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Siena College Poll:

Corruption – A Serious Problem – Has Not Gotten Worse Over Last Few Years, Voters Say; Not As Important as Jobs or Education as Priority Issue for Legislature to Address

Voters Strongly Support Continuing Property Tax Cap (Maybe with Changes); Support Start-Up NY; Continue to Support SAFE Act; Voters Divided on Education Tax Credit and Dream Act

Cuomo Favorability & Job Performance Ratings Worst As Governor

Loudonville, NY. While 90 percent of voters say corruption in state government is a serious problem and 62 percent say corruption among their state legislators is a serious problem, 57 percent say the level of corruption in state government over the last four years is about the same as it was previously. However, addressing corruption and ethics is a second tier issue for voters, who say the top two issues for the Legislature to address are jobs and education, according to a new Siena College poll of New York State registered voters released today.

More than three-quarters of voters want to see the property tax cap continued ó 43 percent as is; 36 percent with changes to give school districts and local governments more flexibility. Voters support the Start-Up New York program 52-37 percent and the SAFE Act 62-33 percent (up slightly from 58-33 percent in December). Voters are split on the proposed education tax credit plan ó with 44 percent supporting it and 49 percent opposing ó and the Dream Act, which is supported by 47 percent and opposed by 50 percent (44-50 percent last month). Governor Andrew Cuomo now has his lowest favorability and job performance ratings since taking office.

õVoters continue to see corruption in state government as a serious issue, with half saying it's a very serious issue. One-third of voters think there's been more corruption in the last four years than there was previously, however, a clear majority, 57 percent, say it's about the same as it previously was,õ said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. õBy a 55-35 percent margin ó including majorities from every party and region ó voters say the recent indictments of former Speaker Sheldon Silver and former Majority Leader Dean Skelos will not reduce corruption in Albany.

õWhen it comes to õreducing corruption, half ó including a majority of Democrats and those from New York City ó say Cuomo has been at least somewhat effective, while half say he has not been,õ Greenberg said.

Jobs/economy was identified by 30 percent of voters as the most important issue they want their state legislators working on, followed by education at 27 percent, corruption and ethics at 15 percent, taxes at 13 percent and health care at 12 percent.

“While voters see corruption as a serious problem in Albany, it is certainly not the most important issue they want the Legislature to address,” Greenberg said. “Jobs and education are the key issues for all voters. Jobs leads the way with Republicans and independents, New York City and upstate voters, and those 55 and older. Democrats are split between education and jobs as the top issue, while education tops the list for downstate suburbanites and voters under 55.

“If Albany does try to address the corruption issue before session ends, voters think there are several reforms that would help reduce corruption, however, they are closely divided on which would be

Effectiveness of Proposals to Reduce Corruption			
Proposal	Would Reduce	Would Not Reduce	Most Effective to Reduce
Dramatically reduce amount of money that can be contributed to political campaigns	78%	21%	32%
Create a truly independent ethics watchdog to monitor all state government elected officials	71%	26%	26%
Increase disclosure of elected officials' finances, including all sources of income	79%	20%	25%
Make the job of state legislator full time, with outside employment banned	57%	38%	12%
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the most effective in reducing corruption,” Greenberg said. “One-third say dramatically reducing campaign contribution limits, while one-quarter each say true independent oversight and increased financial disclosure are the way to go. Only one in eight think a full time legislature is the most effective corruption fighting proposal.

“Nearly three-quarters of voters – including at least two-thirds from every party and region – say that recent arrests and corruption scandals make them more likely to vote next year to be part of the solution, compared to only 16 percent who say they are less likely to vote since state government is hopelessly corrupt. And while 37 percent of voters say all the scandals make them less likely to vote for their incumbent legislators, 11 percent say it makes them more likely and about half say the scandals have no effect on their vote next year,” Greenberg said.

