

**DEMOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION IN MARYLAND STATE GOVERNMENT:  
CANDIDATES AND ELECTED OFFICIALS IN 2010**

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**A report by  
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## **Executive Summary**

This report is divided into seven parts describing the demographic background of Maryland candidates and elected officials by party affiliation, gender, race, education, military service, religion and occupation. Each section assesses the demographic representativeness of Maryland candidates and officeholders compared to the population of Maryland.

### **Major Findings:**

- The percentage of women in the General Assembly increased between 2006 and 2010.
- Women make up a small percentage of all primary election candidates but they tend to be successful in elections.
- The percentage of Black candidates in the 2010 primary elections is smaller than the percentage of Blacks in the population. Black politicians tend to enjoy a disproportionate level of success in elections, resulting in Blacks being better represented among officeholders than candidates.
- Democratic officeholders in Maryland are more representative of the state's population in terms of gender and race than Republican officeholders, almost all of whom were white in 2010.
- The House of Delegates is more representative of women and racial minorities than the Senate.
- Candidates with some college education or that hold undergraduate or postgraduate degrees make up approximately 97 percent of the candidate pool.
- Most candidates and elected officials have not served in the military; those who did serve were more likely to belong to the Republican Party.
- Candidates for the Maryland General Assembly had a wide variety of professional backgrounds. Republicans predominantly had careers in the business sector while more Democrats had professions in law and education.

## **Introduction**

The 2010 midterm elections resulted in a Republican wave across the country. The Republican Party took control of 53 percent of all legislative seats nationwide—the most it has held since 1928. Yet, despite wide-spread Republican success, Maryland voters overwhelmingly supported Democratic candidates for state offices, doing so at a higher rate than they did in 2006. Maryland has a unique political identity that reflects its proximity to Washington, DC and contributes to the Democrats' successes. These factors played into its insulation from the Republican wave in 2010.

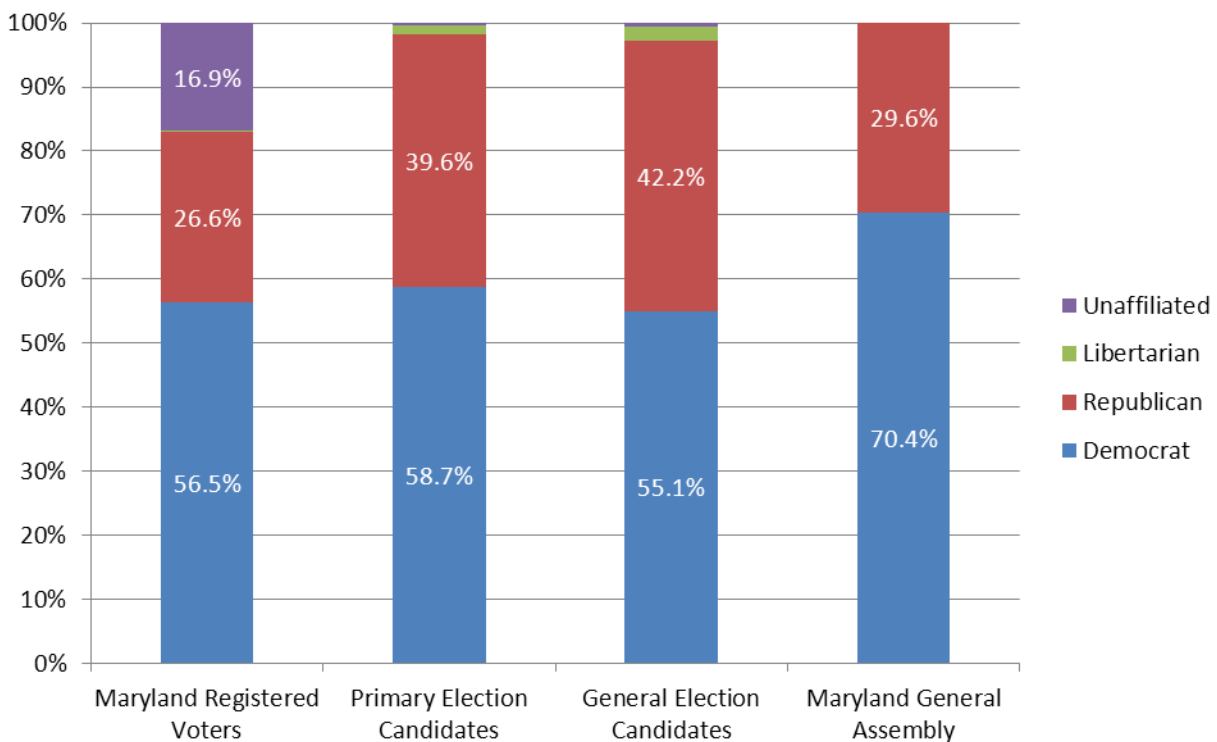
Representation in Maryland is notable in several ways. The Maryland General Assembly is typically among the nation's leaders in its proportion of female representatives, with more than 30 percent of its representatives being women. The Assembly is among the most diverse in the nation, as well, with typically more than 20 percent of seats held by black legislators. This reflects the diversity of the state's population, as well as the historical power of blacks in the state's Democratic Party. The state's population is also among the most educated and affluent in the United States, resulting in a legislature composed largely of white-collar, highly-educated professionals.

This report examines the demographic characteristics of candidates and elected officials in Maryland State government during and after the 2010 election cycle. The study compares the characteristics of candidates and elected officials to the demographics of the Maryland public and breaks down election results by party and office, highlighting the main differences that emerge from the analysis.

## Party Affiliation

In 2010, American voters overwhelmingly chose Republican candidates over Democrats at both the national and state levels. In electing representatives to the House of Delegates and State Senate, Maryland voters bucked the national Republican wave. Maryland has one of the highest percentages of registered Democratic voters in the country. This has implications for the partisanship of those who run for the General Assembly. Fifty-seven percent of Maryland's voters are Democrats, while only 27 percent are Republicans (see Figure 1). Between the primary and general elections, the percentage of Republican candidates rose from 40 percent to 42 percent. However, with the results of the general elections, the percentage of Republicans decreased. Less than 30 percent of all state legislators in Maryland are now Republicans, compared to 23 percent following the 2006 elections.

