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PDF version; crosstabs; website:

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Siena College Poll:

Cuomo Still Leads Astorino by 35 Points as Ratings Slip

While Strongly Seen As Effective Governor, Under Cuomo Voters Don't See Improved State Government, Business Climate, Economy, Education Quality

Voters: Strong Support for SAFE Act a Year After Passage; Support for State Funding College for Inmates; Opposition to NY Dream Act

Loudonville, NY. Governor Andrew Cuomo leads Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino, the only declared Republican candidate for governor, 61-26 percent (down from 64-22 percent last month). There was slippage as well in Cuomo's job performance and generic re-election ratings, according to a Siena College Poll of New York voters released today. By a 64-28 percent margin, voters say Cuomo has been an effective governor. However, on seven of a series of eight issues, only between 15 and 26 percent of voters said that issue has improved since Cuomo's been governor, while between 24 and 45 percent of voters said it has gotten worse.

A year after its enactment, New Yorkers support the SAFE Act by a two-to-one margin. Voters also support the governor's proposal to have the state fund college classes for inmates by a 53-43 percent margin. A majority oppose the New York Dream Act 56-39 percent (up from 53-44 percent in January 2013).

"This Siena College poll provides both good news and bad news for both Cuomo and Astorino. For the governor, the good news is that he maintains a strong 35-point lead over his likely challenger, he continues to have a strong favorability rating and almost two-thirds of voters think he's been an effective governor," said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. "The bad news for him is that his job performance rating is the lowest it's been since November, and for the first time, only a plurality – not a majority – of voters are prepared to re-elect him."

Cuomo's favorability rating is 58-34 percent (60-35 percent last month) and his job performance rating fell from 48-51 percent last month to 46-54 percent today. By a 49-41 percent margin voters say they are prepared to re-elect Cuomo compared to preferring someone else (down from 54-37 percent last month). Astorino has a 17-19 percent favorability rating, with 65 percent having no opinion (from 11-15-73 percent last month).

"For Astorino the good news is that a plurality of voters – 47-43 percent – voters thinks a Republican can beat Cuomo in this election, and the bad news is that he remains unknown to two-thirds of voters and among those who know him slightly more view him unfavorably than favorably," Greenberg said.

“Although by a better than two-to-one margin voters say Cuomo has been an effective governor, on only one out of eight issues are more New Yorkers prepared to say things have improved rather than have gotten worse. On six of the eight, a majority or plurality says things have remained about the same, however, on two of the quality of public education and the economic well-being of most New Yorkers a plurality says things have gotten worse,” Greenberg said.

How Have Things Changed Since Andrew Cuomo Has Been Governor?			
Issue	Improved	Stayed the Same	Gotten Worse
Ensuring equal rights for New Yorkers	37%	45%	15%
New York's business climate	26%	37%	31%
Lessening corruption in state government	23%	43%	28%
State government effectiveness	21%	50%	24%
Economic well-being of you and your family	19%	52%	28%
Quality of public education	15%	38%	41%
Economic well-being of most New Yorkers	15%	38%	45%
Fairness of the state's tax policy, not local govt. tax policy	12%	51%	30%
Siena College Poll, March 24, 2014			

“To paraphrase Ronald Reagan, do New Yorkers think they are better off economically now than they were four years ago? Only 19 percent say they are, and they support Cuomo over Astorino 82-12 percent. Among the majority, 52 percent, who say they are the same economically, they favor Cuomo 66-23 percent. And the 28 percent who say they are worse off economically today? They only side with Astorino by a narrow 41-38 percent margin,” Greenberg said.

One Year Later, SAFE Act Continues to Be Strongly Supported by New York Voters

Sixty-three percent of voters support the SAFE Act, compared to 32 percent who oppose it. One year ago, in March 2013, voters supported the then new gun law by a 61-35 percent margin.