Voters Want Property Tax Cap Continued – Many Want Some Changes – Few Want it Eliminated

Nearly three-quarters of voters agree with tax cap supporters that taxpayers are not seeing large increases as they previously had, and only 41 percent agree with opponents that the cap has forced local governments and school districts to cut services. Forty-three percent of voters say continue the cap as is, 36 percent say continue the cap but provide school districts and local governments a little more flexibility, and 17 percent say eliminate the cap.

“Democrats and Republicans, upstaters and downstaters agree that the property tax cap should be continued,” Greenberg said. “The property tax cap had broad, statewide, bi-partisan support when it was passed four years ago and it continues to be an issue that garners support from the vast majority of New Yorkers.”

Support for Start-Up New York; Particularly from Downstaters and Democrats

“With millions spent on advertising the Start-Up New York program, about half of New Yorkers say they have heard or read at least something about it,” Greenberg said. “Among all voters, support for Start-Up New York is 52-37 percent, however, there are clear partisan and geographical differences. Democrats support the program better than two-to-one, as do New York City voters. It also has solid support from downstate suburbanites. Upstaters and independents are closely divided, while a small majority of Republicans oppose the program.”

SAFE Act Continues to Enjoy Strong Support

“Views on the SAFE Act have remained largely unchanged over time. It has the support of more than three-quarters of Democrats and New York City voters and a strong majority of independents and downstate suburbanites. Upstaters are closely divided, with a bare majority opposed and Republicans are strongly opposed,” Greenberg said. “While three-quarters of those who view Cuomo favorably support the SAFE Act, only a bare majority of those who view him unfavorably are opposed.”

Education Tax Credit Proposal and Dream Act Both Closely Divide Voters

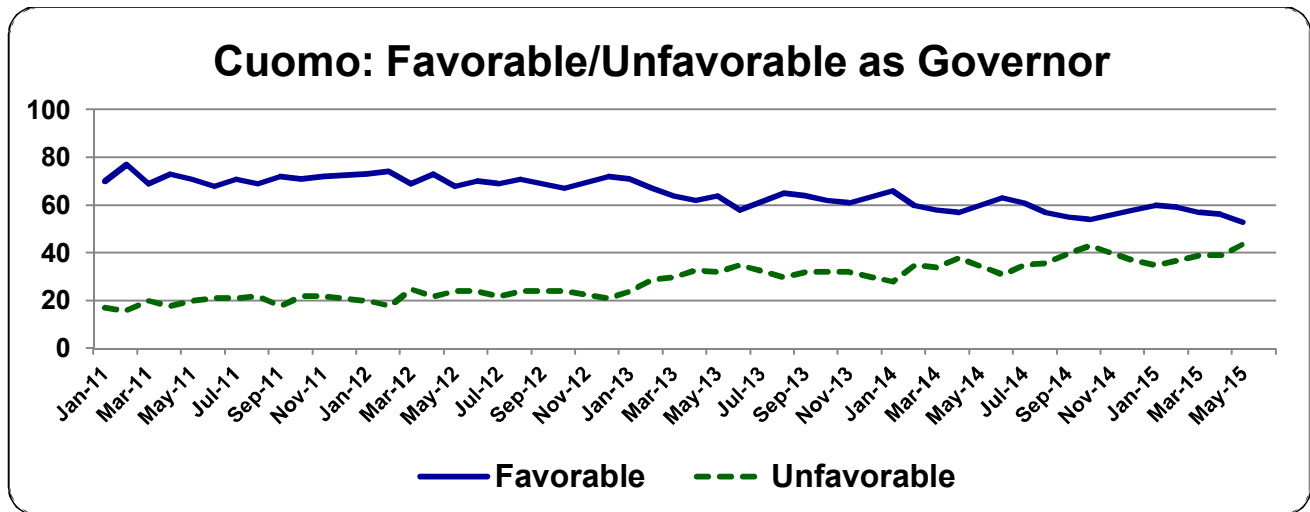
Voters were told that the education tax credit proposal has three key provisions and were given arguments in support, including the support of Cuomo and Cardinal Timothy Dolan, and opposition, including the opposition of teachers’ unions. It is supported by 44 percent of voters and opposed by 49 percent.

