QUESTION F?

Question F is for the purpose of amending the provision dedicating for public park uses the portion of the city that lies along the Northwest and South Shores of the Inner Harbor, south of Pratt Street to the water's edge, east of Light Street to the water's edge, and north of the highway to the water's edge, from the World Trade Center around the shoreline of the Inner Harbor including Rash Field with a maximum of 4.5 acres north of an easterly extension of the south side of Conway Street plus access thereto to be used for eating places, commercial uses, multifamily residential development and off-street parking with the areas used for multifamily dwellings and off-street parking as excluded from the area dedicated as a public park or for public benefit.

Mayor Brandon Scott is backing an ambitious plan that he hopes will reinvigorate the Baltimore Inner Harbor. In recent decades, this area has been incredibly valuable because of its proximity to the water and tourist attractions like the National Aquarium. However, as businesses left the area and fears about crime tainted the city's image, it has become a giant question mark. Question F makes it easier for that development plan, which would require \$400 million in public funding for roadway and pedestrian promenade upgrades, to move forward.

## Recommended Reading:

### **BIG FISH: P. DAVID BRAMBLE AND REIMAGINING HARBORPLACE (PART I)**

Author: David Nitkin  
Published: 4/10/24  
Baltimore Fishbowl

Critics say the design process was rushed, and the results are not special enough. Some have asked for a reboot. In an interview with Baltimore Fishbowl Executive editor David Nitkin, Bramble embraced and defended the plan, even as he said some elements could change as community discussions continue.

Access to spaces matters and it isn't always given equally. Where you live in the city, how much you make, and what you look like all play a role in how welcome you are and in what parts of the city you can easily access.

## Recommended Reading:

### **BIKING FOR ALL- BALTIMORE TEENS GAIN SELF-RELIANCE, EXPAND COMMUNITY ACCESS**

Author: Bri Hatch  
Published: 9/16/2024  
WYPR

Youth cyclists "just want a space where they can congregate, have fun, share their skills, explore, and really stay out of trouble," [Baltimore Youth Kinetic Energy Collective Executive Director Jasper] Barnes said. "And when they're constantly being criminalized for things that aren't their responsibility, they're being accused of things that they didn't perpetuate, it's really frustrating."

In Baltimore, many businesses have begun to restrict the way young people can access their spaces. In August, Giant Food announced that they would ban shoppers under the age of 18 from entering their stores without an adult after 6 p.m. Mondawmin Mall requires shoppers 17 and under be accompanied by an adult Monday through Friday after 6 p.m.

In most cases, lawmakers can't tell private companies whether they should or should not enact these rules. However, elected officials do have a say about things like curfews. They can also voice their opinions.

## Recommended Reading:

### **A DOZEN CITIES SET YOUTH CURFEWS THIS YEAR, EVEN THOUGH THEY DON'T REDUCE CRIME**

Author: Lakeidra Chavis  
Published: 6/29/23  
Baltimore Banner

Since the start of the year [2023], more than a dozen cities and counties have enacted curfews — or are once again enforcing them — in the name of youth safety, despite a mountain of research showing they have little effect on crime.

Young people need places to go. For years here in Baltimore, recreation centers and play spaces were closed and many fell into disrepair. Mayor Brandon Scott's administration has made reopening and reinvigorating these spaces a priority.