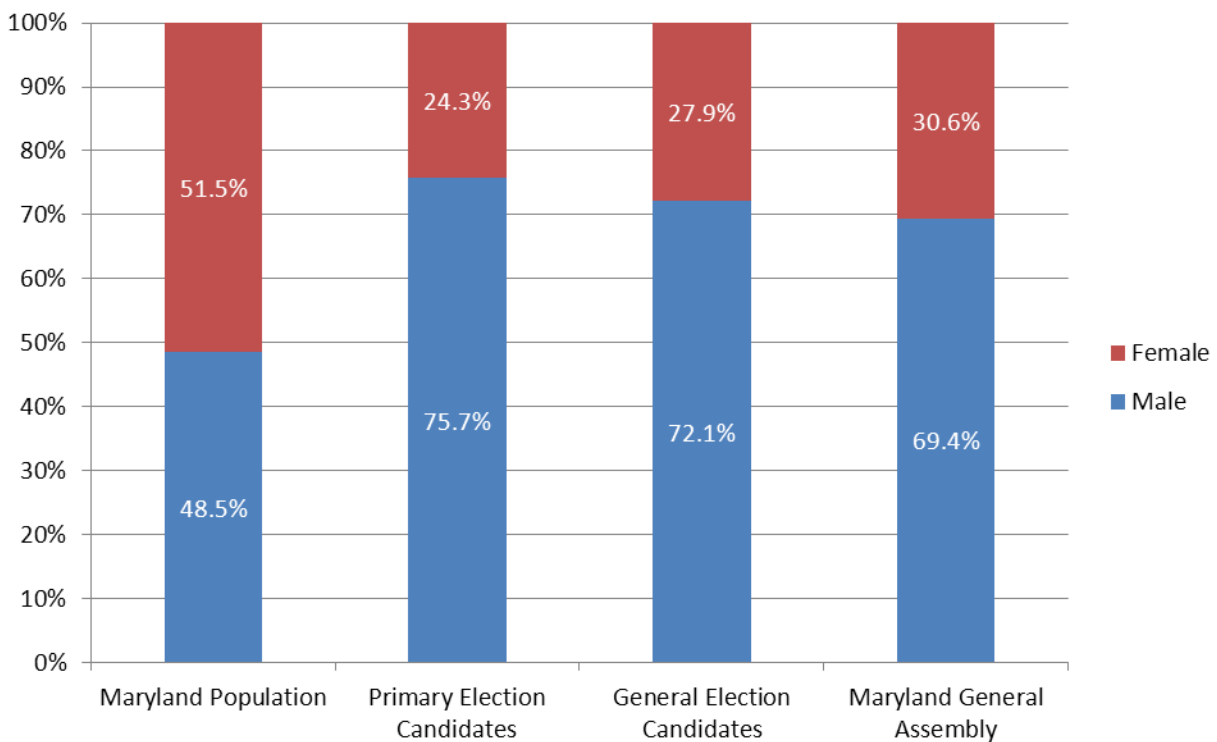
**Figure 1. Party Affiliation of Maryland General Assembly Candidates, Officeholders, and the Public**



## Gender

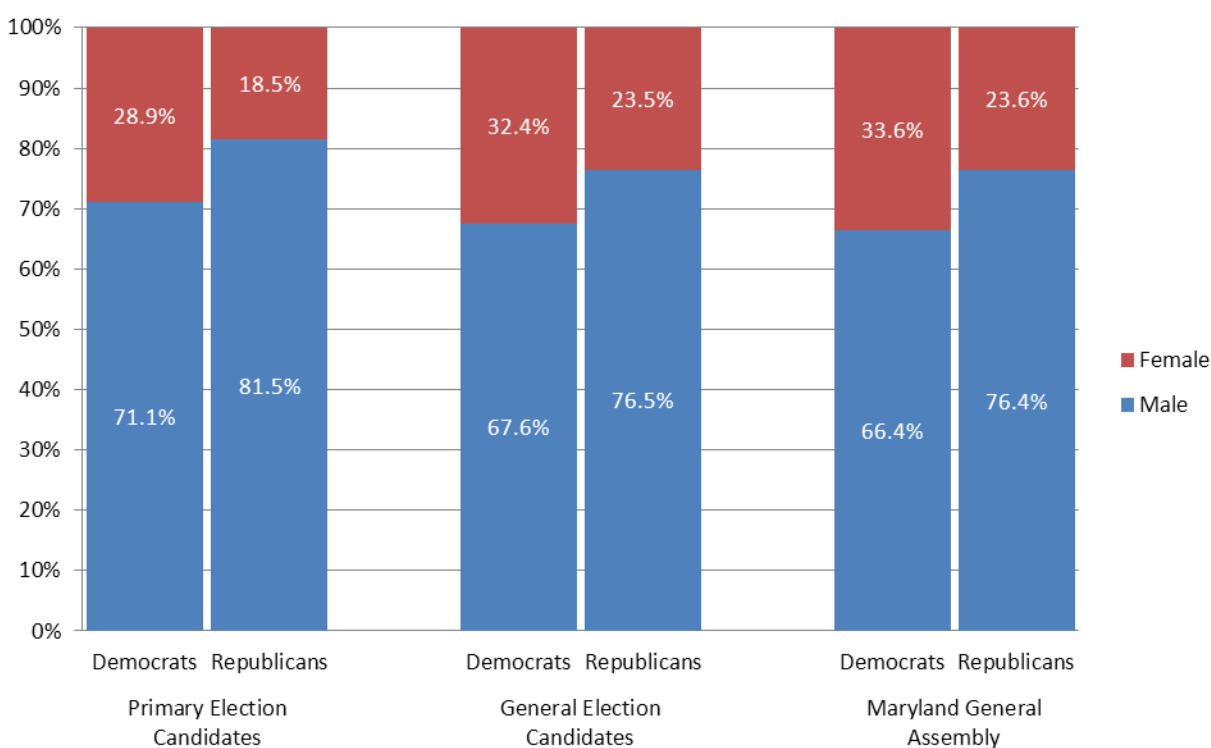
Though making up more than half of the population in the United States, women have historically been, and continue to be, underrepresented in legislatures. As shown in Figure 2, Maryland's population is split almost evenly between men and women, with a slightly higher percentage of women. However, the pool of all candidates for the General Assembly in 2010 was only one-quarter female. Among candidates who won their primary elections and competed in the general election, the percentage of female candidates was only slightly larger. Among those who won election to the General Assembly, women made up approximately 31 percent. This shows that once women enter the political arena, their odds of success are somewhat better than men. Moreover, the 2010 elections resulted in a slight increase in female representation from 2006, when 30 percent of election winners were female.

**Figure 2. Gender of Maryland General Assembly Candidates, Officeholders, and the Public**



There were differences in the gender representativeness of candidates from each party during the 2010 elections. While both parties had a minority of female candidates and election winners, women accounted for a larger percentage of the Democrats' candidates and elected legislators than Republicans' (see Figure 3). Altogether, 29 percent of Democratic candidates were women compared to 19 percent of Republican candidates. Among general election candidates, those proportions raised to 32 percent and 24 percent, respectively. Among those who ultimately won seats in the statehouse, women accounted for roughly one-third of Democrats and under one-quarter of Republicans.

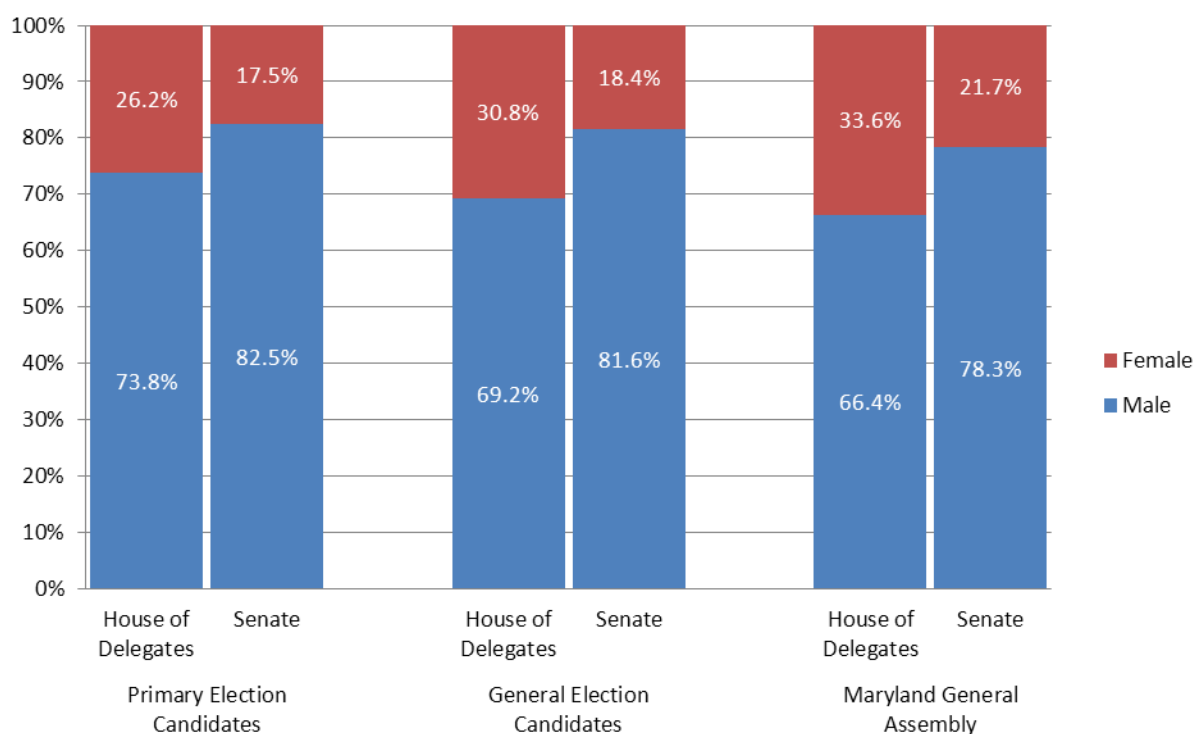
**Figure 3. Gender Representativeness of Maryland General Assembly Candidates and Officeholders, by Party**



