



SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

www.siena.edu/sri

For Immediate Release:

Friday, December 12, 2014

Contact:

Steven Greenberg, 518-469-9858

PDF version; crosstabs; website:

www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY

This Poll Must Be Cited As: The New York Times/Siena College Poll

Two-Thirds of NYC Adults:

**People of Color Treated Unfairly by Criminal Justice System;
SI Grand Jury Should Have Brought Charges Against Cop;
Feds Should Charge Cop with Violating Garner's Civil Rights**

*By 52-32 Percent, NYers Approve de Blasio's Handling His Job as Mayor
Blacks, Whites, Latinos Have Similar – Declining – Views on the State of
NYC Race Relations; Views Differ Sharply on Garner Situation & de Blasio*

Loudonville, NY. Nearly two-thirds of New York City adults believe that the Staten Island grand jury should have brought criminal charges against the police officer for the death of Eric Garner in July (65-20 percent); that the Federal government should charge the officer in Federal court with violating Garner's civil rights (64-24 percent); and that people of color are not treated fairly by New York City's criminal justice system (64-26 percent), although there are big differences between how black and Latino New Yorkers feel compared to how white New Yorkers feel. As he closes out his first year as mayor, a majority approves of the job Bill de Blasio is doing, according to The New York Times/Siena College poll of New York City residents released today.

New Yorkers are nearly evenly divided on whether they think race relations in the City are generally good or bad, down considerably from a year ago when by a two-to-one margin – including strong majorities of blacks, whites and Latinos – New Yorkers said race relations in the City were generally good. Police Commissioner Bill Bratton gets a divided 43-40 percent approval rating, and only 44 percent say New York City police are doing an excellent or good job, compared to 55 percent who say they are doing a fair or poor job.

“While 50 percent of white New Yorkers feel the grand jury should have indicted the officer in the Garner case, 73 percent of Latino and 85 percent of black adults feel that way. Similarly, 86 percent of black and 76 percent of Latino New Yorkers feel the feds should bring civil rights charges against the officer, while white adults are evenly divided, 42-42 percent,” said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. “A similar racial divide exists on whether people of color are treated fairly or not by the City's criminal justice system, with 83 of blacks, 71 percent of Latinos and 45 percent of whites saying people of color are not treated fairly.”

“In addition to the racial divide on these questions, there is also a strong partisan divide. More than two-thirds of Democrats say the grand jury should have indicted, federal charges should be brought and people of color are treated unfairly in the criminal justice system. However, among Republicans – 10 percent of New Yorkers – only 47 percent say the grand jury should have indicted, a majority say the feds should not bring charges, and a majority say that people of color are treated fairly in the City’s criminal justice system,” Greenberg said.

“Independents are much closer to Democrats on these issues than they are to the Republicans.

“Narrowly, 48-45 percent, New Yorkers say race relations in the City are generally bad, down dramatically from a year ago when, by a 63-30 percent margin, New Yorkers said race relations were good,” Greenberg said.

“Interestingly, the racial divide is much smaller on this question, with 51 percent of blacks, 49 percent of Latinos and 47 percent of whites saying race relations are bad, up from 33, 35 and 25 percent, respectively, last year.”

Majority Approves de Blasio’s Job Performance; Generally Good Marks in Other Areas As Well

By a 52-32 percent margin, New Yorkers approve of the way de Blasio is handling his job as mayor, virtually unchanged from 49-31 percent in April. New Yorkers have confidence in de Blasio’s ability to deal with a serious crisis by a 63-34 percent margin. By a similar 64-30 percent margin, they are confident in his ability to hire effective, competent people in his administration.

New Yorkers are closely divided, 48-47 percent, on whether de Blasio is focused on issues important to them, down from 58-37 percent in April. However, they continue to believe he cares about their problems 64-33 percent, down a little from 70-27 percent in April. And by a 54-37 percent margin New Yorkers say de Blasio has strong leadership qualities.

“Generally, New Yorkers give their one-year mayor positive grades. Democrats approve of de Blasio’s job performance two-to-one, a majority of independents approve and overwhelming majorities of blacks and Latinos approve. A plurality of whites and a strong majority of Republicans disapprove of his performance to date,” Greenberg said. “He is viewed best in the Bronx, 65-26 percent, and worst in Staten Island, negative 31-61 percent, with majority approval in the other three boroughs.