## Recommended Reading:

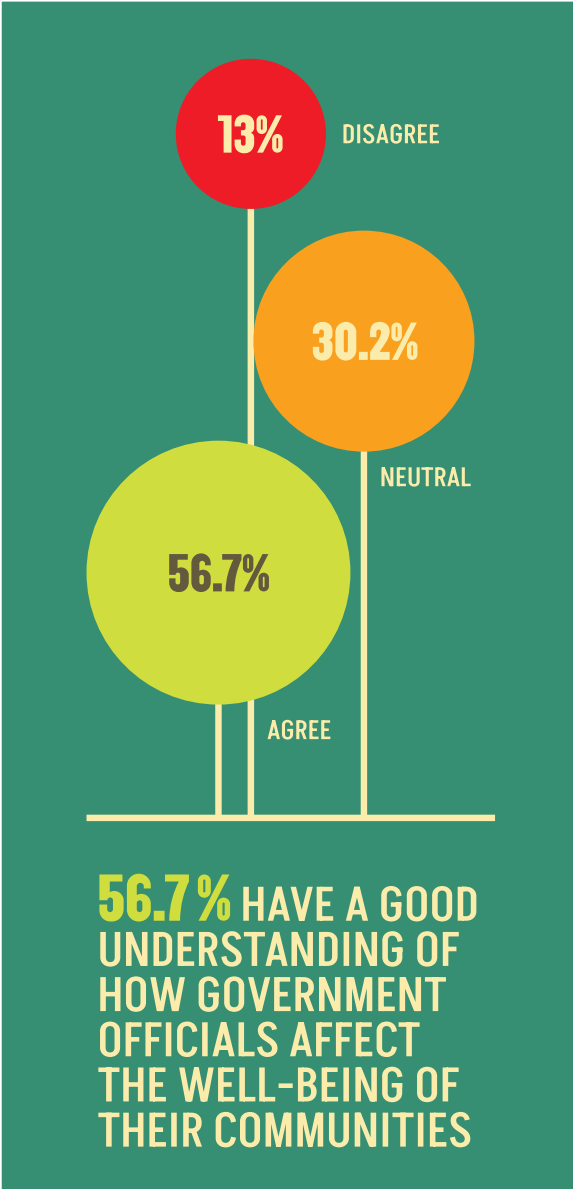
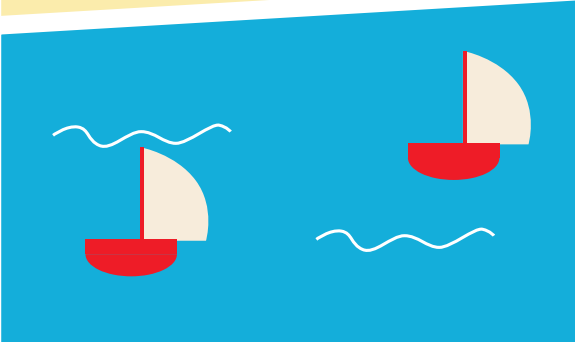
### **MAYOR SCOTT, CITY & STATE OFFICIALS, REC & PARKS CUT RIBBON ON RENOVATED EAST BALTIMORE SWIMMING POOL FACILITY**

Author: Brandon Scott  
Published: 8/31/24

"These projects - and the frequency with which we've done these ribbon-cuttings - are a reflection of our commitment to ensuring every single Baltimorean has access to world-class facilities," said Mayor Brandon M. Scott. "So many of these pools and rec centers have not been touched in decades, despite badly needing attention, but we're finally changing that legacy. This pool will be a gathering place where members of this neighborhood can build community, where young Baltimoreans can learn to swim, and where we can continue to invest in our people."



**48.4% OF YOUNG VOTERS**  
STRONGLY BELIEVE ELECTED OFFICIALS SHOULD INVEST MORE IN MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



