



# SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

[www.siena.edu/sri](http://www.siena.edu/sri)

For Immediate Release:

Contact:

PDF version; crosstabs; website:

Tuesday, February 24, 2015

Steven Greenberg, 518-469-9858

[www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY](http://www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY)

## Siena College Poll:

### **While Small Majority Says Gov's Ethics Package Would Reduce Corruption, Bigger Majority Says On Time Budget Is More Important**

**Voters Prefer Part Time State Legislature with Full Income Disclosure By Legislators Over Full Time Legislature with Outside Employment Ban; However, Would Choose Full Time Legislature Over Current System**

***Voters: Not Enough Parental Involvement is Biggest Reason Too Few High School Grads Are College/Career Ready; Strong Support to Make Tenure 5 Years; More Voters Side with Teachers' Unions Over Gov. on Most Ed. Issues***

**Loudonville, NY.** By a 51-44 percent margin, voters say Governor Andrew Cuomo's proposed ethics reform legislation would reduce state government corruption, which 92 percent say is a serious problem. However, a larger majority, 53-37 percent, says passing an on time state budget is more important than the Governor's ethics reform package. And by 50-42 percent, voters say the Governor's threat to hold up the budget over ethics reform is an idle one designed to make him look good, rather than a serious effort to reduce corruption in state government, according to a new Siena College poll of New York State registered voters released today.

More than nine in ten voters say corruption in state government is a serious problem, including 51 percent who say it's very serious. And 60 percent say corruption among state legislators from their area is a serious problem, with 21 percent saying very serious, said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. A majority of voters, including a majority of Democrats and downstaters, says the Governor's proposed ethics reform will reduce corruption. However, majorities of Democrats, Republicans, independents, upstaters and downstaters say that passing an on time state budget is more important than passing Cuomo's ethics plan if it means a late state budget.

While Democrats are closely divided on whether the Governor's position to not approve a new state budget without his ethics reform package represents a serious effort to reduce corruption, Republicans, independents, upstaters and downstate suburbanites believe it is but an idle political threat designed to make himself look good, Greenberg said. Voters think corruption in Albany and among their local state legislators is a serious problem and they believe the Cuomo ethics reform package will reduce corruption, however, most believe an on time state budget is more important than the ethics package and they think that Cuomo's threat is but an idle one.

**Full Time or Part Time State Legislature? Voters Want Greater Disclosure or a Ban on Outside Work**

By a 59-35 percent margin, voters prefer full time state legislators with a ban on outside employment, compared to the current system of part time legislators. However, by a similar 58-40 percent margin, voters want a part time Legislature with full disclosure of outside income over a full time Legislature that bans outside employment.

“The current system of part time legislators and existing income disclosure requirements is the preference of only about one-third of voters. A clear majority opt for a full time Legislature with a ban on outside employment over that system,” Greenberg said. “But if the choice is a full time State Legislature with a ban on outside employment versus part time legislators with full disclosure of all outside income, voters strongly prefer to keep a part time Legislature with full income disclosure by legislators. A majority of voters from every party and region agrees.

“Another point of agreement among Democrats, Republicans and independents is opposition to a legislative pay raise – even if legislators are full time with outside employment banned. Downstate voters are closely divided on this issue but upstaters are opposed to a pay raise by better than two-to-one,” Greenberg said.

**Need for More Parental Involvement in Education; More Time for Tenure; Side with Teachers Over Gov**

A plurality, 37 percent, says that not enough parental involvement is the single biggest reason that not enough high schoolers graduate college or career ready, followed by 18 percent who say it’s insufficient education funding, 17 percent point to the effects of poverty, 12 percent say ineffective state education oversight, and only 10 percent blame the quality of New York’s teachers. By an overwhelming 62-29 percent, voters say teachers should be eligible for tenure after five years, as Cuomo has proposed, rather than the current three years.

“A plurality of voters from every party and region says the level of parental involvement is the single largest problem facing schools today, more so than education funding, poverty, oversight, or teacher quality,” Greenberg said. “Downstate suburban and upstate voters think their local public schools do at least a good job of preparing students, however, New York City voters disagree more than two-to-one. A majority of all voters, including two-thirds from New York City, says that schools statewide are doing only a fair or poor job of preparing students.

“In the ongoing war of words between Cuomo and the teachers’ unions over a broad array of education issues, a plurality of voters sides with the unions, including a majority of Democrats and upstaters and a plurality of Republicans and downstate suburbanites. Independents and New York City voters are closely divided. Men and voters in non-union households are also closely divided, while women and voters in union households more strongly side with the teachers’ unions,” Greenberg said.

**Voters Approve of Heastie’s Election as Speaker, Although He Is Unknown to Three-Quarters**

By a 44-26 percent margin, voters approve of the election of new Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, who is viewed favorably and unfavorably by 14 percent each, with 73 percent not knowing enough about him to have an opinion.

“He may be a man in the news, as well as the first black and first Bronx Assembly Speaker, but Carl Heastie, like his Senate counterpart, Dean Skelos, is largely unknown to the vast majority of New Yorkers,” Greenberg said.