“While overall, New Yorkers support the SAFE Act by a two-to-one margin, there are some stark differences based on partisanship and geography. Three-quarters of Democrats and a majority of independents support the law, while a majority of Republicans oppose it. The law is supported by more than three-quarters of New York City voters and almost two-thirds of downstate suburban voters, while a slim majority of upstaters oppose it,” Greenberg said. “While a majority of men and white voters support the gun law, even stronger majorities of women, black and Latino voters support it.”

Cuomo’s Push for College Classes for Inmates Has Majority Support

“There is a very strong partisan and geographic split on the governor’s proposal to fund college classes for prison inmates. Two-thirds of Democrats support it, while two-thirds of Republicans oppose it, and independents are divided down the middle. More than 70 percent of New York City voters support it, as do a majority of downstate suburbanites, however, two-thirds of upstaters oppose the idea,” Greenberg said.

“A majority of white voters oppose funding college classes for inmates but it enjoys support from three-quarters of Latino voters and more than 80 percent of black voters, as well as two-thirds of Jewish voters,” Greenberg said. “Younger voters strongly support it, while older voters are evenly divided.”

New York Dream Act Opposed by Strong Majority

Although a majority of Democrats supports the Dream Act in New York, a stronger majority of independents opposes it, as do more than 80 percent of Republicans. Similarly, a small majority of New York City voters supports it, a larger majority of downstate suburban voters opposes it and more than two-thirds of upstaters oppose it. A majority of Latino and black voters supports the Dream Act, while white voters oppose it two-to-one, Greenberg said. And although it passed the Assembly and narrowly failed in the Senate, support for the Dream Act is actually down from last year when opposition was only nine points higher than support. Now opposition is 17 points higher than support.

Voters Don't View Legislature Favorably but They Like Their Legislators

The Assembly has a negative 39-46 percent favorability rating (up slightly from 37-49 percent last month). Voters view their own assemblymember favorably 52-23 percent (virtually unchanged from 52-24 percent in May 2013). The Senate's favorability rating is negative 39-49 percent (up slightly from 37-51 percent last month), while voters favorably view their own senator 59-26 percent (virtually unchanged from 59-28 percent in May 2013).

Voters don't like the Legislature but they do like their own legislators. And while there is a clear difference in the partisan leadership of each house, that difference does not materialize in the way each house is viewed. Democrats have a slightly favorable view of both the Senate and the Assembly, while Republicans and independents have a decidedly more unfavorable view of both houses, Greenberg said. By a narrow 41-36 percent margin, voters say they are prepared to re-elect their assemblymember and by a wider 48-36 percent margin they say they are prepared to re-elect their senator.

Voters See State on the Right Track – Barely; See Country More Strongly Headed in Wrong Direction

By a 46-43 percent margin, voters say New York is on the right track, compared to headed in the wrong direction (down from 48-40 percent last month). The United States is headed in the wrong direction 57-36 percent (up from 55-39 percent last month).

A majority of Democrats and City voters, as well as a plurality of downstate suburban voters say the state is on the right track. However, a majority of Republicans and upstaters and a plurality of independents don't like the direction the state is headed in, Greenberg said. When it comes to the direction of the country, a bare majority of Democrats say it's headed on the right track, while a majority of independents and more than 80 percent of Republicans say the country is headed in the wrong direction.

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This Siena College Poll was conducted March 16-20, 2014 by telephone calls to 813 New York State registered voters. It has an overall margin of error of ± 3.4 percentage points. Data was statistically adjusted by age, party, region 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. For survey cross-tabs: www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY.



