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Siena College Poll:

Will Cuomo Succeed on Major Issues? Voters More Optimistic Than Not

Creating New Jobs Is Most Important Issue for Voters; Budget is Second
Majority Want Reps & Dems to Jointly Share Power Running State Senate
Cancel White House Speculation, Focus on NY, Voters Tell Governor-Elect

Loudonville, NY. Most New Yorkers have a favorable view of Governor-elect Andrew Cuomo and a majority say they are somewhat or very optimistic that Cuomo will be successful in addressing several key issues, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll of registered voters released today. Creating new jobs and balancing the state budget are the two most important issues voters want at the top of his priority list.

More than eight in ten voters do not like speculation of a Cuomo presidential candidacy, preferring that he prove he can succeed as governor first. When it comes to control of the State Senate, the majority thinks that the two major parties should share power, jointly running the Senate, while only 22 percent of voters want to see either the Republicans or the Democrats control that house of the Legislature.

“Fresh off his victory over Carl Paladino, 64 percent of voters have a favorable view of Andrew Cuomo, compared to 26 percent who view him unfavorably, his best favorability rating since May,” said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. “Voters know the issues they want Cuomo to work on and they are at least somewhat optimistic he will succeed in addressing them.

“Creating jobs is the most important issue for voters, and it’s the issue on which voters are most optimistic that Cuomo will succeed,” Greenberg said. “Three-quarters of voters, including 65 percent of Republicans, are

optimistic that Cuomo will develop programs to create new jobs, while only 24 percent are not very or not at all optimistic.”

What issues would you like to see Governor-elect Cuomo make his top priorities?			
Issue	Top Priority	2nd Priority	Top 2 Priorities
Developing programs that help create new jobs	48%	23%	71%
Balancing the state’s budget	31%	33%	64%
Enacting a property tax cap	9%	18%	27%
Enacting a stronger ethics law, requiring full disclosure of outside income by state officials	6%	16%	22%
Requiring new legislative districts be created by an independent, non-partisan commission	4%	8%	12%
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“By a 59-40 percent margin, voters are optimistic that the incoming governor will solve the state budget deficit. Voters are least optimistic on enacting a property tax cap, but even there by a 52-41 percent majority voters are optimistic. By 26 and 16 point margins, respectively, voters are confident Cuomo will successfully pass a new ethics law and require non-partisan redistricting,” Greenberg said. “Democrats are overwhelmingly optimistic that Cuomo will succeed on all the issues and independent voters are also optimistic on all of the issues. Republicans are optimistic on jobs and nearly divided on ethics reform and the state budget, however, they are not optimistic on enacting a property tax cap, non-partisan redistricting or making state government less dysfunctional.”

Voters are divided on whether the new Cuomo Administration will improve the quality of life for New Yorkers over the next two years. Forty-one percent of voters say the quality of life will improve, 44 percent say things will stay about the same and 14 percent believe the quality of life will worsen. A plurality of Democrats and New York City voters say the quality of life will improve. Independents are evenly divided between improvement and status quo. And a plurality of Republicans, suburbanites and upstate voters say things will remain the same.

“While there’s been early speculation by some that the governorship will merely be a stepping stone for Cuomo’s bid for the White House, that kind of talk does not make voters happy,” Greenberg said. “Only 11 percent of voters like the Cuomo presidential speculation, while an overwhelming 85 percent, including 79 percent of Democrats, say they don’t like the speculation because Cuomo needs to prove he can succeed as governor first.”

Voters Want Democrats & Republicans to Share Power and Jointly Run the State Senate

“While a majority of Republicans want to see their party take a narrow majority and control the Senate, a majority of Democrats and independents want the two major parties to share power and jointly control the chamber. Overall, 53 percent of New York voters want shared power, with 22 percent each saying the Democrats or Republicans should control the Senate,” Greenberg said. “A majority of voters from every region want a shared power relationship, as do a majority of voters who view the Tea Party Unfavorably. Even a plurality of voters who have a favorable view of the Tea Party want to see shared power in the Senate.”

