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Siena College Poll:

Cuomo is Budget Winner Say Voters, as His Ratings Go Higher; After Budget, Voters Feel Better About Legislature, Not its Leaders

Property Tax Cap & Ethics Reform Top Voters' End-of-Session List; Also Strong Support for Expansion of Rent Regulations, Larger Contribution by Public Employees for Benefits; Independent Redistricting Commission

Voters: Cuomo Fair to Unions; Keep Triborough Amendment, Not Taylor Law

Loudonville, NY. Although voters say the citizens of New York, their local schools and their local hospitals were losers in the recently enacted state budget, they overwhelmingly say Governor Andrew Cuomo was a budget winner. Cuomo also saw his favorability and job performance ratings edge up higher, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll of registered voters released today. And while voters continue to have unfavorable views of Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos, by a better than three-to-one margin, they say the new budget makes them feel better about the State Legislature.

A property tax cap and a new legislative ethics law are the top priorities for voters for the remainder of the legislative session. Voters also strongly support renewing and strengthening rent regulation laws, creating an independent redistricting commission and requiring public employees to contribute more for their benefit package. A majority also supports legalizing same sex marriages, allowing SUNY to set its own tuition rates, and freezing state employees' salaries for a year.

Voters overwhelmingly say Cuomo has treated New York's public employee union fairly. By a slim margin, voters believe public employees should have the right to strike and they support keeping the Triborough Amendment in place. New York voters also support, by a nearly two-to-one margin, Wisconsin unions in their fight with Governor Scott Walker, an issue to which most New Yorkers have paid at least some attention.

"Andrew Cuomo starts his second hundred days as governor continuing to enjoy 'rock star status' among New Yorkers. His favorability rating is back over 70 percent, his job performance rating is up and, by a 61-9 percent margin, voters say he was a winner, not loser, in the just-completed budget battle," said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. "There are many issues voters want to see addressed between now and June so the Governor has his work cut out for him if he wants to keep the honeymoon going into the summer."

Cuomo Riding High with Voters After Budget Passage

Cuomo is viewed favorably by 73 percent of voters and unfavorably by 18 percent, up from 69-20 percent last month. Fifty-four percent of voters say he is doing an excellent/good job as Governor (up from 51 percent last month) and 41 percent say he's doing a fair/poor job (unchanged).

“Nearly three-quarters of voters view Cuomo favorably, including two-thirds of Republicans and independents, and his favorability rating is nearly identical in New York City, the downstate suburbs and in upstate,” Greenberg said. “His job performance rating is the same among Democrats and Republicans, 56-40 percent, while independents are nearly evenly divided at 49-47 percent. And by a nearly seven-to-one margin, voters say Cuomo was a winner as a result of the budget, including at least 59 percent of voters from every party and region.”

After Budget, Voters See Legislature – Not its Leaders – In a Better Light

“After the budget, 44 percent of voters feel better about the State Legislature, compared to only 13 percent who feel worse, with 42 percent not changing their view. This more positive attitude about the Legislature tracks fairly evenly across party and regional lines, with virtually no difference among voters in households that have union members and those that don't,” Greenberg said.

“Silver and Skelos both continue to be viewed unfavorably by nearly twice as many voters as view them favorably. Both were seen as budget winners by 18 percent of voters, however Silver was seen as a budget loser by 25 percent and Skelos by only 16 percent,” Greenberg said.

Citizens, Schools, Teachers' Unions & Hospitals All Seen as Budget Losers Too

“While voters see Cuomo as a big budget winner, they can't say the same for themselves. Only 27 percent say the citizens of New York were budget winners, with 41 percent saying the citizens lost,” Greenberg said. “By big majorities, voters say that teachers' unions (61-13 percent) and their local school districts (57-16 percent) were losers – not winners – as a result of the budget, by a smaller 44-17 percent margin, they see their local hospitals as budget battle losers as well.

“Despite seeing themselves, their schools and their hospitals as budget losers, 44 percent of voters think that the budget will make fiscal conditions in New York better, compared to only 16 percent who believe the budget will worsen the state's fiscal condition. Nearly one-third of voters think the budget will not affect the state's fiscal condition. While only 37 percent of New York City voters believe the budget will improve fiscal conditions, more than half of downstate suburban voters and nearly half of upstaters believe it will,” Greenberg said.