**38% OF THE YOUTH**  
BELIEVE PUBLIC SAFETY WILL BE IMPROVED BY SPENDING MORE MONEY ON POLICE

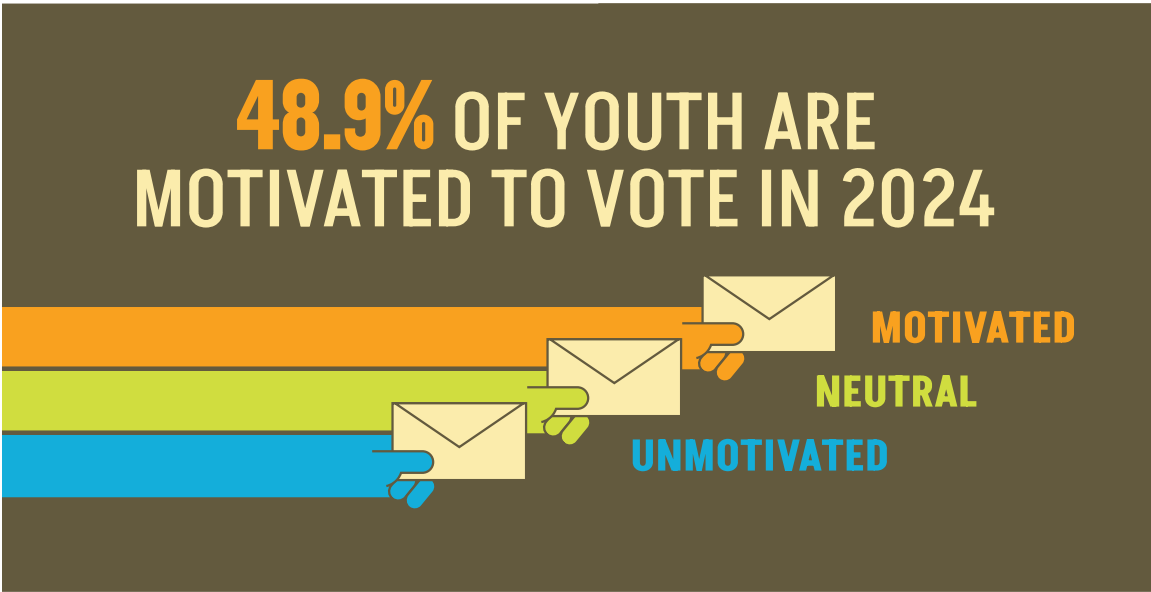
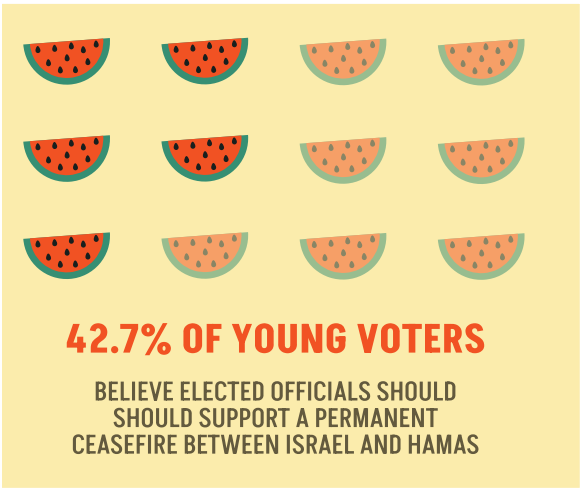
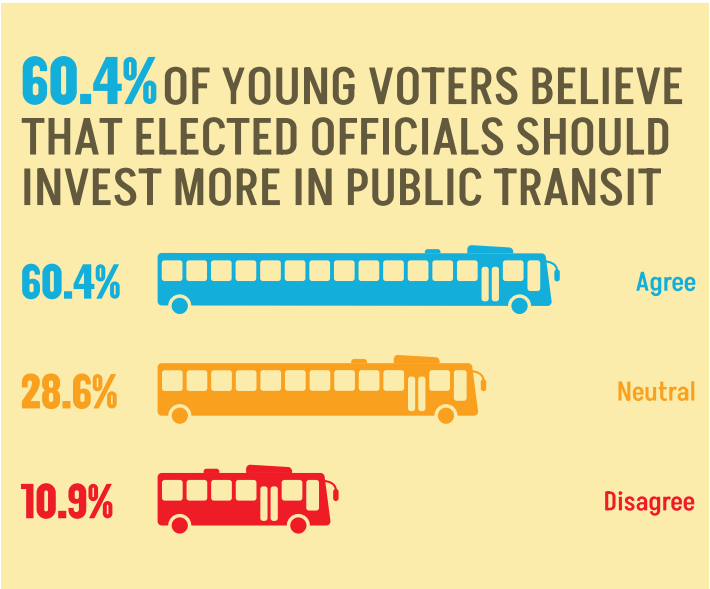