Officeholders in the House of Delegates are more representative of Maryland's gender composition than officeholders in the State Senate. With 34 percent female delegates, the House of Delegates has proportionately more female officeholders than the State Senate (see Figure 4).

Though these proportions do not reflect the 52 percent of Maryland's residents who are female, the percentage of female officeholders in Maryland is greater than most other states in the country. Nationwide, only 23 percent of state legislators are women. Following the election, roughly 31 percent of Maryland's General Assemblypersons are female.

**Figure 4. Gender of Candidates and Officeholders in the State House of Delegates and Senate**



## **Race**

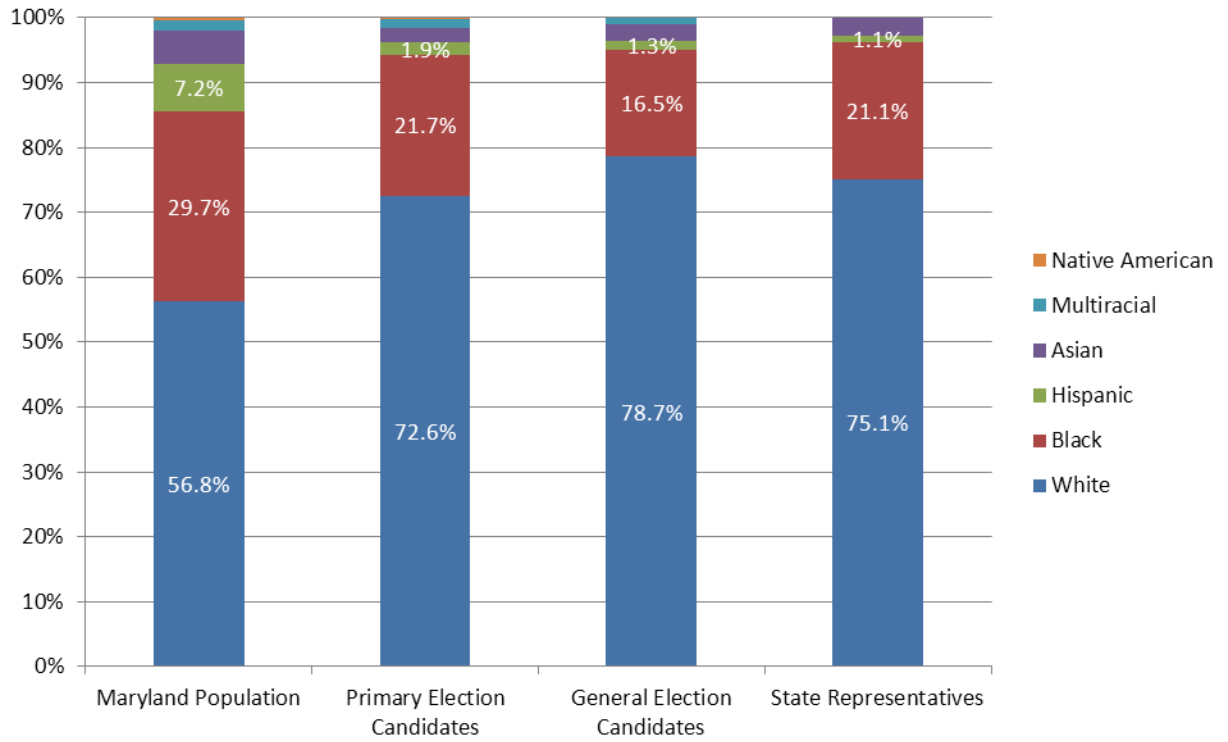
Racial minorities are not proportionally represented in federal and state government in the United States. Within the state of Maryland, a little over half of the population is white, nearly one-third is black, and almost one-tenth is Hispanic. Despite the state's diversity, the vast majority (73 percent) of candidates for the Maryland General Assembly were white (see Figure 5). There were 11 percent more white candidates and 10 percent fewer black candidates in the primary election than in the state's population. As the election cycle progressed, the percentage of black candidates declined from 20 percent in the pool of primary candidates to 15 percent in the pool of general election candidates. After the election, blacks made up about 21 percent of all representatives in the General Assembly. This trend indicates that black candidates have a higher success rate during the general election than during the primary election, but are still proportionally underrepresented in state government.

The Hispanic population of Maryland, now 7 percent, has grown significantly since the 2006 elections, when it made up about 4 percent. Hispanics' representation in Maryland's government, however, has not grown at the same rate. Hispanics account for just 1 percent of all elected officials, roughly the same proportion as in 2006.

Candidates of Asian descent made up 2 percent of primary election candidates, compared to the 5 percent of the state's population. After the election, Asian Americans made up 3 percent of officeholders, indicating an increasing success rate throughout the election cycle.

