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Siena College Poll:

Voters Want Cuomo to Focus on New York's Economy & Budget Santa Should Give Cuomo Revitalized Economy & Balanced Budget *Raises for State Judges? No. Raises for State Legislators? No, No, No!* *Strong Support for Millionaire's Tax; Strong Opposition to Health, Education Cuts* **Currently, Even 'Blue' New York State is Not Prepared to Re-elect Obama**

Loudonville, NY. When it comes to Governor-elect Andrew Cuomo's upcoming Inaugural Address, two-thirds of voters think the primary topics should be fiscal, with 44 percent saying he should focus on revitalizing the state's economy and 22 percent suggesting the focus be on resolving the state's budget crisis. Similarly, when asked what 'gift' they would put under Cuomo's Christmas tree if they could play Santa Claus, nearly one-third of voters would give a revitalized upstate economy and another 29 percent would give a balanced state budget with no new taxes, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll of registered voters released today.

A majority of voters oppose raises for state judges and more than two-thirds oppose raises for state legislators. When it comes to state budget ideas, nearly three-quarters of voters oppose cutting education by \$1 billion to help close the deficit, more than two-thirds oppose cutting Medicaid and health care by \$1 billion, however, increasing income tax rates on million dollar earners has the support of nearly three-quarters of voters. Looking ahead two years, New York voters are currently divided on whether they would re-elect President Barack Obama, with only 43 percent saying they are prepared to re-elect him and 47 percent preferring 'someone else.'

"The issues voters want to hear Andrew Cuomo talk about as he takes the oath of office to become New York's next Governor are the economy, jobs and the state budget. While New Yorkers certainly care about education, health care, state government reform and myriad other issues, if Cuomo was forced to limit his Inaugural Address to just one topic, voters overwhelmingly want it to be one that relates to the fiscal picture of the state," said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg.

"And if voters could play Santa Claus and leave a gift under the Cuomo Christmas tree, more than two-thirds would leave a gift that improves the fiscal health of New York by improving the economy to produce jobs or balancing the budget," Greenberg said.

Cuomo Favorability Remains High; Job Performance Rating as Governor-elect is Mixed

Cuomo is viewed favorably by 66 percent of voters and unfavorably by 25 percent. More than three-quarters of Democrats and nearly two-thirds of independents give Cuomo a positive favorability rating, as do a slim plurality of Republicans, 47-45 percent. When asked to rate the job he has done so far as Governor-elect, seven percent of voters rate it as excellent, 36 percent rate it as good, 33 percent say fair and six percent say poor.

“Approaching the beginning of his term as Governor, Cuomo remains very popular, with two-thirds of voters having a favorable view of him and only one-quarter viewing him unfavorably,” Greenberg said. “He has a better than two-to-one favorability rating in every region of the state, and even Republicans who viewed Cuomo unfavorably last month by a 39-51 percent margin, have an ever-so-slightly favorable view of him.

“When it comes to the job Cuomo’s doing as he prepares to become Governor, however, voters are less than enthusiastic. Only 43 percent of voters view the job he’s doing as excellent or good, and almost the same number, 39 percent, say he’s doing a fair or poor job. Republicans are far less impressed and by a better than two-to-one margin, give him a negative job performance rating,” Greenberg said.

How Would Voters Decide if they Had the Chance to Be State Senators?