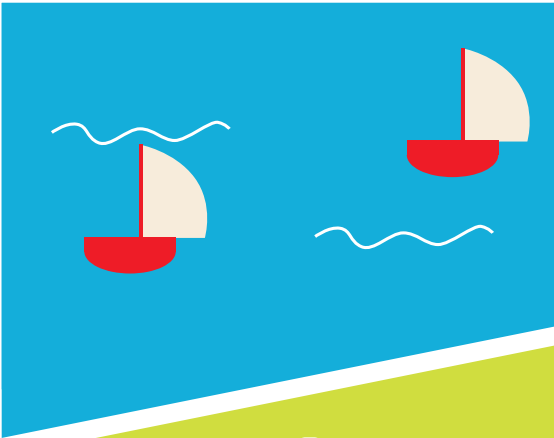
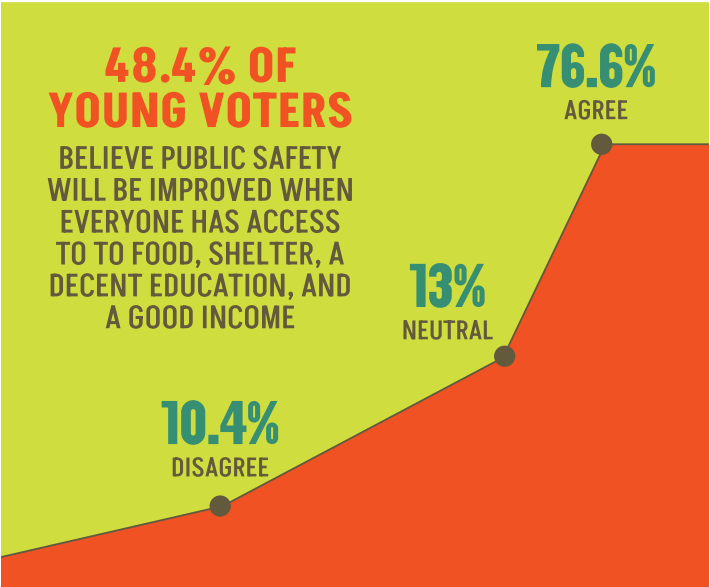
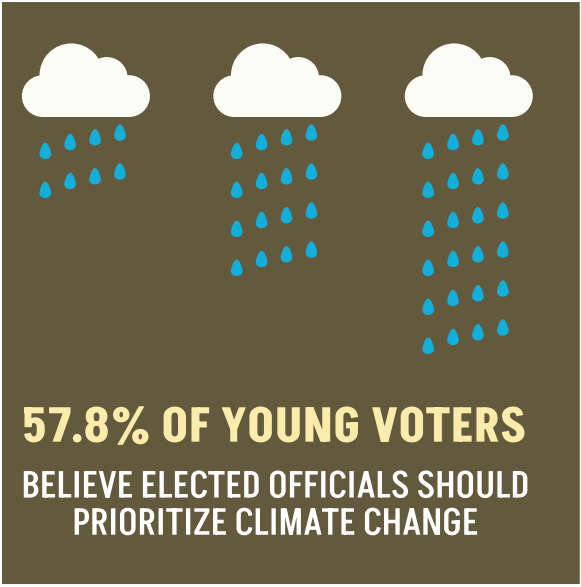
**71.5%**  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE VOTED AGREE