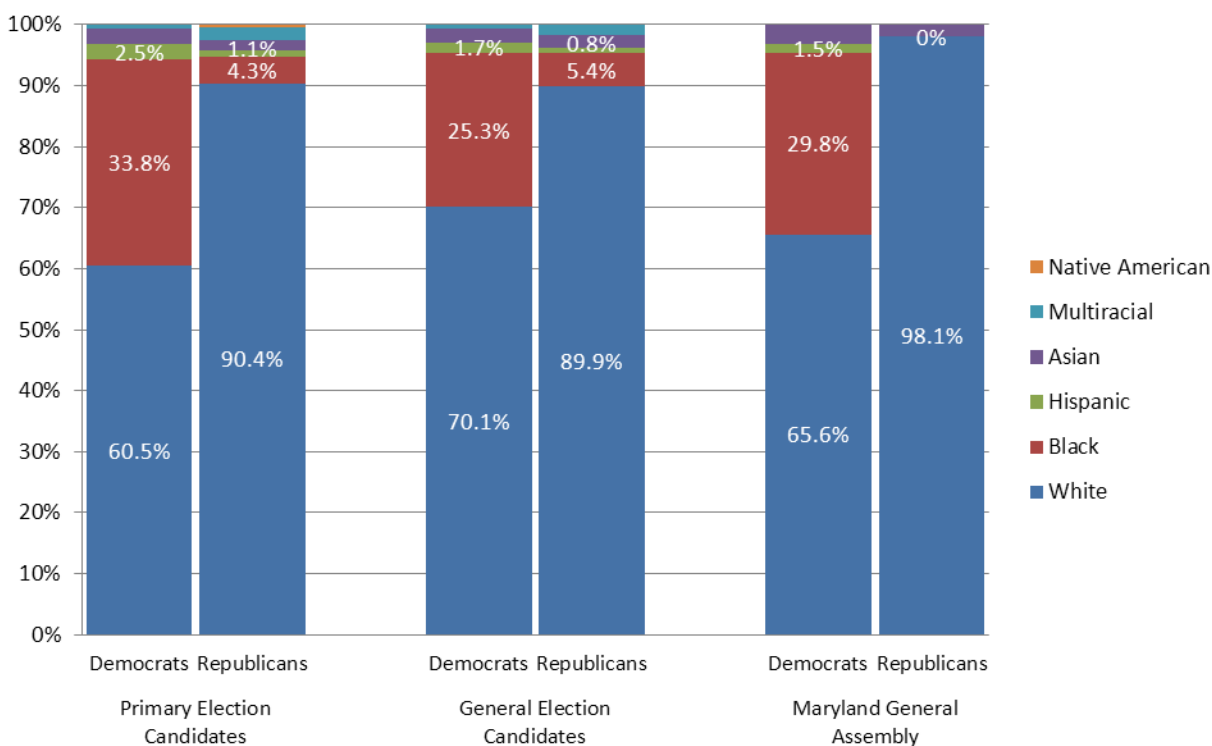
**Figure 5. Race of Maryland General Assembly Candidates, Officeholders, and the Public**





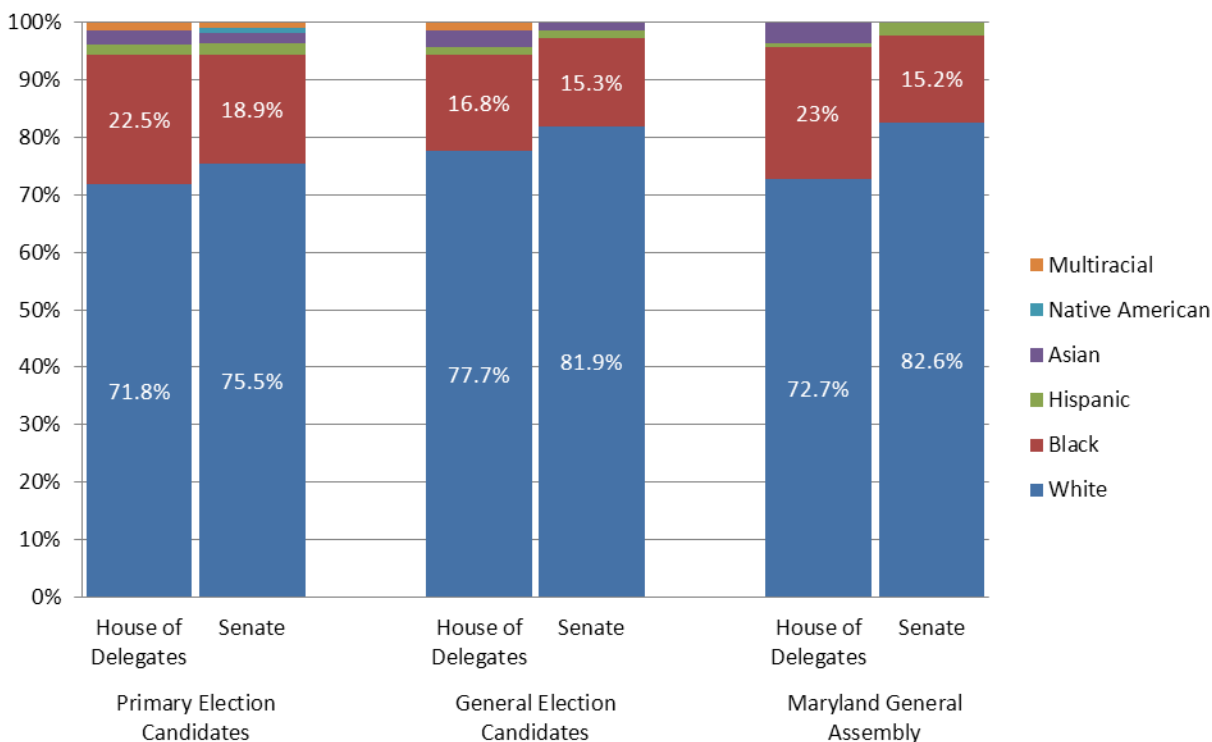
The racial make-up of each party's officeholders demonstrates the differences in diversity between Democrats and Republicans. At all stages of the election cycle, the Democratic Party had a greater percentage of non-white candidates than the Republican Party (see Figure 6). Following the elections, 30 percent of Democratic elected officials in the Maryland legislature are black, which is equal to the percentage of blacks in Maryland's population. In contrast, no Republican officeholders are black or Hispanic: 98 percent are white and 2 percent are Asian.

**Figure 6. Race of Maryland General Assembly Candidates and Officeholders, by Party**



The majority of members of both the House of Delegates and the State Senate are white (see Figure 7). In 2006, both chambers of the Maryland State legislature were composed of approximately 18 percent black officeholders. Following the 2010 elections, the House of Delegates increased its percentage of black officeholders to 23 percent, but the State Senate decreased its percentage of black representatives to 15 percent. While the House of Delegates is 4 percent Asian, the State Senate does not have any Asian officeholders.