“That said, a plurality of voters, including strong majorities of Democrats and New York City voters, approve of his election as speaker. Three times as many voters – 18 percent to five percent – think Heastie will make state government better rather than worse, although 64 percent think state government will stay about the same.

“Following his arrest and stepping down as speaker, Sheldon Silver is now viewed unfavorably by 58 percent of voters, up from 37 percent last month, compared to only 16 percent who view him favorably,” Greenberg said.

“The tumult in the Assembly and all the talk about corruption and ethics reform have had no effect on how voters view the Legislature. Voters are closely divided on both houses, with the Assembly having a 43-45 percent favorability rating, down slightly from 42-41 percent last month, and the Senate having a 45-44 percent favorability rating, exactly the same as last month,” Greenberg said.

### **Cuomo Ratings Slip a Little; Strong Favorability, Job Performance Under Water**

Cuomo’s favorability rating is 59-37 percent, down slightly from 60-35 percent last month, and he has a negative 44-55 percent job performance rating, down a little from a negative 47-51 percent last month.

“Cuomo continues to have a strong favorability rating, particularly with Democrats and New York City voters. A majority of independents and downstate suburbanites continue to view him favorably. However, he has a negative 43-53 percent favorability rating from both Republicans – although he’s up with them this month – and upstaters, with whom he fell this month,” Greenberg said. “His job performance rating is positive with Democrats and New York City voters, however, it is under water with voters from other parties and regions.”

### **Direction of State and Nation Up this Month; New York Positive; USA Still Negative**

“By a 49-41 percent margin, voters say the state is on the right track, up from 46-45 percent last month, and the best it’s been since July,” Greenberg said. “While a majority of voters say the country is headed in the wrong direction, 51-42 percent, it’s improved from 55-38 percent wrong direction last month, and the best it’s been since January 2013.”

# # #

This Siena College Poll was conducted February 15-18, 2015 by telephone calls conducted in English to 810 New York State registered voters. Respondents were selected by asking for the youngest male in the household. It has an overall margin of error of  $\pm 3.7$  percentage points including the design effects resulting from weighting. Sampling was conducted via a stratified dual frame probability sample provided by Survey Sampling International of landline and cell phone telephone numbers from within New York State weighted to reflect known population patterns. Data was statistically adjusted by age, party, region and gender to ensure representativeness. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in NYS. 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: [www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY](http://www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY).



# SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

[www.siena.edu/sri](http://www.siena.edu/sri)

## Siena College Poll Trends – February 2015

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2015	59	37	4
January 2015	60	35	5
December 2014	58	37	4
October 2014*	54	43	3
September 2014*	55	40	5
August 2014*	57	36	7
July 2014*	61	35	4
June 2014	63	31	6
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>77 (2/11)</b>	<b>43 (10/14)</b>	<b>24 (1/06, 2/06, 9/07)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>44 (8/06, 10/06)</b>	<b>14 (8/09)</b>	<b>3 (10/20/10)</b>

**Q. 13** 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
February 2015	9	35	38	17	1
January 2015	11	36	35	16	1
December 2014	7	35	40	17	1
October 2014*	9	34	32	25	0
September 2014*	7	35	35	21	1
August 2014*	9	35	38	17	1
July 2014*	9	41	31	18	1
June 2014	8	41	34	16	1
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>17 (1/12)</b>	<b>47 (4/12, etc.)</b>	<b>39 (11/13)</b>	<b>25 (10/14)</b>	<b>28 (1/11)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>7 (Several)</b>	<b>34 (10/14, 1/11)</b>	<b>24 (1/11)</b>	<b>4 (2/11, 1/11)</b>	<b>0 (10/14)</b>

**Q. 5** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the New York State Assembly?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2015	43	45	12
January 2015	42	41	17
December 2014	39	41	20
September 2014*	40	44	16
July 2014*	39	43	17
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>45 (1/13)</b>	<b>61 (7/10)</b>	<b>20 (12/14)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>25 (7/10)</b>	<b>40 (12/12)</b>	<b>12 (4/13, 1/10)</b>

**Q. 7** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Sheldon Silver?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2015	16	58	26
January 2015	21	37	42
March 2014	23	39	38
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>28 (4/13, 7/05)</b>	<b>58 (2/15)</b>	<b>50 (4/05)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>16 (2/15)</b>	<b>30 (4/05)</b>	<b>26 (2/15)</b>

**Q. 6** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the New York State Senate?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2015	45	44	11
January 2015	45	44	11
December 2014	41	44	14
September 2014*	40	46	14
July 2014*	41	45	14
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>46 (1/14, 5/12)</b>	<b>74 (7/09)</b>	<b>14 (12/14, 7/14, 12/12, 6/11)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>20 (7/09)</b>	<b>41 (12/12)</b>	<b>6 (7/09)</b>

# Siena College Poll Trends – February 2015

Page 2

**Q. 9** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Dean Skelos?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2015	16	20	64
January 2015	13	18	68
March 2014	19	21	61
January 2014	18	16	66
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>19 (3/14)</b>	<b>24 (4/13)</b>	<b>82 (11/08)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>9 (12/10)</b>	<b>8 (7/08)</b>	<b>61 (3/14, 4/13)</b>

**Q. 10** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Preet Bharara?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2015	20	10	69
August 2014	11	8	81
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>20 (2/15)</b>	<b>10 (2/15)</b>	<b>81 (8/14)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>11 (8/14)</b>	<b>8 (8/14)</b>	<b>69 (2/15)</b>

**Q. 16** How serious a problem would you say corruption is in state government in Albany? Would you say it's very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious?