“The education tax credit proposal divides voters – but not on a partisan basis. Opposition beats out support by four points among Democrats and Republicans, and by 10 points among independents. New York City voters support it by a 14-point margin and downstate suburbanites oppose it by a nine-point margin, as upstaters give it a solid thumbs down, 58-34 percent,” Greenberg said. “While white voters oppose the proposal, it is supported by a majority of black, Latino, Jewish, and Catholic voters. It is strongly opposed by those earning more than \$100,000 annually and supported by those earning less than \$50,000. And those in households with at least one union member oppose it two-to-one.”

“The Dream Act continues to divide voters. While it is supported by at least 62 percent of Democrats, New York City voters, blacks, Latinos and voters under 35, it is opposed by more than three-quarters of Republicans, a majority of independents, strong majorities of downstate suburbanites and upstaters, white voters and those 55 and older,” Greenberg said.

Cuomo Favorability & Job Performance Ratings Hit Low Point in Five Years as Governor

Cuomo’s favorability rating is 53-44 percent, down from 56-39 percent last month and 63-31 percent in June 2014. He has a negative 41-59 percent job performance rating, down from a negative 44-55 percent last month and 49-50 percent in June 2014.



Cuomo, while still viewed favorably by a small majority of voters, has his lowest favorability rating since he’s been governor. While his statewide favorability rating dropped by a net eight points in the last month, it fell by a net 19 points with New York City voters and a net 25 points with Republicans, Greenberg said. Similarly, Cuomo’s job performance rating is also at an all-time low. More than twice as many voters say he’s doing a poor job as compared to those who say he’s doing an excellent job. Even Democrats are evenly divided, with 50 percent giving him a positive job performance rating and 49 percent rating him negatively. His job performance rating is significantly under water with Republicans, independents, downstate suburbanites and upstaters.

Assembly Favorability Rating Up, Near Even; While Senate Favorability Drops A Bit

The State Assembly’s favorability rating is 43-46 percent, up from 38-49 percent last month, and Speaker Carl Heastie has a 12-16 percent favorability rating, up a little from 11-19 percent last month. The State Senate’s favorability rating is 41-49 percent down slightly from 42-48 percent last month. Former Majority Leader Dean Skelos has a 13-40 percent favorability rating, down significantly from 12-28 percent last month. New Majority Leader John Flanagan has 17-14 percent favorability rating.

While the Senate saw a slight dip in its favorability rating and the Governor’s favorability rating dropped, as did the mood of voters on the direction of the state, the Assembly saw a rebound in its favorability rating, Greenberg said. Skelos is more known than he’s ever been but he’s also viewed more unfavorably than he has ever been, although his unfavorability rating does not approach that of former Speaker Sheldon Silver’s 58 percent the month after he was indicted.

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This Siena College Poll was conducted May 18-21, 2015 by telephone calls conducted in English to 695 New York State registered voters. Respondent sampling was initiated by asking for the youngest male in the household. It has an overall margin of error of ± 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. For survey cross-tabs: www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY.



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Siena College Poll Trends – May 2015

Q. 2 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Andrew Cuomo?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2015	53	44	3
April 2015	56	39	5
March 2015	57	39	4
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
HIGHEST EVER	77 (2/11)	44 (5/15)	24 (1/06, 2/06, 9/07)
LOWEST EVER	44 (8/06, 10/06)	14 (8/09)	3 (10/20/10)

Q. 9 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
May 2015	9	32	36	23	0
April 2015	9	35	35	20	1
March 2015	6	37	37	19	1
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
HIGHEST EVER	17 (1/12)	47 (4/12, etc.)	39 (11/13)	25 (10/14)	28 (1/11)
LOWEST EVER	6 (3/15)	32 (5/15)	24 (1/11)	4 (2/11, 1/11)	0 (5/15, 10/14)