What would you do as State Senator? Would you vote for or against the following proposals?			
Proposal	For	Against	DK/NO
Requiring state legislators to detail the amount and source of all their income earned outside of their legislative duties	85%	14%	1%
Limiting to 2% the amount property taxes can rise each year	76%	21%	3%
Increasing the personal income tax rate on families making more than \$1 million a year to help close the \$9 billion deficit in next year’s budget	73%	26%	2%
Legalizing the use of prescription marijuana for medical purposes	60%	37%	3%
Allowing wine to be sold in supermarkets and grocery stores in New York	59%	39%	2%
Making same sex marriages legal in new York State	56%	43%	1%
Increasing the salaries of state judges, who have not received a pay raise since 1998	43%	52%	5%
Imposing a new tax of a nickel per 12 ounce serving on sugared beverages, such as soda, in New York	43%	56%	1%
Reducing state aid to Medicaid and health care by \$1 billion to help close the state’s \$9 billion deficit in next year’s budget	29%	68%	3%
Increasing the salaries of state legislators, who have not received a pay raise since 1998	27%	69%	4%
Reducing state aid to education by \$1 billion to help close the state’s \$9 billion deficit in next year’s budget	23%	74%	2%

Source: Siena College Poll, December 13, 2010

Voters Oppose Raises for Judges and REALLY Oppose Raises for State Legislators

“Voters were asked a series of 11 questions, seeking their input on how they would vote on potential legislative proposals if they got to be a State Senator for a day,” Greenberg said. “One thing that is clear is that they are certainly not in the mood to give raises to elected officials.

“By a 52-43 percent margin, voters oppose giving raises to state judges, and by an overwhelming 69-27 percent margin they oppose raises for state legislators, despite the fact that these officials have not had raises in more than a decade. A majority of every group of voters opposes raises for legislators,” Greenberg said.

Opposition High to Cutting Education or Medicaid to Balance the Budget; Millionaire’s Tax Supported

“By a better than three-to-one margin, voters say they would vote against cutting education by \$1 billion to help close the state’s \$9 billion budget deficit. By a slightly smaller, but still overwhelming margin, they would also vote against cutting Medicaid and health care by \$1 billion to help balance the budget. Voters of every party and region oppose these cuts to help close the budget deficit,” Greenberg said.

“On the other hand, voters do strongly support higher income tax rates for millionaires to help close the budget deficit. Even a majority of Republicans and conservative voters say they would vote for a millionaire’s tax,” Greenberg said.

“A majority of voters also say they would vote in favor of requiring legislators to disclose all outside income, for a property tax cap, to allow the use of medical marijuana, to allow wine to be sold in grocery stores, and to legalize same sex marriages. They would, however, vote down a proposed soda tax,” Greenberg said.

In ‘Blue’ New York, Obama Not Doing Well with Voters, Especially Republicans but also Independents

“President Obama currently has the lowest favorability rating among *registered* New York voters since he’s taken office, with 55 percent having a favorable view of him and 42 percent having an unfavorable view. For the first time a majority of independent voters now view Obama unfavorably. Over the last month, he’s also lost ground with Democrats, New York City voters, younger voters, and liberals,” Greenberg said.

“And when asked whether they are prepared to re-elect Obama as President, only 43 percent of voters say they are, while 47 percent say they would prefer ‘someone else.’ While 62 percent of Democrats are prepared to re-elect the President, 83 percent of Republicans and 50 percent of independent voters say they want someone else.”

Voters Don't Like or Don't Know the Leaders of the Legislature

“Speaker Sheldon Silver has a nearly two-to-one negative favorability rating, with 22 percent of voters viewing him favorably and 42 viewing him unfavorably. Senator Dean Skelos also has a two-to-one negative favorability rating, 9-19 percent, but he is unknown to 71 percent of voters. Senator John Sampson and Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb are both unknown to more than three-quarters of voters,” Greenberg said. “Voters are negative toward Speaker Silver, however, the other legislative leaders largely fly beneath the public’s radar.”

Direction of State and Nation, Nearly Identical, Both Strongly Negative

“By nearly identical two-to-one margins, voters say the state and the nation are headed in the wrong direction. Only 29 percent of voters think the state is on the right track and similarly only 30 percent think the country is on the right track. Sixty percent of voters say the state is headed in the wrong direction and 59 percent say the country is headed in the wrong direction,” Greenberg said. “The mood of voters is pretty grim when they look at their state or the nation. Clearly President Obama and Governor-elect Cuomo have their work cut out for them.”