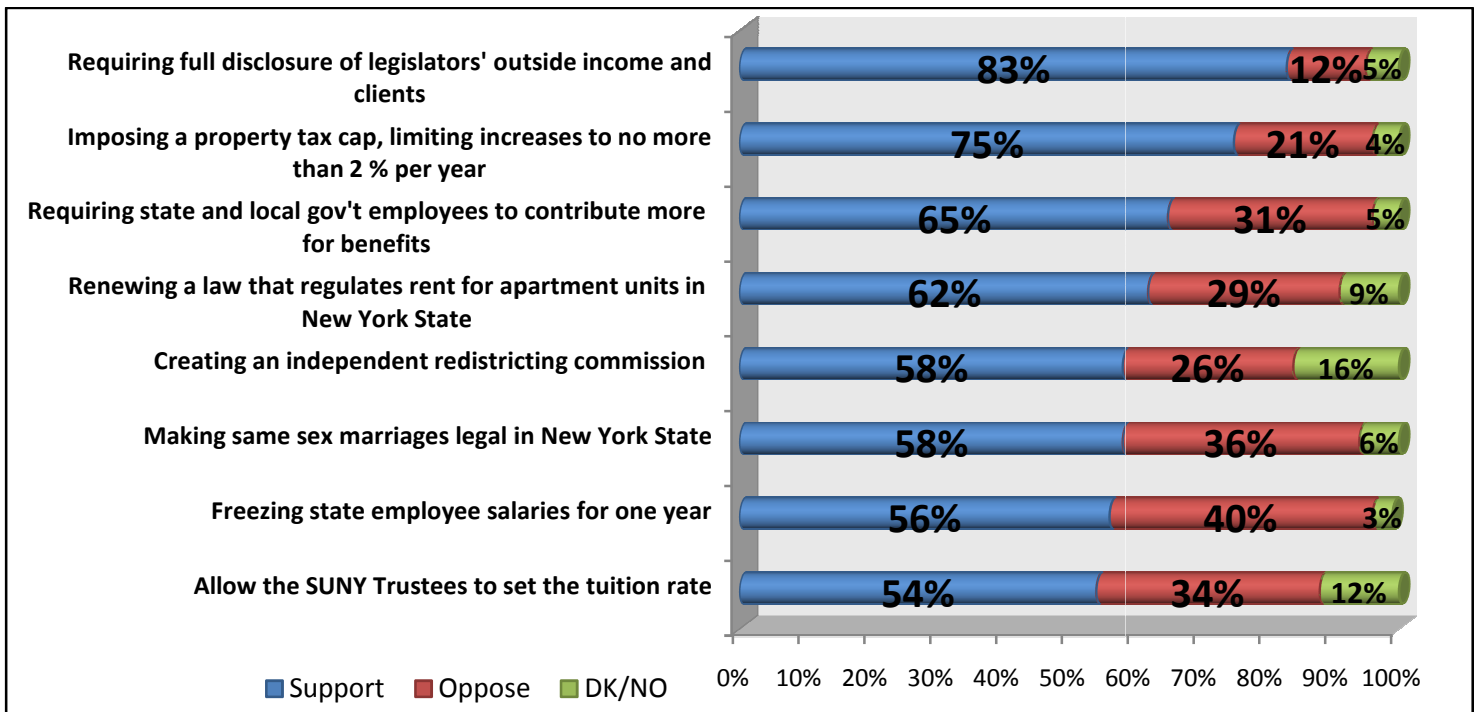
Currently, nine percent of New York voters say the fiscal condition of the state is excellent (one percent) or good (eight percent), compared to 90 percent who say it is fair (32 percent) or poor (58 percent).

Property Tax Cap & New Ethics Law Top Voters’ To Do List for Legislative Session

Nearly two-thirds of voters say that either a property tax cap (37 percent) or a new ethics law for state legislators including greater disclosure of outside income (27 percent) is the most important issue that they want legislators to address before the June end of session. Legalizing same sex marriages was identified by 13 percent of voters, extending rent regulations by 12 percent, and creating an independent redistricting commission by eight percent.