Paladino Viewed Unfavorably by 2/3 of Voters; They Say He Should Not Remain Active in Politics

“Since the election, voters’ view of Paladino has only worsened, with 68 percent of voters, including a majority of Republicans and those favorable to the Tea Party, viewing Paladino unfavorably,” Greenberg said. “Paladino’s favorability rating does not hit 40 percent with any demographic group. And when asked whether he should or should not remain active in New York politics, the answer voters give is a resounding ‘no.’ By a 58-27 percent margin, voters say Paladino should not stay on the New York political scene. A plurality of Republicans and Tea Party supporters say he should, while a plurality or majority of every other group says he should not.”

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Support for Same Sex Marriage; Opposition to State Worker Layoffs; No Cuts for Education & Health

“By a 52-39 percent majority, New York voters favor legalizing same sex marriages. In August 2009, the last time voters were asked in a Siena College Poll, support for same sex marriages was at 50-44 percent,” Greenberg said. “There is strong support among Democrats, independents, women, and younger voters. Same sex marriage is supported by at least a 12-point margin in every region of the state. A majority of Republicans, conservatives, Protestants, and those favorable to the Tea Party oppose legalizing same sex marriages.

“Voters oppose Governor David Paterson’s plans to lay off nearly 1,000 state workers to help balance the budget by a 53-40 percent majority. Republicans and those favorable to the Tea Party are the only groups where a majority supports the Governor’s plan. A majority of voters in every region oppose the plan,” Greenberg said.

“While balancing the state budget is the second most important issue voters want Cuomo to address, a majority would like him to do so without cutting spending for education and health care,” Greenberg said. “Only about one-quarter of voters support spending cuts in both of those areas, with another 18 percent favoring cuts to one or the other. However, 52 percent of voters, including a majority or plurality of voters from every region, urge Cuomo and the Legislature to ‘not cut spending to either health care or education, even if it means raising taxes.’ State leaders certainly have their work cut out for them if they want to balance the budget, not raise taxes – as the legislative leaders and Governor-elect have said is their plan – and keep their constituents happy.”

Voters See Continued Bleak NY Fiscal Picture; ‘Right Track/Wrong Direction’ Measure Up, Still Negative

“Unchanged since March, only seven percent of voters think the fiscal condition of New York is either excellent or good, compared to 92 percent who rate it fair (27 percent) or poor (65 percent). Between 89 and 93 percent of voters have rated the fiscal condition of the state as fair or poor since the beginning of 2009,” Greenberg said.

“When it comes to the direction of the state, 32 percent believe New York is on the right track, compared to a majority of 54 percent who say the state is headed in the wrong direction. That is up considerably from 14-76 percent last month among likely voters and it is the most optimistic voters have been on this measure since the beginning of the year. There was a huge bounce in this question after the 2006 gubernatorial election. This year’s election provided a significant uptick – particularly among Democrats and downstate voters – but there is a long way to go before most New Yorkers think the state is headed in the right direction.”

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This SRI survey was conducted November 8-10, 2010 by telephone calls to 802 New York State registered voters. It has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percentage points. Data was statistically adjusted by age, party 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 – November, 2010

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Carl Paladino?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
November 2010	19	68	13
October 31, 2010*	31	62	7
October 20, 2010*	23	69	8
October 5, 2010*	30	59	11
September 2010	32	36	32
August 2010	22	19	59
July 2010	16	16	69
June 2010	16	17	67
May 2010	15	10	76
April 2010	11	13	76
HIGHEST EVER	32 (9/10)	69 (10/20/10)	76 (5/10, 4/10)
LOWEST EVER	11 (4/10)	10 (5/10)	7 (10/31/10)

* Likely voters

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Kirsten Gillibrand?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
November 2010	50	24	26
October 31, 2010*	52	34	14
October 20, 2010*	51	31	18
September 2010	43	26	30
August 2010	40	29	31
July 2010	34	29	37
June 2010	36	27	36
May 2010	42	24	34
April 2010	34	25	41
March 22, 2010	32	29	39
February 2010	34	28	38
January 2010	30	32	38
HIGHEST EVER	52 (10/31/10)	34 (10/31/10)	56 (1/09)
LOWEST EVER	26 (3/09)	14 (1/09)	14 (10/31/10)

* Likely voters

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Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Charles Schumer?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
November 2010	67	24	9
October 31, 2010*	64	32	4
October 20, 2010*	66	29	5
September 2010	58	32	10
July 2010	60	28	12
June 2010	54	32	14
May 2010	64	27	10
March 22, 2010	62	27	10
February 2010	61	29	10
HIGHEST EVER	70 (7/05)	32 (10/31/10, 9/10, 6/10)	17 (2/05)
LOWEST EVER	54 (6/10)	20 (2/05, 11/06)	4 (10/31/10)