**Figure 7: Race of Candidates and Officeholders in the State House of Delegates and Senate**



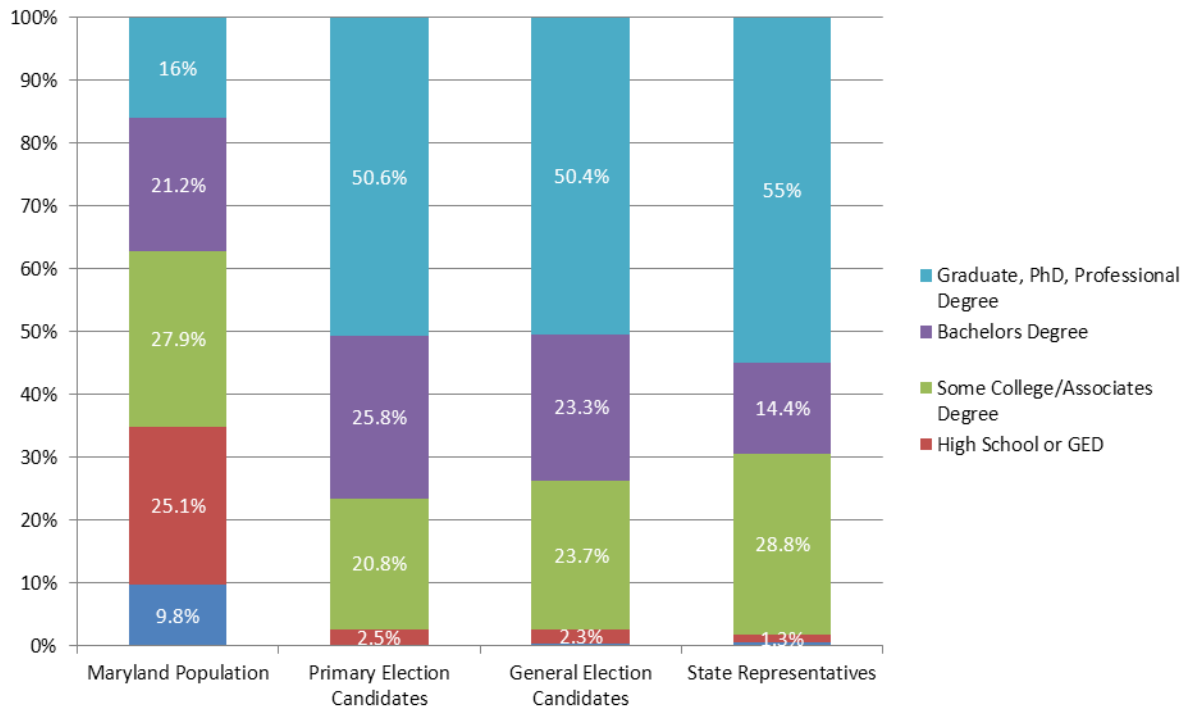
## Education

The state of Maryland has one of the most highly-educated populations in the United States. Only 17 percent of individuals nationwide hold bachelor's degrees, and 9 percent of individuals hold a graduate or professional degree. In contrast, approximately 65 percent of the population in Maryland has, at minimum, taken some college courses, with 21 percent attaining four-year bachelor's degrees and another 16 percent attaining graduate or professional degrees (Master's, PhD, MD, or JD).

An overwhelming majority of candidates for the General Assembly attained at least some college education before running for office. In every stage of the election, candidates with higher levels of education fared better than those with lower levels. Candidates with a graduate or professional degree enjoyed increasing success rates in their races across all elections, with nearly half of all elected officeholders having obtained some advanced degree.

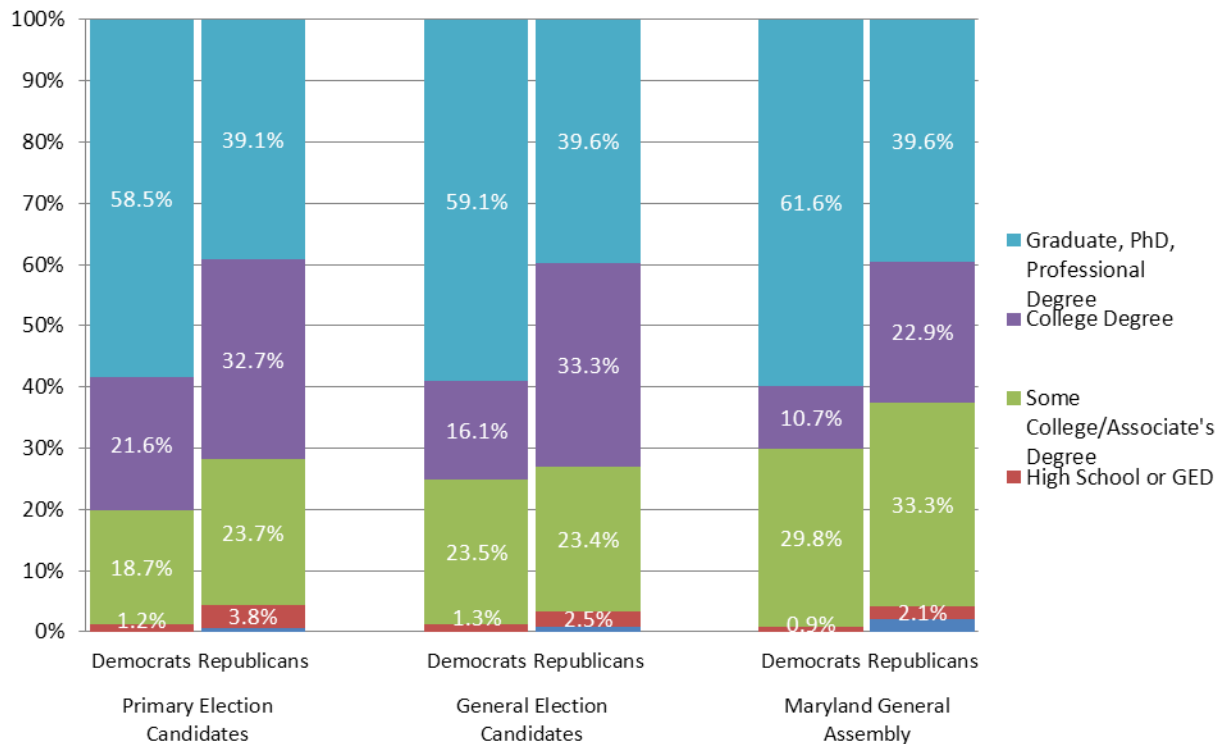
Unsurprisingly, few individuals who had completed a high school degree or less chose to run for office in Maryland. Though about 35 percent of Maryland's population falls into this category, only 1 percent of officeholders did not pursue some form of higher education.

**Figure 8. Education Level of Maryland General Assembly Candidates, Officeholders, and the Public**



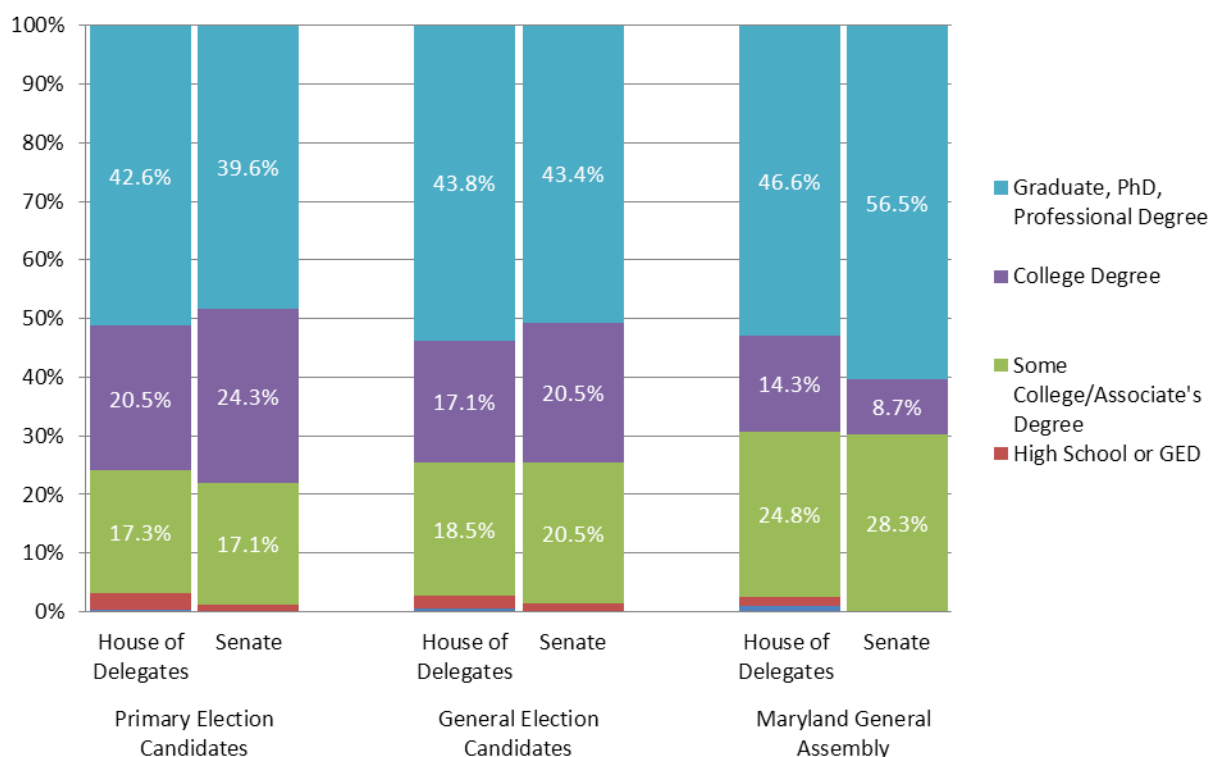
Most candidates for the Maryland State legislature have obtained at least a college degree. The percentage of Democrats who hold graduate degrees is significantly higher than the percentage of Republicans who hold graduate degrees (see Figure 9). By contrast, a larger percentage of Republicans completed some college or obtained an undergraduate degree. The Republican candidates' educational achievement is more consistent with the Maryland population across all education levels, including at the lowest levels (see Figures 8 and 9). Though 4 percent of all Republican candidates only completed high school, virtually no Democratic candidates finished their education at this level.