“A property tax cap and new ethics law are the top two priorities for Democrats, Republicans and independents, downstate suburban and upstate voters, moderates and conservatives. For New York City voters, ethics is number one, followed by extending rent regulations, one point ahead of the property tax cap. Liberal voters put legalizing same sex marriages at the top of the list, slightly ahead of a property tax cap and ethics,” Greenberg said.

Majority of Voters Support Eight Key Issues Being Debated in Albany, Some Overwhelmingly



“Voters overwhelmingly support requiring legislators to fully disclose their outside income and clients and creating a two-percent property tax cap. Strong majorities of voters want government employees to contribute more for their benefits, an extension of rent regulation laws and an independent redistrict commission. And voters also support legalizing same sex marriages, allowing SUNY trustees to set tuition rates and freezing state employee salaries for one year,” Greenberg said.

“Same sex marriage now has more support than it’s ever had, with voters 55 and older and Republicans being nearly evenly divided, and voters younger than 55 and Democrats and independents being strongly supportive,” Greenberg said. “Among the 62 percent of voters who want rent regulations renewed, 28 percent of those voters want the law renewed as is, while 61 percent of those voters want the laws strengthened for tenants.”

Voters Say Cuomo is Fair to Public Employee Unions; Side with Wisconsin Unions Over Walker

“Nearly two-thirds of voters say that in his first three months as Governor, Cuomo has treated public employee unions fairly. At least 60 percent of voters from every region and party say so, as do 57 percent of voters who are either union members or have a union member in their household,” Greenberg said.

“When it comes to the political fight between Wisconsin’s unions and its governor, by a nearly two-to-one margin, New York voters say that the unions are more right than Governor Walker. Republicans strongly say Walker is more right, however, Democrats, overwhelmingly side with the unions,” Greenberg said.

Voters Give New York’s Public Employee Unions a Mixed Bag of News

“While voters would like to see state and local government employees contribute more for their health care and pension benefits, and they support freezing state workers’ salaries for one year, by a small 51-46 percent majority, voters support allowing public employees to have the right to strike, which is currently prohibited by the Taylor Law. Republicans, voters 55 and older and voters earning more than \$100,000 strongly oppose public employees being allowed to strike, while Democrats, voters younger than 35, and those earning less than \$50,000 strongly support allowing public employees to strike,” Greenberg said. “Non-union households are virtually evenly divided, while union households favor the ability to strike by a 55-42 percent margin.

“By a 56-34 percent margin, voters say New York should keep the Triborough Amendment, which keeps current salary and benefit levels in place for public employees when their contracts expire,” Greenberg said. “A majority or plurality of every demographic group supports keeping it, although Democrats support it more than Republicans, downstaters more than upstaters, and union households more than non-union households.”

Obama Favorability and Re-elect Prospects See Uptick

“President Obama’s favorability rating, 63-34 percent, hit its highest level since January 2010,” Greenberg said. “The boost came largely from independent, suburban and younger voters. Similarly, the percentage of voters wanting to see him re-elected next year is up to 52 percent, the highest level since Siena started asking in December, while 39 percent prefer ‘someone else,’ up from 49-43 percent since last month,” Greenberg said.

Voters’ View on Direction of NYS Improves

“Forty-six percent of voters think New York is on the right track, up from 43 percent last month, while 41 percent say the state is headed in the wrong direction, down from 45 percent last month. This is only the second time in the last three years that more New Yorkers have an optimistic view on the direction of the state,” Greenberg said.

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This Siena College Poll was conducted April 4-6, 2011 by telephone calls to 777 New York State registered voters. It has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percentage points. Data was statistically adjusted by age, party, gender, and region to ensure representativeness. Sampling was conducted via random digit dialing to landline and cell phones weighted to reflect known population patterns. 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, please call Steven Greenberg at 518-469-9858. Survey cross-tabulations and frequencies can be found at: www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY.



