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SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

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Contact:

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Steven Greenberg, 518-469-9858

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**Siena College Poll:**

## **On MLK Day, Two-Thirds Say Race Relations in NYS Are Only Fair or Poor; Was 51 Percent Last Year**

**While NYers (Including NYC) Overwhelmingly View Their Local Police Favorably, Voters Say Cops Wrong to Turn Back on de Blasio  
*Bratton, Cuomo Seen as Making Police-Community Relations Better,  
de Blasio, Lynch, Sharpton Seen as Making Relations Worse***

**Loudonville, NY.** Only 31 percent of New Yorkers think race relations in the state are excellent (four percent) or good (27 percent), compared to 66 percent who say they are fair (38 percent) or poor (28 percent), down significantly from 47-51 percent on Martin Luther King Day in 2014, and 54-46 percent in 2013, according to a new Siena College poll of New York State registered voters released today.

By an 81-16 percent margin ó including 72-25 percent in New York City ó voters have a favorable view of their local police department. A majority of New Yorkers, 52 percent, including nearly two-thirds in the City, say police officers who turned their back on Mayor Bill de Blasio were wrong, compared to 39 percent who say they were right (28 percent in the City). More voters say Governor Andrew Cuomo and NYPD Commissioner Bill Bratton are making police-community relations better than those who say the two are making relations worse. However, more say that PBA President Pat Lynch is making relations worse rather than better and by large margins, more say Al Sharpton and de Blasio are making police-community relations worse.

õEven as we celebrate the life and achievements of Dr. King, New Yorkersø feelings about the state of race relations here are more negative today than they have been for the last several years,õ said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. õLast year, two thirds of black voters and about half of white and Latino voters thought race relations were only fair or poor. Today, between 65 and 74 percent of black, white and Latino voters say race relations are fair or poor, as do between 64 and 68 percent of Democrats, Republicans and independents.

õClearly, events over the last several months, particularly Ferguson and Staten Island, have had a significant impact on how many New Yorkers feel about race relations,õ Greenberg said. õA majority of New Yorkers, including a large majority of those from the City, believe the Staten Island grand jury should have indicted the police officer in the death of Eric Garner, although that belief is down a little from last month.õ

“Similarly, a majority of New Yorkers and a large majority of City voters, say that people of color are not treated fairly by the criminal justice system in New York State. Sixty-three percent of City voters and a small majority of downstate suburbanites say people of color are not treated fairly, however, by a 50-42 percent margin, upstaters say people of color are treated fairly,” Greenberg said. “While white voters are evenly divided on both questions of the grand jury and how people of color are treated by the criminal justice system of black and Latino voters overwhelmingly say there should have been an indictment and they’re not treated fairly.”

Overall, voters say the Staten Island grand jury should have indicted the police officer 51-36 percent, down from 55-30 percent last month. By 52-40 percent, voters say people of color are not treated fairly in the state’s criminal justice system. It was 52-35 percent last month.

**Voters Really Like Their Local Police Department; Think Turning Backs Toward de Blasio is Wrong**

“New Yorkers overwhelmingly view their local police department favorably. Nearly nine in ten outside New York City view their local department favorably, and City voters view the NYPD favorably by a nearly three-to-one margin,” Greenberg said. “A majority of upstaters and Republicans think cops were right to turn their backs on the Mayor and white voters were evenly divided. However, a majority of downstate suburbanites, nearly two-thirds of Democrats and City voters and more than three-quarters of people of color said they were wrong.