“New Yorkers are confident in de Blasio’s ability lead, to bring good people into City government and to deal with a serious crisis. They continue to say he cares about their needs and problems, however, they are less certain than they were earlier this year that de Blasio is focused on the issues important to them,” Greenberg said. “When it comes to the mayor’s reputation for lateness, 56 percent say it’s rude, while 34 percent think it’s unimportant.”

Bratton, NYPD Not Riding High in New Yorkers' Estimation

“Bratton, with an overall 43-40 percent job approval rating, gets high marks from whites and Republicans. He breaks even with Democrats and independents. And he gets a thumbs down from a plurality of Latinos and a majority of black New Yorkers,” Greenberg said. “In the wake of the Garner case and other high profile cases, New York’s Finest are not viewed so fine by New Yorkers. Only 12 percent say the NYPD is doing an excellent job, compared to 26 percent who say they’re doing a poor job.

“While two-thirds of whites say the police are doing an excellent or good job, two-thirds of Latinos and three-quarters of blacks say the police are doing only a fair or poor job,” Greenberg said. “The NYPD gets a positive grade from a little more than one-third of New Yorkers under the age of 45, however, 54 percent of those 45 and older give the police a positive job performance rating.

“How do cops get treated by the City’s criminal justice system when they cause injury or death in the course of their jobs? A clear majority of New Yorkers, 53 percent, currently say they get treated too leniently, compared to 27 percent who say they are treated fairly and 12 percent who say they are treated too harshly,” Greenberg said. “A plurality of Republicans and whites feel they are treated fairly, while strong majorities of Democrats, blacks and Latinos say cops are treated too leniently by the criminal justice system.”

Majority Say City is Headed on the Wrong Track

“By a 52-41 percent margin, New Yorkers say the City is on the wrong track, rather than headed in the right direction. This is a flip from April when they said, by a 51-42 percent margin, the City was headed in the right direction,” Greenberg said. “The falloff was with voters of every party. Republicans were already the most pessimistic about the City’s direction and they fell the most, with now only nine percent saying the City is going in the right direction. Blacks and Latinos had been optimistic in April, however, they are now nearly as pessimistic as whites, who had previously thought the City was on the wrong track by a small margin.”

###

This New York Times/Siena College Poll was conducted December 4-10, 2014 by telephone calls in both English and Spanish to 760 New York City residents of whom 621 are registered voters. It has a margin of error of ± 3.6 percentage points for residents and ± 3.9 for registered voters. Data was statistically adjusted to correct for unequal probability of selection by household size, residence in Staten Island, and the overlap of land and cell phones and by age, education, borough, race/ethnicity and gender to ensure representativeness. Sampling was conducted via random digit dialing to landline and cell phones weighted to reflect known population patterns. An oversampling of residents of Staten Island was added so as to enhance the representativeness of respondents from that borough. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in New York State. SRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For more information, call Steve Greenberg at [\(518\) 469-9858](tel:5184699858). For survey cross-tabs and frequencies: www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY.



SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

www.siena.edu/sri

Siena College New York City Poll Trends – December 2014

Q. 1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill de Blasio is handling his job as Mayor?

DATE	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2014	52	32	15
April 2014	49	31	19

Q. 2 Do you feel things in New York City are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?

DATE	RIGHT DIRECTION	WRONG TRACK	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2014	41	52	7
April 2014	51	42	6
December 2013	50	42	8

Q. 6 Do you think race relations in New York City today are generally good, or generally bad?

DATE	GENERALLY GOOD	GENERALLY BAD	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2014	45	48	7
December 2013	63	30	7

Q. 9 So far, would you say that Bill de Blasio has been focusing on issues that are important to you or not?

DATE	FOCUSING	NOT FOCUSING	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2014	48	47	5
April 2014	58	37	6

Q. 10 How much do you think Bill de Blasio cares about the needs and problems of people like yourself?

DATE	A LOT	SOME	NOT MUCH	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2014	28	36	21	12	3
April 2014	30	40	18	9	4