THAT NEWS MEDIA SHOULD HOLD POLITICIANS ACCOUNTABLE FOR FIXING THE PROBLEMS IN MY COMMUNITY



**36.9% OF YOUNG VOTERS**  
BELIEVE THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING





# POLICING AND JUSTICE

According to the 2020 data from The Vera Institute of Justice, a nonpartisan research and advocacy organization dedicated to making the U.S. justice system more fair, Baltimore spends more than any other city in the country on policing — \$840 per resident. Is the money worth it? To get to the root of what causes violent crime and how to stop it, you must first brush aside rhetoric.

Despite this, many people want police to crack down on youth crime even harder. A law that protects the rights of young people who are being interrogated by police has come under heavy scrutiny.

Recommended Reading:

**TEEN REPORT SHOWS DECLINING YOUTH ARRESTS, TAKES AIM AT PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH CRIME**

Author: Jalen Wade  
Published: 10/11/24  
Baltimore Beat

“For decades, people have said crime was going up. And so looking just at the overall youth arrests, and seeing that those were down pretty significantly from before the pandemic, that was not particularly surprising to me. What was surprising to me was the scope of the drop,” Rovner said.

The law requires police to notify the parents or guardians of a minor they take into custody. If the child’s parents have not hired a lawyer, police also must call a hotline staffed 24 hours a day by the Public Defender’s Office. When the lawyers answer, they read from a child-friendly script that explains what’s happening and what rights the child has.

Recommended Reading:

**JUDGES USE ‘ARBITRARY,’ ‘HORRENDOUS’ REASONS TO KEEP TEENS IN ADULT COURT**

Author: Rachel Baye, Jennifer Lu, Claire Keenan-Kurgan  
Published: 10/11/24  
WYPR

A review of more than three dozen court hearings over the past three years found a process that subjects teenagers to adult jails, courts and sentences despite decades of research showing these tactics push teens to commit more crime.

Some reporting shows that judges are actually very tough on young people who find themselves in the legal system.

Here, as elsewhere in the country, crime rates have fallen. In early October, Mayor Brandon Scott announced that homicides were down 27.3% and nonfatal shootings were down 37.6% compared to this time last year. Scott attributed the drop to the police department and the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, specifically the organization’s “work treating violence as a public health issue.”

Recommended Reading:

**FACT CHECK: DOES MARYLAND CHILD INTERROGATION PROTECTION ACT FORBID POLICE FROM INTERROGATING TEENS?**

Author: Rachel Baye  
Published: 9/12/24  
WYPR

[Harford County Sheriff Jeff] Gahler and other Maryland law enforcement leaders began criticizing the law, known as CIPA, even before it took effect in October 2022. They say it prohibits police from interviewing minors in their custody. But that’s not entirely accurate. At its core, CIPA is designed to help children and teens understand their rights when talking to police.

“VOTE TO STOP THE COPPIN PROJECT AND COP CITY.”

BONITA TILLMAN, 16

“THE CURRENT VOTING AGE IS AN INJUSTICE AND SHOULD BE LOWERED TO 16. SO MANY ISSUES IN OUR MODERN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE DIRECTLY AFFECT PEOPLE WHO ARE TOO YOUNG TO VOTE - JUST LOOK AT BOOK BANS, GUN CONTROL, OR TRANS RIGHTS. THE PEOPLE WHO ARE IMPACTED BY THESE POLICIES DESERVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE ON THEM.”

RONAN GOEKE, 15

# INTERNATIONAL

Recommended Reading:

## BALTIMORE MARKS ONE YEAR AFTER OCT. 7

Author: Jaisal Noor  
Published: 10/7/24  
Baltimore Beat

Over the past year, Israeli attacks have killed more than 41,000 Palestinians, injured tens of thousands people, systematically targeted journalists and aid workers, and blocked food and medical supplies. These actions prompted South Africa to go to the International Court of Justice and accuse Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians.

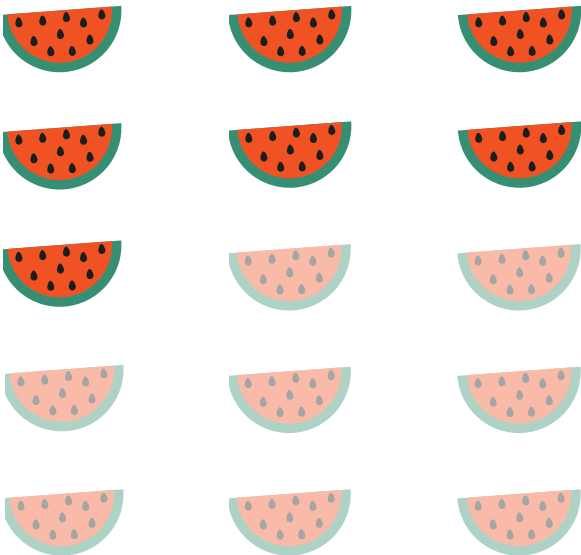
On college campuses here and elsewhere, students assembled to protest Israel's actions and demand that schools disinvest from companies profiting from the conflict. In many cases, university leaders and lawmakers sought to halt the convenings.