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Siena College Poll Trends – April 2011

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2011	73	18	8
March 2011	69	20	11
February 2011	77	16	7
January 2011	70	17	13
December 2010	66	25	8
November 2010	64	26	9
October 31, 2010*	57	38	5
October 20, 2010*	62	34	3
October 5, 2010*	56	37	7
September 2010	60	31	9
August 2010	61	27	13
July 2010	62	25	13
June 2010	59	26	15
May 2010	67	21	12
April 2010	66	18	15
March 22, 2010	63	22	15
March 8, 2010	63	25	12
February 2010	66	21	13
January 2010	67	21	12
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)

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
April 2011	11	43	34	7	4
March 2011	8	43	34	7	8
February 2011	10	47	29	4	10
January 2011	10	34	24	4	28
HIGHEST EVER	11 (4/11)	47 (2/11)	34 (4/11, 3/11)	7 (4/11, 3/11)	28 (1/11)
LOWEST EVER	8 (3/11)	34 (1/11)	24 (1/11)	4 (2/11, 1/11)	4 (4/11)

Based on what you've seen of him as Governor so far, would you describe Andrew Cuomo as a liberal, a moderate or a conservative?

DATE	LIBERAL	MODERATE	CONSERVATIVE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2011	18	57	15	10
March 2011	20	60	11	9
February 2011	21	57	15	7
January 2011	25	55	10	10
HIGHEST EVER	25 (1/11)	60 (3/11)	15 (4/11, 2/11)	10 (4/11, 1/11)
LOWEST EVER	21 (2/11)	55 (1/11)	10 (1/11)	7 (2/11)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2011	22	39	39
February 2011	19	41	39
December 2010	22	42	36
July 2010	20	40	41
HIGHEST EVER	28 (7/05)	42 (12/10)	50 (4/05)
LOWEST EVER	19 (2/11, 4/05)	30 (4/05)	36 (12/10, 6/09)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2011	11	19	69
February 2011	11	17	71
December 2010	9	19	71
HIGHEST EVER	15 (6/09)	23 (6/09)	82 (11/08)
LOWEST EVER	9 (12/10)	8 (7/08)	62 (6/09)

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Barack Obama?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2011	63	34	3
March 2011	60	37	3
February 2011	62	35	3
January 2011	61	36	3
December 2010	55	42	3
November 2010	58	37	5
October 31, 2010*	51	46	3
October 20, 2010*	56	41	3
September 2010	60	36	4
July 2010	60	37	3
April 2010	59	35	6
February 2010	61	35	4
January 2010	64	32	4
HIGHEST EVER	81 (1/09)	46 (10/31/10)	40 (11/06)
LOWEST EVER	48 (11/06)	10 (1/09)	3 (4/11, etc.)

Barack Obama is running for re-election as President in 2012. I know it's a ways off, but as things stand now, would you vote to re-elect him or would you prefer someone else?^

DATE	RE-ELECT	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2011	52	39	9
March 2011	49	43	8
February 2011	49	43	8
January 2011	50	40	10
December 2010	43	47	10
HIGHEST EVER	52 (4/11)	47 (12/10)	10 (1/11, 12/10)
LOWEST EVER	43 (12/10)	39 (4/11)	8 (3/11, 2/11)

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
April 2011	1	8	32	58	0
March 2011	1	7	30	62	1
February 2011	0	7	26	66	1
November 2010	0	7	27	65	1
March 22, 2010	1	6	25	67	1
January 2010	1	9	27	62	1
HIGHEST EVER	1 (4/11, etc.)	14 (9/08)	43 (10/08)	67 (3/22/10)	4 (9/08)
LOWEST EVER	0 (many)	6 (3/22/10, etc.)	25 (3/22/10)	41 (9/08)	0 (4/11, etc.)

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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
April 2011	46	41	13
March 2011	43	45	12
February 2011	47	39	14
January 2011	36	50	14
December 2010	29	60	11
November 2010	32	54	15
October 31, 2010*	14	76	10
October 20, 2010*	14	75	12
October 5, 2010*	16	72	11
September 2010	21	68	11
August 2010	21	67	12
July 2010	20	71	9
June 2010	18	65	17
May 2010	16	72	12
April 2010	20	68	11
March 22, 2010	18	70	12
February 2010	25	63	12
January 2010	27	61	12
HIGHEST EVER	52 (11/06)	76 (10/31/10)	30 (1/07)
LOWEST EVER	14 (10/31 & 20/10)	26 (1/07)	9 (7/10)

Poll Trend Notes: * All surveys are of registered voters except for the polls of 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 January 2010.

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

^ Inconsequential wording change.