DATE	VERY SERIOUS	SOMEWHAT SERIOUS	NOT VERY SERIOUS	NOT AT ALL SERIOUS	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2015	51	41	4	2	2
August 2014	47	39	8	1	5
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>51 (2/15)</b>	<b>41 (2/15)</b>	<b>8 (8/14)</b>	<b>2 (2/15)</b>	<b>5 (8/14)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>47 (8/14)</b>	<b>39 (8/14)</b>	<b>4 (2/15)</b>	<b>1 (8/14)</b>	<b>2 (2/15)</b>

**Q. 24** How would you rate the job your local public school district does in preparing students to be college or career ready? Would you say your local public schools do an excellent job or preparing students, a good job, a fair job, or a poor job?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2015	17	30	27	21	5
January 2015	17	30	29	19	5
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>17 (2/15, 1/15)</b>	<b>30 (2/15, 1/15)</b>	<b>29 (1/15)</b>	<b>21 (2/15)</b>	<b>5 (2/15, 1/15)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>17 (2/15, 1/15)</b>	<b>30 (2/15, 1/15)</b>	<b>27 (2/15)</b>	<b>19 (1/15)</b>	<b>5 (2/15, 1/15)</b>

**Q. 25** And how would you rate the overall job that public schools across New York State do in preparing students to be college or career ready? Would you say that New York State public schools generally do an excellent job or preparing students, a good job, a fair job, or a poor job?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2015	5	30	39	20	6
January 2015	5	28	44	15	7
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>5 (2/15, 1/15)</b>	<b>30 (2/15)</b>	<b>44 (2/15)</b>	<b>20 (2/15)</b>	<b>7 (1/15)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>5 (2/15, 1/15)</b>	<b>28 (1/15)</b>	<b>39 (1/15)</b>	<b>15 (1/15)</b>	<b>6 (2/15)</b>

**Q. 11** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Barack Obama?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2015	56	42	2
December 2014	54	43	3
September 2014*	50	46	4
July 2014*	53	45	1
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>81 (1/09)</b>	<b>46 (9/14, 10/31/10)</b>	<b>40 (11/06)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>48 (11/06)</b>	<b>10 (1/09)</b>	<b>1 (7/14, 1/13, 8/12)</b>

**Q. 12** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Hillary Clinton?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2015	62	33	5
December 2014	63	32	5
March 2014	65	32	3
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>75 (12/12)</b>	<b>46 (4/08)</b>	<b>8 (3/05, 6/06, 3/07)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>48 (4/08)</b>	<b>23 (12/12)</b>	<b>2 (many)</b>

# Siena College Poll Trends – February 2015

Page 3

**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
February 2015	42	51	8
January 2015	38	55	7
December 2014	34	57	9
October 2014*	33	60	7
September 2014*	36	55	9
July 2014*	38	56	7
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>62 (5/09)</b>	<b>74 (10/13, 8/11)</b>	<b>17 (9/08)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>19 (10/13, 10/08)</b>	<b>24 (12/09)</b>	<b>5 (1/13)</b>

**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
February 2015	2	26	45	25	2
December 2014	3	26	40	28	2
September 2014*	2	28	41	25	4
July 2014*	2	29	41	25	2
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>3 (12/14, 8/13)</b>	<b>29 (7/14)</b>	<b>49 (8/12)</b>	<b>67 (3/22/10)</b>	<b>4 (9/14, etc.)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>0 (many)</b>	<b>6 (3/22/10, etc.)</b>	<b>25 (3/22/10)</b>	<b>25 (2/15, 9/14, 7/14)</b>	<b>0 (4/11, etc.)</b>

**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
February 2015	49	41	10
January 2015	46	45	9
December 2014	41	45	14
October 2014*	46	46	8
September 2014*	48	43	10
August 2014*	47	40	13
July 2014*	49	40	10
June 2014	50	39	11
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>57 (1/13)</b>	<b>76 (10/31/10)</b>	<b>30 (1/07)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>14 (10/10)</b>	<b>26 (1/07)</b>	<b>7 (5/13)</b>

**Poll Trend Notes:** \* All surveys are of registered voters except for the polls of July thru October 2014, August/October 2012, October 2010, September/October 2008, and September/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 June 2014.

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

^ Inconsequential wording change.