Governor Paterson Not Leaving Office on a High Note

“Governor David Paterson’s standing with voters continues to be highly negative, even as he approaches his final days in office,” Greenberg said. “By a nearly two-to-one margin, voters have an unfavorable view of Paterson, 32-61 percent. And even worse, only 17 percent of voters think he’s doing an excellent or good job as Governor, while 82 percent saying he’s doing a fair or poor job. Governor Paterson’s favorability and job performance ratings have been relatively stagnant for the last year. He can only hope that time will allow voters to look back on him and his tenure more fondly.”

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This SRI survey was conducted December 6-8, 2010 by telephone calls to 806 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 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 – December, 2010

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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	71 (6/09)	42 (10/06)	24 (1/06, 2/06, 9/07)
LOWEST EVER	44 (8/06, 10/06)	14 (8/09)	3 (10/20/10)

* Likely voters

Overall, do you think New York State government, under the new Cuomo Administration, will improve the quality of life for the people of New York over the next two years, keep things about the same or that the quality of life here in New York will worsen?

DATE	IMPROVE	STAY THE SAME	WORSEN	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2010	45	42	10	4
November 2010	41	44	14	1
HIGHEST EVER	45 (12/10)	44 (11/10)	14 (11/10)	4 (12/10)
LOWEST EVER	41 (11/10)	42 (12/10)	10 (12/10)	1 (11/10)

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

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

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about John Sampson?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2010	10	14	76
July 2010	8	9	83
HIGHEST EVER	10 (12/10)	14 (12/10)	83 (7/10)
LOWEST EVER	8 (7/10)	9 (7/10)	76 (12/10)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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)

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Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the Tea Party Movement?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2010	31	52	17
November 2010	33	49	18
October 31, 2010*	39	51	9
October 20, 2010*	34	52	15
October 5, 2010*	40	50	10
September 2010	34	49	18
HIGHEST EVER	40 (10/5/10)	52 (12/10, 10/20/10)	18 (11/10, 9/10)
LOWEST EVER	31 (12/10)	49 (11/10)	9 (10/31/10)

* Likely voters

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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 (12/10, etc.)

* Likely voters

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about David Paterson?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2010	32	61	7
November 2010	30	58	12
October 31, 2010*	30	60	10
October 20, 2010*	33	58	10
September 2010	32	59	8
August 2010	32	60	9
July 2010	30	61	9
June 2010	31	56	14
May 2010	32	58	10
April 2010	25	65	10
March 8, 2010	21	67	12
February 2010	35	55	10
January 2010	38	52	10
HIGHEST EVER	64 (11/08)	67 (3/8/10)	76 (1/07)
LOWEST EVER	17 (1/07)	8 (1/07)	7 (12/10)

* Likely voters

How would you rate the job that David Paterson is doing as Governor – excellent, good, fair, or poor?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2010	2	15	41	41	2
July 2010	2	15	38	44	1
April 2010	2	15	34	49	1
March 22, 2010	2	14	39	44	1
March 8, 2010	2	17	33	47	2
February 2010	2	20	39	37	1
January 2010	3	21	44	31	1
HIGHEST EVER	9 (12/08)	48 (10/08)	46 (3/09, 2/09)	49 (4/10)	32 (4/08)
LOWEST EVER	1 (10/09, etc.)	14 (3/22/10)	28 (5/08)	4 (9/08, etc.)	1 (7/10, etc.)

Siena College Poll Trends – December, 2010

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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
December 2010	30	59	11
November 2010	39	51	10
July 2010	41	52	8
April 2010	45	47	9
March 22, 2010	36	54	11
HIGHEST EVER	62 (5/09)	69 (10/08)	17 (9/08)
LOWEST EVER	19 (10/08)	24 (12/09)	7 (5/09)

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
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)

* Likely voters

Poll Trend Notes: 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.

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.