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Siena College Poll Trends – March 2014

Q. 4 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Andrew Cuomo?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	58	34	7
February 2014	60	35	5
January 2014	66	28	6
November 2013	61	32	6
October 2013	62	32	6
September 2013	64	32	4
August 2013	65	30	5
HIGHEST EVER	77 (2/11)	42 (10/06)	24 (1/06, 2/06, 9/07)
LOWEST EVER	44 (8/06, 10/06)	14 (8/09)	3 (10/20/10)

Q. 17 How would you rate the job that Andrew Cuomo is doing as Governor? Would you rate it excellent, good, fair, or poor?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	7	39	35	19	1
February 2014	7	41	38	13	1
January 2014	10	44	35	11	1
November 2013	7	37	39	17	1
October 2013	8	44	34	13	1
September 2013	11	38	36	14	1
August 2013	9	43	33	13	2
HIGHEST EVER	17 (1/12)	47 (4/12, etc.)	39 (11/13)	19 (3/14)	28 (1/11)
LOWEST EVER	7 (Several)	34 (1/11)	24 (1/11)	4 (2/11, 1/11)	1 (many)

Q. 14 I know it's a ways off, but as things stand now, if Andrew Cuomo runs for re-election as Governor this year, would you vote to re-elect him or would you prefer someone else? ^

DATE	RE-ELECT CUOMO	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	49	41	10
February 2014	54	37	9
January 2014	57	33	10
November 2013	51	41	9
October 2013	52	38	10
September 2013	52	39	10
August 2013	55	35	9
HIGHEST EVER	62 (12/12)	41 (3/14, 11/13, 6/13)	10 (3/14, 10/13, 9/13)
LOWEST EVER	49 (3/14)	29 (12/12)	7 (6/13, 4/13)

Q. 18 Overall, would you say that in his first three plus years, Andrew Cuomo has been an effective governor, or has not been an effective governor? ^

DATE	HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE	HAS NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE	MIXED/ DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	64	28	8
April 2013	68	25	8
HIGHEST EVER	68 (4/13)	28 (3/14)	8 (3/14, 4/13)
LOWEST EVER	64 (3/14)	25 (4/13)	8 (3/14, 4/13)

Q. 27 In light of what you've heard or read about actions taken by Governor Cuomo recently, overall, which of the following two statements comes closest to your view: the Governor makes decisions based on what he thinks is best for New Yorkers, or the Governor makes decisions based on what he thinks is best for his political future? (Choices were rotated.)

DATE	BEST FOR NYERS	BEST FOR HIS POLITICAL FUTURE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	44	52	4
April 2013	49	48	3
HIGHEST EVER	49 (4/13, 3/13)	52 (3/14)	4 (3/14)
LOWEST EVER	44 (3/14)	47 (3/13)	3 (4/13, 3/13)

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Q. 12 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Rob Astorino?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	17	19	65
February 2014	11	15	73
January 2014	14	10	76
November 2013	12	14	75
HIGHEST EVER	17 (3/14)	19 (3/14)	76 (1/14)
LOWEST EVER	11 (2/14)	10 (1/14)	65 (3/14)

Q. 36 If the 2014 election for governor was held today and the candidates were Andrew Cuomo on the Democratic line and Rob Astorino on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (Choices were rotated.)

DATE	CUOMO	ASTORINO	OTHER/WON'T VOTE/ DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	61	26	13
February 2014	64	22	15
January 2014	67	19	14
November 2013	63	24	13
HIGHEST EVER	67 (1/14)	26 (3/14)	15 (2/14)
LOWEST EVER	61 (3/14)	19 (1/14)	13 (3/14, 11/13)

Q. 8 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the New York State Assembly?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	39	46	16
February 2014	37	49	14
January 2014	41	43	16
November 2013	34	48	19
October 2013	43	41	16
September 2013	38	49	14
August 2013	37	48	15
HIGHEST EVER	45 (1/13)	61 (7/10)	19 (11/13, 12/12)
LOWEST EVER	25 (7/10)	40 (12/12)	12 (4/13, 1/10)

Q. 9 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about your New York State Assembly Member?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	52	23	25
May 2013	52	24	24
HIGHEST EVER	54 (5/12)	29 (6/11)	25 (3/14, 6/11)
LOWEST EVER	47 (6/11)	23 (3/14)	21 (5/12)