**Figure 9. Education Level of Maryland General Assembly Candidates and Officeholders, by Party**



In both chambers of the General Assembly, the largest percentage of officeholders held graduate degrees (see Figure 10). Following the 2010 elections, State senators, of whom 61 percent hold graduate degrees, are, on average, slightly more educated than their colleagues in the House of Delegates, of whom 53 percent hold graduate degrees. No State senators stopped their education at the high school level, but 2 percent of Delegates did.

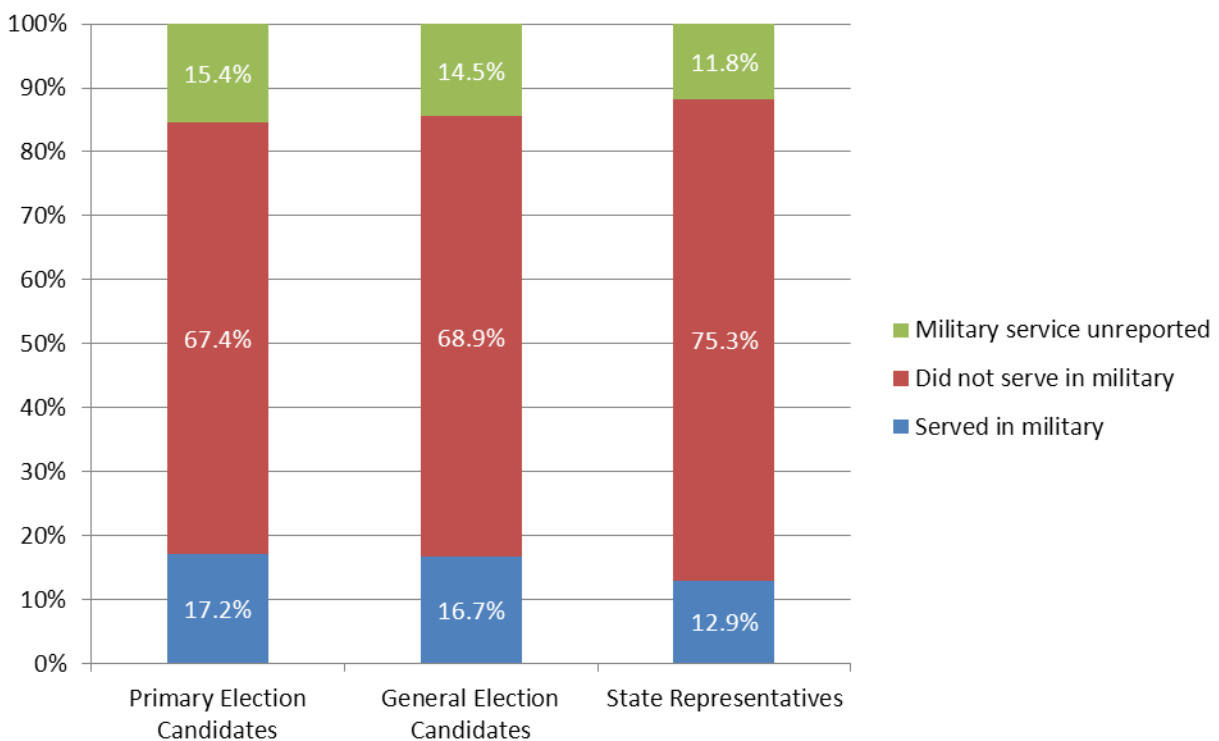
**Figure 10. Education Level of Candidates and Officeholders in the State House of Delegates and Senate**



## Military Service

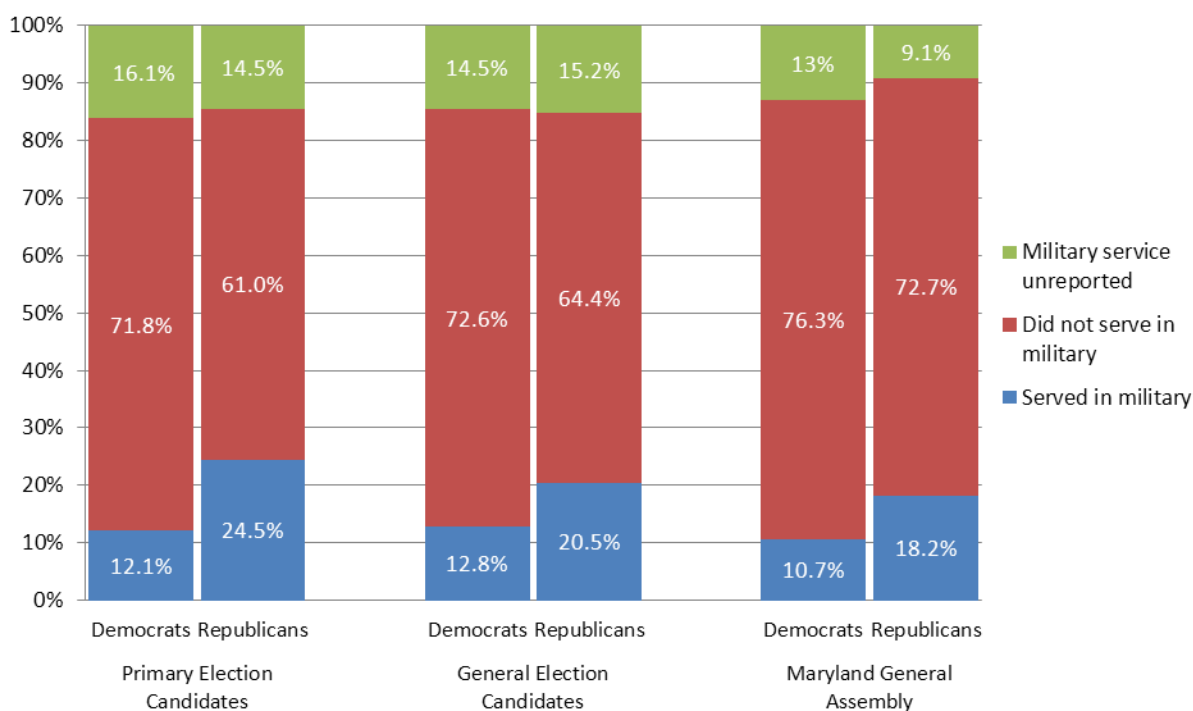
About 17 percent of all candidates for the Maryland General Assembly served in the military, as opposed to the 67 % who reported never serving (see Figure 11). From primary candidates to elected officials, the number of veterans or active military personnel decreased from 17 to 13 percent. Candidates who served in the military, therefore, had decreasing success rates throughout the 2010 election, and were less likely to be elected than candidates who had not served in the military.

