



SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

www.siena.edu/sri

For Immediate Release:

Friday, December 13, 2013

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

Optimistic New Yorkers Expect de Blasio to Have Positive Effect on City's Needs & Bring Real Change

Strong Support for Appointment of Bratton as Police Commissioner

Large Majority of all Ethnic Groups Believe Race Relations in City are Generally Good but 30 Percent Say They Still Suffer Discrimination

Loudonville, NY. As New York City prepares to inaugurate Bill de Blasio as Mayor, 73 percent of New York City residents are generally optimistic about the next four years under his administration according to The New York Times/Siena College Poll of New York City residents released today. Sixty-five percent of the City thinks de Blasio will bring about real change in the way things are done in New York. Majorities expect he will have a positive effect on the quality of schools, the job done by the police to keep New Yorkers safe and the condition of parks and other recreational facilities while large pluralities anticipate he will have a positive impact on affordable housing, employment prospects and the quality of public transportation.

Sixty-one percent of all New Yorkers, including more than three-quarters of Republicans and more than two-thirds of Democrats, support de Blasio's recent decision to appoint former Police Commissioner Bill Bratton to hold that position again. Bratton assumes control of the NYPD viewed favorably by more than four times as many New Yorkers as view him unfavorably (32 to 7 percent).

Sixty-three percent of New Yorkers think that race relations in the City today are generally good while less than a third, 30 percent, think they are generally bad. Two-thirds of white residents think race relations are good and that view is shared by nearly as high a percentage of black residents (59 percent), Hispanic residents (61 percent) and by a greater percentage of Asian residents (72 percent). However, 30 percent of all residents and 35 percent of both blacks and Hispanics report that they had an occasion in the last few months when they felt they were treated unfairly because of their race, ethnicity or some other personal characteristic.

"Expectations are high for the Mayor-elect. Between 47 and 61 percent of New Yorkers expect him to have a positive effect on issues such as schools and the subways, to parks and housing, while only between seven and 15 percent think he'll have a negative effect addressing those issues," said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg.

De Blasio takes the oath of office with 35 percent of all New Yorkers and 41 percent of registered voters viewing him favorably while 13 percent of residents and 15 percent of voters view him unfavorably. Half of residents, and 43 percent of voters, say that they haven't yet heard (or seen) enough of Bill de Blasio to have an opinion.

“Despite the optimism and high hopes for de Blasio as well as his police commissioner, many New Yorkers want to take a wait and see attitude before they go all in on the incoming administration,” Greenberg said. “More than forty percent have only some, if not ‘no’, confidence in de Blasio’s ability to make the right decisions for the City’s future or in his ability to effectively manage the government.

“While the Bratton decision has widespread support – across partisan, borough and racial groups – many challenges, including crime and security issues, and far more, await the new Mayor,” Greenberg said.

New Yorkers are closely divided on what should be de Blasio’s top priority as Mayor. Improving public education is number one, as the choice of 23 percent of residents, but it finishes a distant fourth among Republicans while first among Democrats. Keeping the city safe from crime, the top priority among Republicans, is second at 20 percent tied with promoting economic development, and followed closely by dealing with the gap between the city’s rich and poor (18 percent). Addressing the housing needs of New Yorkers is cited by 13 percent of all residents and by 18 percent of those earning less than \$50,000 annually.

“The new Mayor no doubt hopes to be more Santa than Scrooge but this wish list is pretty long,” Greenberg said. “A majority of New Yorkers feel that Mayor Bloomberg’s policies favored the rich. As de Blasio takes office a plurality expect his administration will treat all groups equally, few think he will favor the rich and about twenty percent each think he will fill the stockings of the middle class or the poor. Still, despite this change in focus, more than half of New Yorkers think the gap between the rich and poor will stay about the same.”

Seventy-two percent of New Yorkers support raising taxes on New York City residents who make more than \$500,000 per year in order to fund citywide pre-kindergarten. But, when asked whether they would be willing or not willing to pay higher taxes to fund the pre-kindergarten initiative, 49 percent say they would but 48 percent would not.

“As de Blasio takes office only 11 percent expect their taxes to go down with him as Mayor and more than a third anticipate an increase,” Greenberg said. “While nearly three-quarters support raising taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers to fund pre-K – support for taxing the other person is always strong – about half say they are willing to pay higher taxes themselves to help fund pre-K, at least partially debunking the clichéd question, ‘Does anyone really want to pay more taxes?’ The real question becomes can he deliver on that campaign promise?”

Chirlane McCray: New York City's New First Lady

“Few New Yorkers know enough about Bill de Blasio’s wife, Chirlane McCray, in order to have an opinion of her as the couple appears ready to move into Gracie Mansion. Nine percent view her favorably while only five percent have an unfavorable opinion of McCray. The vast majority, 85 percent, simply have not yet gotten to know her,” Greenberg said. “Still, 50 percent say that they support McCray taking an active role in policy making in the de Blasio administration while 38 percent prefer that she assume a more ceremonial role. Blacks, Hispanics, women, and Democrats support McCray having an active role in the administration while Republicans support her having a more ceremonial role.”

New Yorkers are evenly split, 47 to 47 percent, as to whether New York’s first bi-racial couple occupying the role of Mayor and First Lady of New York will help transform race relations in the City, or while having a bi-racial first couple may be historic, it won’t have any meaningful impact on race relations in the City.

Grading Mayor Bloomberg as his Administration Ends

“Mayor Michael Bloomberg is poised to leave office with a majority, 53 percent, of New Yorkers approving of the way he has handled his job as Mayor. A majority of Republicans, Democrats and independents approve of Bloomberg’s job performance as he completes his 12 years as the City’s leader. Bloomberg leaves office with 50 percent of the city’s residents saying that New York is going in the right direction but 42 percent saying the City is on the wrong track,” Greenberg said.

Thirty-eight percent rank Bloomberg as better than average including 13 percent that say he was ‘the best’ when compared to all the New York City Mayors, living or dead. A plurality, 40 percent, say that Bloomberg was an ‘average’ Mayor, and 20 percent give the Mayor below average grades (11 percent below average, nine percent ‘the worst’).

“Bloomberg leaves office with a majority rating the condition of parks and the job done by police to keep citizens safe as either good or excellent but affordability, employment prospects, and schools receive failing grades. De Blasio steps in, greeted with optimism and high expectations but also by a public that is looking for results and solutions. It will likely take both for Mayor de Blasio to turn high hopes into high grades,” Greenberg said.

###

This New York Times/Siena College Poll was conducted December 7-11, 2013 by telephone calls in both English and Spanish to 1,016 New York City residents of whom 795 are registered voters. It has a margin of error of ± 3.1 percentage points for residents and ± 3.5 for registered voters. Data was statistically adjusted to correct for unequal probability of selection by household size 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. 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.