Q. 5 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Sheldon Silver?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	23	39	38
January 2014	23	37	40
September 2013	21	43	37
HIGHEST EVER	28 (4/13, 7/05)	43 (9/13, 6/13)	50 (4/05)
LOWEST EVER	19 (2/11, 4/05)	30 (4/05)	33 (4/13)

Q. 10 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the New York State Senate?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	39	49	13
February 2014	37	51	12
January 2014	46	42	12
November 2013	35	52	12
October 2013	41	47	12
September 2013	40	51	10
August 2013	40	48	12
HIGHEST EVER	46 (1/14, 5/12)	74 (7/09)	14 (12/12, 6/11)
LOWEST EVER	20 (7/09)	41 (12/12)	6 (7/09)

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Q. 11 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about your New York State Senator?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	59	26	15
May 2013	59	28	14
HIGHEST EVER	65 (5/12)	30 (6/11)	15 (3/14, 6/11)
LOWEST EVER	55 (6/11)	24 (5/12)	11 (5/12)

Q. 6 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Dean Skelos?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	19	21	61
January 2014	18	16	66
September 2013	14	23	63
HIGHEST EVER	19 (3/14)	24 (4/13)	82 (11/08)
LOWEST EVER	9 (12/10)	8 (7/08)	61 (3/14, 4/13)

Q. 7 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Jeff Klein?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	17	13	70
January 2014	13	13	74
September 2013	13	12	74
HIGHEST EVER	17 (3/14, 4/13)	15 (4/13)	84 (11/09)
LOWEST EVER	9 (11/09)	7 (11/09)	68 (4/13)

Q. 28 The Governor has proposed launching a pilot or test program to permit about 20 New York hospitals to provide medical marijuana to patients being treated for serious illness. Which of the following three options best describes how you feel about this: the Governor's test program is the way to go; New York should immediately move beyond a test program and make medical marijuana legal, as about 20 states have already done; or medical marijuana should remain illegal in New York? (Choices were rotated.)

DATE	GOVERNOR'S	LEGALIZE MEDICAL	KEEP MEDICAL	DON'T KNOW/ NO OPINION
	TEST PROGRAM	MARIJUANA	MARIJUANA ILLEGAL	
March 2014	31	47	20	3
February 2014	32	45	20	3
January 2014	28	49	21	2
HIGHEST EVER	32 (2/14)	49 (1/14)	21 (1/14)	3 (3/14, 2/14)
LOWEST EVER	28 (1/14)	45 (2/14)	20 (3/14, 2/14)	2 (1/14)

Q. 29 Looking beyond the issue of medical marijuana, two states ó Colorado and Washington ó have legalized and regulated marijuana for recreational use. Do you support or oppose passing a similar law in New York to legalize and regulate marijuana for recreational use?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	42	54	4
February 2014	43	53	4
January 2014	41	54	5
HIGHEST EVER	43 (2/14)	54 (3/14, 1/14)	5 (1/14)
LOWEST EVER	41 (1/14)	53 (2/14)	4 (3/14, 2/14)

Q. 31 The New York State Education Department has adopted new learning standards in math and English for all public schools in New York. These new standards, which have been adopted in more than 40 states, are called the Common Core. Some have called for a two-year moratorium on the implementation of Common Core standards, while others have said they should continue to be implemented as quickly as possible. Which view is closer to yours: Common Core standards should continue to be implemented as quickly as possible, OR the Common core standards should be delayed for two years? ^

DATE	IMPLEMENTED	DELAYED	DON'T HAVE ENOUGH	DON'T KNOW/ NO OPINION
	AS IS	FOR TWO YEARS	INFORMATION	
March 2014	40	48	8	3
February 2014	38	50	6	6
HIGHEST EVER	40 (3/14)	50 (2/14)	8 (3/14)	6 (2/14)
LOWEST EVER	38 (2/14)	48 (3/14)	6 (2/14)	3 (3/14)

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Q. 32 In general, do you support or oppose the New York Dream Act, which would remove restrictions on undocumented immigrants from receiving financial aid for higher education?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	39	56	5
January 2013	44	53	3
HIGHEST EVER	44 (1/13)	56 (3/14)	5 (3/14)
LOWEST EVER	39 (3/14)	53 (1/13)	3 (1/13)

Q. 34 The State Department of Environmental Conservation is expected to soon issue a decision on whether or not to allow hydrofracking ó that is the proposed method to recover natural gas from parts of upstate New York ó to move forward. How much have you heard or read about it ó a great deal, some, not very much, or nothing at all?