**Sharpton, de Blasio and Lynch Making Police-Community Relations Worse; Bratton & Cuomo Better**

<b>Making Police-Community Relations Better, Worse or Little Impact</b>						
	<b>New York State</b>			<b>New York City</b>		
	<b>Better</b>	<b>Worse</b>	<b>Little Impact</b>	<b>Better</b>	<b>Worse</b>	<b>Little Impact</b>
<b>Bill Bratton</b>	<b>38%</b>	15%	30%	<b>39%</b>	17%	34%
<b>Andrew Cuomo</b>	32%	9%	<b>48%</b>	38%	5%	<b>48%</b>
<b>Pat Lynch</b>	19%	<b>34%</b>	22%	16%	<b>43%</b>	23%
<b>Bill de Blasio</b>	18%	<b>48%</b>	24%	24%	<b>42%</b>	27%
<b>Al Sharpton</b>	14%	<b>57%</b>	17%	15%	<b>52%</b>	21%
Siena College Poll – January 19, 2015						

“While Bratton works for de Blasio, voters see them in very different lights regarding their actions to improve police-community relations. Among New York City and New York State voters, pluralities think that Bratton is making relations better while de Blasio is making them worse,” Greenberg said. “There’s little good news here for de Blasio, even as City voters say that the PBA’s Lynch is doing a little bit worse and that Sharpton is doing even worse than that. Nearly half of State and City voters say Cuomo has had little impact, however, far more voters think he’s made relations better than those who think he’s made them worse.”

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## Siena College Poll Trends – January 19, 2015

**Q. 21** As we look to next week's commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, how would you describe the state of race relations in New York State? Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
January 2015	4	27	38	28	3
January 2014	7	40	37	14	2
January 2013	7	47	35	11	1
January 2012	7	44	36	11	2
January 2011	7	48	33	10	2
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>7 (many)</b>	<b>48 (1/11)</b>	<b>38 (1/15, 1/10)</b>	<b>28 (1/15)</b>	<b>3 (1/15, 1/08)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>3 (1/08)</b>	<b>27 (1/15)</b>	<b>33 (1/11)</b>	<b>8 (1/10)</b>	<b>1 (1/13)</b>

**Q. 22** How much have you heard or read about a Staten Island grand jury's decision not to indict a white police officer for the chokehold death in July of Eric Garner, an unarmed black man? A lot, some, not much, or nothing at all?

DATE	A GREAT DEAL	SOME	NOT MUCH	NOTHING	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
January 2015	66	24	5	4	1
December 2014	75	16	4	3	1
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>75 (12/14)</b>	<b>24 (1/15)</b>	<b>5 (1/15)</b>	<b>4 (1/15)</b>	<b>1 (1/15, 12/14)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>66 (1/15)</b>	<b>16 (12/14)</b>	<b>4 (12/14)</b>	<b>3 (12/14)</b>	<b>1 (1/15, 12/14)</b>

**Q. 23** Based on what you have heard or read, do you think the grand jury in Staten Island should have brought criminal charges against the police officer, or do you think the grand jury was correct when it did not indict him?

DATE	SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT CHARGES	CORRECT NOT TO INDICT	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
January 2015	51	36	13
December 2014	55	30	15
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>55 (12/14)</b>	<b>36 (1/15)</b>	<b>15 (12/14)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>51 (1/15)</b>	<b>30 (12/14)</b>	<b>13 (1/15)</b>

**Q. 24** Regardless of the decision by the grand jury, do you think the federal government should or should not charge the police officer in federal court with violating Eric Garner's civil rights?

DATE	SHOULD	SHOULD NOT	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
January 2015	45	44	11
December 2014	50	36	14
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>50 (12/14)</b>	<b>44 (1/15)</b>	<b>14 (12/14)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>45 (1/15)</b>	<b>36 (12/14)</b>	<b>11 (1/15)</b>

**Q. 25** Do you think people of color are treated fairly by the criminal justice system in New York, or not fairly?

DATE	FAIRLY	NOT FAIRLY	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
January 2015	40	52	8
December 2014	35	52	13
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>40 (1/15)</b>	<b>52 (1/15, 12/14)</b>	<b>13 (12/14)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>35 (12/14)</b>	<b>52 (1/15, 12/14)</b>	<b>8 (1/15)</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 January 2014.

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

^ Inconsequential wording change.