**Figure 11. Military Service Among Maryland General Assembly Candidates and Officeholders**



Although relatively few candidates reported military service, most who did were Republicans. Approximately 25 percent of all Republican candidates reported serving in the military, compared to only 12 percent of Democrats (see Figure 12). Republicans elected to office showed that those with a military background were not as successful, even within the Republican Party, as the percentage of candidates with military backgrounds diminished by over 6 percentage points from primary candidates to elected officials.

**Figure 12. Military Service Among Democrat and Republican Candidates and Officeholders**



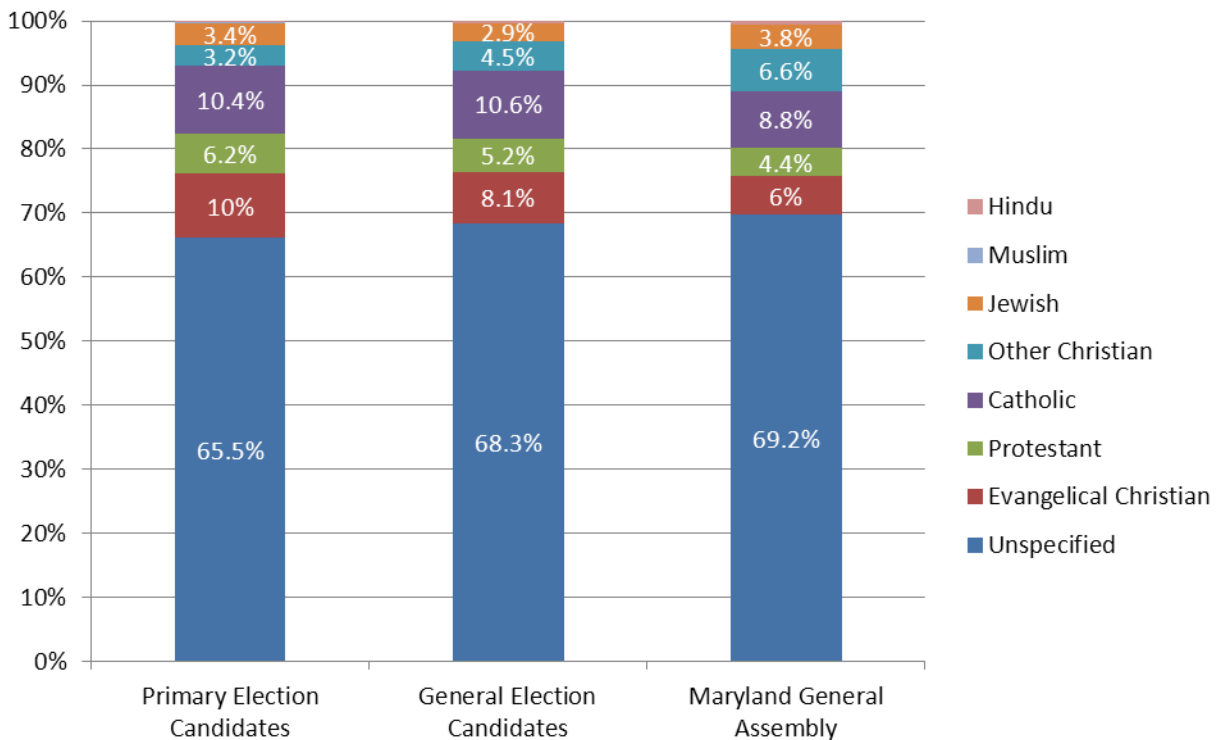


## Religion

Before the primary elections, 66 percent of candidates did not specify any particular religion (see Figure 13). Out of those who did identify their religious affiliation, the majority were Christians—30 percent in total. Evangelical Christians and Catholics each made up approximately 10 percent of candidates, and Protestants and Other Christians together represented 9 percent. Jewish candidates made up about 3 percent of all primary candidates, and small percentages were Hindu or Muslim.

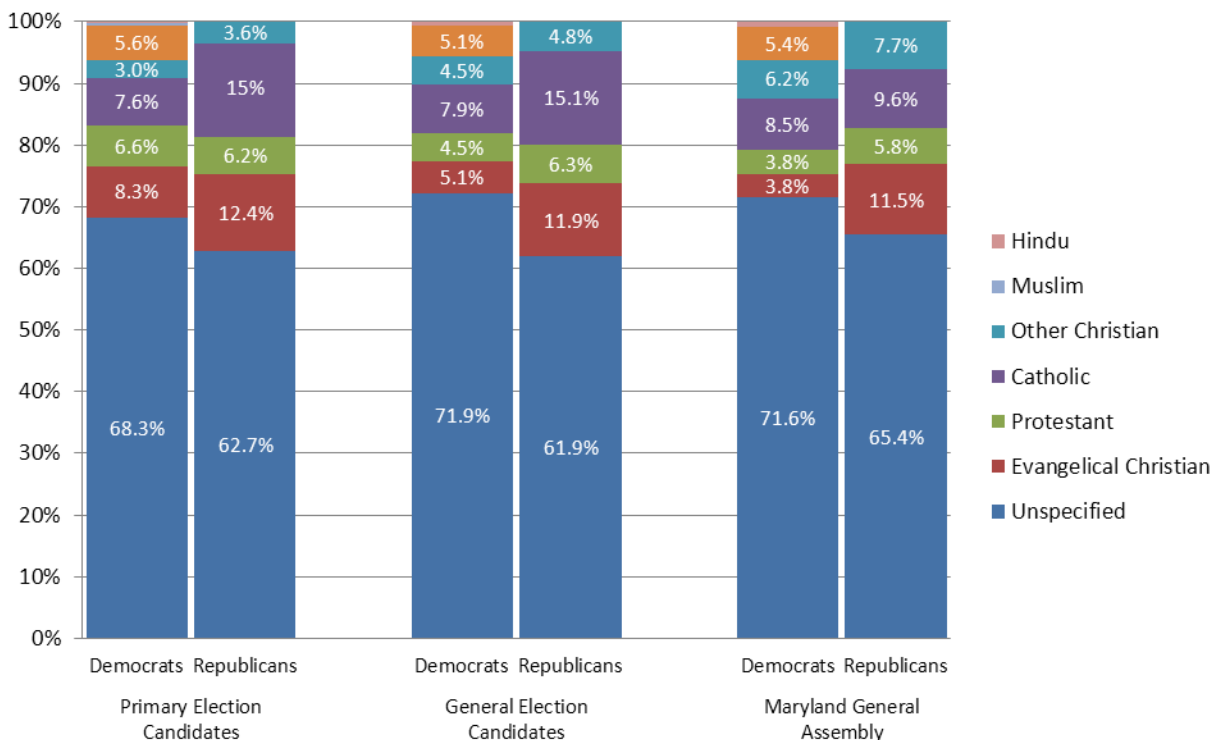
After the general elections, the percentage of candidates who did not specify religion increased to 69 percent. While the amount of Catholics, Protestants and Evangelicals decreased by a few percentage points, the percentage of nondenominational Christians increased by more than 3 percent. The percentage of Jewish candidates increased to 4 percent of state representatives following the general elections. No Hindu or Muslim candidates advanced past the primaries.

**Figure 13. Religion of Maryland General Assembly Candidates and Officeholders**



Democrats were more reluctant to declare any religion, with 72 percent of Democratic assemblypersons not specifying their religious affiliation (see Figure 14). Christians compose 22 percent of Democratic representatives, whereas 35 percent of Republicans are Christian. Jewish representatives make up 5 percent of elected Democrats, however there are no Jewish representatives in the Republican Party.