DATE	A GREAT DEAL	SOME	NOT VERY MUCH	NOTHING	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	29	33	22	15	1
February 2014	28	32	22	18	1
October 2013	27	33	20	19	1
September 2013	30	32	17	21	0
August 2013	34	31	17	19	0
HIGHEST EVER	35 (6/13)	39 (10/12)	22 (3/14, etc.)	21 (9/13)	1 (many)
LOWEST EVER	27 (10/13, etc.)	29 (5/13)	13 (6/13)	12 (10/12)	0 (many)

Q. 35 Do you support or oppose the Department of Environmental Conservation allowing hydrofracking to move forward in parts of upstate New York?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION/ DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	40	42	19
February 2014	38	43	19
October 2013	38	43	19
September 2013	37	45	18
August 2013	41	42	17
HIGHEST EVER	42 (12/12, 10/12)	45 (9/13, 4/13)	27 (5/12)
LOWEST EVER	37 (9/13, 6/13, 5/12)	36 (12/12, 10/12, 5/12)	12 (8/13)

Q. 13 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Hillary Clinton?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	65	32	3
February 2014	61	35	4
January 2014	68	29	3
November 2013	67	31	2
October 2013	67	30	4
September 2013	69	27	3
August 2013	67	31	2
HIGHEST EVER	75 (12/12)	46 (4/08)	8 (3/05, 6/06, 3/07)
LOWEST EVER	48 (4/08)	23 (12/12)	2 (many)

Q. 2 Is the United States on the right track, or is it headed in the wrong direction?

DATE	RIGHT TRACK	WRONG DIRECTION	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	36	57	8
February 2014	39	55	6
January 2014	37	55	8
October 2013	19	74	7
September 2013	34	58	7
August 2013	37	54	9
HIGHEST EVER	62 (5/09)	74 (10/13, 8/11)	17 (9/08)
LOWEST EVER	19 (10/13, 10/08)	24 (12/09)	5 (1/13)

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Q. 3 How would you describe the fiscal condition of New York State right now? Would you describe it as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	2	19	45	30	4
February 2014	2	22	43	31	2
January 2014	2	27	42	27	2
September 2013	1	20	47	30	2
August 2013	3	20	43	30	4
HIGHEST EVER	3 (8/13)	27 (1/14)	49 (8/12)	67 (3/22/10)	4 (3/14, etc.)
LOWEST EVER	0 (many)	6 (3/22/10, etc.)	25 (3/22/10)	27 (1/14)	0 (4/11, etc.)

Q. 1 Is New York State on the right track, or is it headed in the wrong direction?

DATE	RIGHT TRACK	WRONG DIRECTION	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March 2014	46	43	12
February 2014	48	40	12
January 2014	52	36	12
November 2013	46	44	10
October 2013	44	44	12
September 2013	43	46	11
August 2013	47	40	13
HIGHEST EVER	57 (1/13)	76 (10/31/10)	30 (1/07)
LOWEST EVER	14 (10/10)	26 (1/07)	7 (5/13)

Poll Trend Notes: All surveys are of registered voters except for the polls of August and October 2012, October 2010, September and October 2008, and September and October 2006, which are polls of likely voters.

Trends reflect questions asked at least twice since the first Siena College Poll in February 2005.

Results listed here include all times questions have been asked since August 2013.

“Highest Ever” and “Lowest Ever” is provided at the bottom of each question.

^ Inconsequential wording change.