Q. 3 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the New York State Assembly?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2015	43	46	10
April 2015	38	49	13
March 2015	41	46	14
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
HIGHEST EVER	45 (1/13)	61 (7/10)	20 (12/14)
LOWEST EVER	25 (7/10)	40 (12/12)	10 (5/15)

Q. 5 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Carl Heastie?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2015	12	16	72
April 2015	11	19	69
March 2015	11	15	74
February 2015	14	14	73
HIGHEST EVER	14 (2/15)	19 (4/15)	74 (3/15)
LOWEST EVER	11 (4/15, 3/15)	14 (2/15)	69 (4/15)

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Q. 4 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the New York State Senate?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2015	41	49	9
April 2015	42	48	10
March 2015	44	46	10
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
HIGHEST EVER	46 (1/14, 5/12)	74 (7/09)	14 (12/14, 7/14, 12/12, 6/11)
LOWEST EVER	20 (7/09)	41 (12/12)	6 (7/09)

Q. 7 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Dean Skelos?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2015	13	40	47
April 2015	12	28	60
March 2015	13	22	65
February 2015	16	20	64
January 2015	13	18	68
March 2014	19	21	61
HIGHEST EVER	19 (3/14)	40 (5/15)	82 (11/08)
LOWEST EVER	9 (12/10)	8 (7/08)	47 (5/15)

Q. 8 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Preet Bharara?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2015	18	11	71
February 2015	20	10	69
August 2014	11	8	81
HIGHEST EVER	20 (2/15)	11 (5/15)	81 (8/14)
LOWEST EVER	11 (8/14)	8 (8/14)	69 (2/15)

Q. 11 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
May 2015	50	40	7	1	2
April 2015	49	39	7	2	4
March 2015	49	38	7	2	4
February 2015	51	41	4	2	2
August 2014	47	39	8	1	5
HIGHEST EVER	51 (2/15)	41 (2/15)	8 (8/14)	2 (4/15, 3/15, 2/15)	5 (8/14)
LOWEST EVER	47 (8/14)	38 (3/15)	4 (2/15)	1 (5/15, 8/14)	2 (5/15, 2/15)

Q. 12 How serious a problem would you say corruption is among state legislators from your areas? 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
May 2015	21	41	25	9	4
April 2015	21	37	27	8	8
March 2015	23	34	24	11	7
February 2015	21	39	24	9	7
HIGHEST EVER	23 (3/15)	41 (5/15)	27 (4/15)	11 (3/15)	8 (4/15)
LOWEST EVER	21 (5/15, etc.)	34 (3/15)	24 (3/15, 2/15)	8 (4/15)	4 (5/15)

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Q. 24 In general, do you support or oppose the New York Dream Act, which would allow the children of undocumented immigrants to receive financial aid for higher education? (In 2014, this question was asked with a split sample of half of respondents being asked about undocumented immigrants and half being asked about illegal aliens.)

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2015	47	50	3
April 2015	44	50	5
December 2014	44	48	8
April 2014	48	47	5
HIGHEST EVER	48 (4/14)	50 (5/15, 4/15)	8 (12/14)
LOWEST EVER	44 (4/15, 12/14)	47 (4/14)	3 (5/15)

Q. 25 In early 2013, the Governor and Legislature enacted what some have called the toughest gun control law in the country that was named the SAFE Act by Governor Cuomo. Now, more than two years later, do you support or oppose the gun control law passed in 2013? (Slight wording changes to reflect the timeframe in which the question was asked.)

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2015	62	33	6
December 2014	58	33	9
March 2014	63	32	5
HIGHEST EVER	63 (3/14)	33 (5/15, 12/14)	9 (12/14)
LOWEST EVER	58 (12/14)	32 (3/14)	5 (3/14)

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
May 2015	44	46	10
April 2015	46	42	12
March 2015	46	42	12
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
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 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.