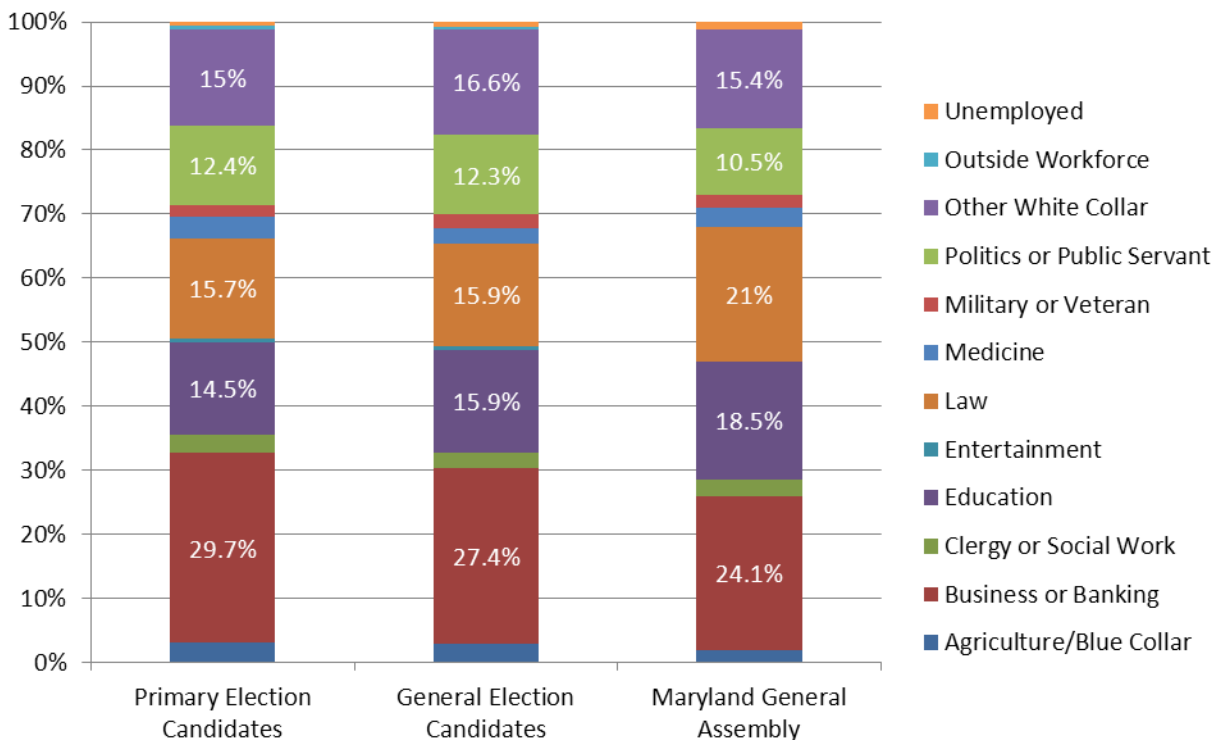
**Figure 14. Religion of Maryland General Assembly Candidates and Officeholders, by Party**



## Occupation

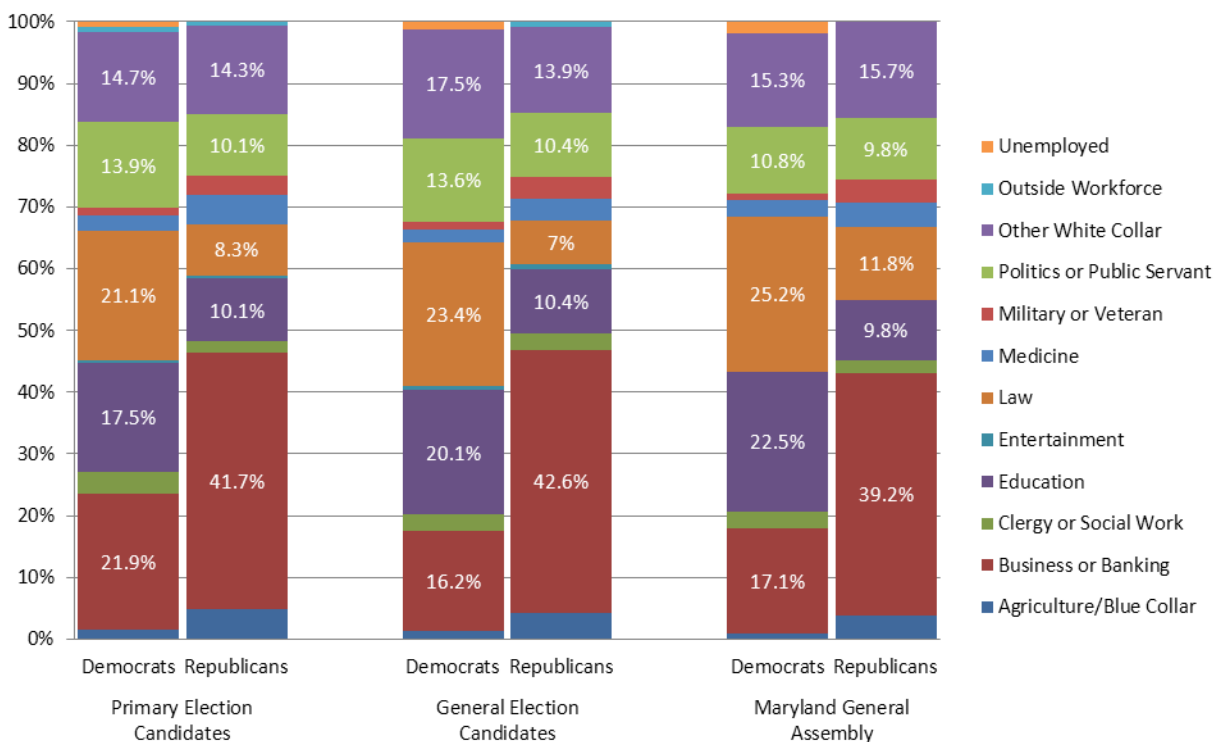
The 2010 candidates for the Maryland General Assembly had a wide array of professional backgrounds. The largest percentage of candidates had careers in business and banking—30 percent before the primary elections and 24 percent of elected candidates (see Figure 15). Other popular occupations included law and education. The proportion of candidates in the legal field remained constant at 16 percent from the primary to the general elections, while the percentage of candidates in education grew slightly from 15 to 16 percent. In the end, 21 percent of elected officials had prior careers in law and 19 percent had careers in education. Candidates with agricultural or blue collar jobs comprised only 3 percent of primary candidates and 2 percent of elected representatives. Candidates with clergy or social work, entertainment, medical or military professions each represented fewer than 3 percent of the total.

**Figure 15. Occupation of Maryland General Assembly Candidates and Officeholders**



There are substantial differences in the career choices of Republican and Democratic candidates. 42 percent of Republicans had prior careers in business, compared to 22 percent of Democrats (see Figure 16). A large percentage of Democrats had jobs in education or law—25 and 23 percent, respectively compared to 8 and 10 percent of Republicans. Those working in the area of public service remained at a relatively constant percentage across parties and different stages in the election process—approximately 10 percent. There are higher percentages of Republicans in blue collar, military and medical professions.

**Figure 16. Occupation of Maryland General Assembly Candidates and Officeholders, by Party**



## **Appendix**

### **The Study**

The data in this study came from several sources. These include the 2010 edition of the Maryland Manual, the Maryland State Board of Elections official candidate and officeholders information file, candidates' and officeholders' website, and a candidate survey conducted by the Center for American Politics and Citizenship.

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### **About the Center for American Politics and Citizenship**

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