* Likely voters

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Eric Schneiderman?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
November 2010	27	19	54
October 31, 2010*	29	27	44
October 20, 2010*	25	23	52
September 2010	21	16	63
May 2010	10	6	84
HIGHEST EVER	29 (10/31/10)	27 (10/31/10)	86 (11/09)
LOWEST EVER	8 (11/09)	6 (5/10, 11/09)	44 (10/31/10)

* Likely voters

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Thomas DiNapoli?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
November 2010	30	26	44
October 31, 2010*	26	36	37
October 20, 2010*	30	26	44
September 2010	21	16	63
August 2010	22	17	61
July 2010	21	15	64
June 2010	19	16	64
May 2010	25	12	63
April 2010	20	12	69
March 22, 2010	19	15	66
HIGHEST EVER	30 (11/10, 10/20/10)	36 (10/31/10)	80 (6/07)
LOWEST EVER	7 (6/07, 5/07)	10 (12/09, 11/08)	37 (10/31/10)

* Likely voters

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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 (10/20/10)	18 (11/10, 9/10)
LOWEST EVER	33 (11/10)	49 (11/10)	9 (10/31/10)

* Likely voters

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New York State faces a multi-billion-dollar budget gap over the current and next fiscal years. [PREVIOUS WORDING: Governor David Paterson said that his proposed state budget closes a budget deficit of more than 8 billion dollars.] Given that health care and education account for the two largest portions of the state budget, which of the following positions best describes how you would prefer Governor-elect Cuomo and the State Legislature to close the deficit? (Choices were rotated): cut spending to both health care and education to help balance the budget; cut spending to health care but not education; cut spending to education but not health care; or do not cut spending to either health care or education, even if it means raising taxes.

DATE	BOTH ED. & HEALTH	HEALTH NOT ED.	ED. NOT HEALTH	NOT ED. OR HEALTH EVEN IF TAXES	DON'T KNOW/ NO OPINION
November 2010	26	12	6	52	3
March 22, 2010	23	8	8	52	9
March 8, 2010	20	8	8	59	5
HIGHEST EVER	26 (11/10)	12 (11/10)	8 (3/22/10)	59 (3/8/10)	9 (3/22/10)
LOWEST EVER	20 (3/8/10)	8 (3/22/10)	6 (11/10)	52 (11/10, 3/22/10)	3 (11/10)

Do you support or oppose the Governor and Legislature passing a law to legalize same sex marriages in New York? [PREVIOUS WORDING: The State Assembly has passed a bill to legalize same sex marriages in New York State. Governor Paterson has said he supports it. To date, the State Senate has not voted on the bill. Do you support or oppose the State Senate passing a bill to legalize same sex marriages, virtually ensuring it would become law in New York?]

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
November 2010	52	39	9
August 2009	50	44	6
HIGHEST EVER	53 (4/09)	46 (5/09)	9 (11/10)
LOWEST EVER	46 (5/09)	39 (11/10, 5/09)	6 (8/09, 7/09)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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 (10/31/10, 10/2010, 7/10)

* Likely voters

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
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)

Which of the following choices best describes how you currently feel about your future in New York State – I am never moving out of New York State; I currently have no plans to move out of New York; I may move out of New York during my retirement, but not before; unless conditions in New York get better, I'm going to leave; I would like to move out of New York State as quickly as I can?

DATE	NEVER MOVING	CURRENTLY NO PLANS	MAYBE IN RETIREMENT	UNLESS IMPROVEMENT	AS QUICKLY AS I CAN	DON'T KNOW/ NO OPINION
November 2010	19	37	22	10	11	1
August 2009	21	38	21	13	7	0
HIGHEST EVER	21 (8/09)	38 (8/09)	27 (7/08)	13 (8/09)	11 (11/10)	2 (5/09, 7/08)
LOWEST EVER	17 (7/08)	36 (5/09)	21 (8/09)	9 (7/08)	7 (8/09, 7/08)	0 (8/09)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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)	8 (9/10)

* Likely voters

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
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 (many)	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 (5/09, 2/09)

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
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.