# 42.7%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE BELIEVE ELECTED OFFICIALS SHOULD SUPPORT A PERMANENT CEASEFIRE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND HAMAS

**“EVERYONE HAS BEEN TALKING ABOUT A CEASE FIRE SINCE THE BOMBINGS BEGAN OVER A YEAR AGO AND NOTHING HAS BEEN DONE BESIDES MORE PUBLICITY FOR THE EVENT. IT'S BECOMING SADDER THAT WE'RE EVEN STILL DOING SURVEYS LIKE THIS BECAUSE ALL THEY DO IS SHOW US THE REALITY WE'RE FACING AND DO NOT ADDRESS THE ACTUAL ISSUE.”**

**KA'MYA TYNES, 19**



Recommended Reading:

## PRO-PALESTINE PROTESTS RETURN TO JOHNS HOPKINS CAMPUS

Author: Bri Hatch  
Published: 9/13/24  
WYPR

Speakers at this week’s rally echoed those demands, calling for Hopkins to end its contract with the Department of Defense, which funnels up to \$10.6 million into the applied physics lab for research and development.

“The applied physics laboratory designs weapons, software and techniques of war that are used by imperialist militaries around the world,” the [Hopkins Justice Collective] student leader said.

In an emailed statement, a Hopkins spokesperson said students are free to express their “strong views and opinions” as long as they comply with university guidelines.

“We ended the encampment in May with an agreement, and we are entering this semester with the expectations that the students will honor that commitment,” the statement read.

**“IF KAMALA WANTS THE MOMENTUM OF YOUNG VOTERS ON HER SIDE, SHE NEEDS TO ADDRESS THE GENOCIDE IN GAZA AND SUPPORT AN ARMS EMBARGO. WORKING TOWARDS A CEASEFIRE THAT WILL NOT EVEN BE EFFECTIVE AS LONG AS WE ARE STILL ARMING ISRAEL IS NOT A SOLUTION WE ACCEPT.”**

**PAYTON NUNEZ, 20**



# ENVIRONMENT

With rising temperatures, melting ice sheets, and severe weather worldwide, we are already living with the reality of climate change. Elected officials have the power to establish rules that prioritize the planet and reduce harmful pollutants.

Often, community members with the least money and resources feel the effects of harmful pollution the most. In Curtis Bay, residents have fought for years to highlight the toll their close proximity to CSX Transportation’s coal terminal has taken on their health.

“I OFTEN FEEL LEFT OUT OF THE TRAFFIC CALMING AND IMPROVED BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE BROUGHT ON BY THE COMPLETE STREETS LAW THAT THE REST OF THE CITY SEEMS TO BENEFIT FROM A LOT MORE THAN WE DO IN WEST BALTIMORE. I’M HOPING THAT THE NEW CITY COUNCIL WILL SHINE SOME LIGHT ON THE NEEDS OF MY COMMUNITY.”

MICHIRU DANIELS, 19

Recommended Reading:

## A PIVOTAL SENATE RACE COULD MAKE OR BREAK MARYLAND’S QUEST FOR CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

Author: Aman Azhar  
Published: 8/29/24  
Inside Climate News

Maryland’s climate challenges — among them worsening heatwaves, intense storms and flooding, sea level rise and coastal erosion — are adding new risks to residents’ health, property and lives. The way out of these worrying trends, advocates and experts say, is to keep the state on a clean energy and emissions-free track.

Recommended Reading:

## CURTIS BAY RESIDENTS WANT MORE THAN MONEY FROM CSX — THEY WANT CLEAN AIR

Author: Jaisal Noor  
Published: 6/20/24  
Baltimore Beat

Historically marginalized South Baltimore communities like Curtis Bay have been ground zero for industrial pollution. The area is a heavily trafficked trucking route and home to the country’s largest medical waste incinerator that’s repeatedly been fined for violating emission limits.

“PADS AND TAMPONS SHOULD BE FREE. AND SO SHOULD HOUSING. AND FOOD.”

LON'DON ROCK, 18

“BALTIMORE HAS SO MUCH POTENTIAL. EVERYTHING WE NEED IS RIGHT HERE :-D”

MO GREEN, 21