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Siena College Poll:

81% of Voters Say More Arrests of Legislators for Corruption Are Likely; About 1/3 Say *Their* Legislator Could Be Arrested

Voters Split on Which Is More Important for Reducing Corruption in Legislature: Law Enforcement Reforms or Electoral Process Reforms

Federal Prosecutors & AG Should Take Lead in Cleaning Up Corruption

Overwhelming Support for Term Limits for Legislators; Support for Limiting Candidates to One Party Line & Full-Time Legislature with No Outside Jobs

Loudonville, NY. Nine out of ten voters say corruption in the New York State Legislature is a serious problem (41 percent *very* serious). Eight out of ten say it's likely that there will be more arrests of state legislators in the near future, and the arrests could include their own assemblymember, 35 percent say, or their state senator, 30 percent say, according to a new Siena College Poll of New York voters released today. Voters are virtually evenly divided on whether focusing on law enforcement or the electoral process is more important in fighting corruption.

Federal prosecutors and Attorney General Eric Schneiderman were each identified by more than one-quarter of voters as best in taking the lead in trying to clean up corruption in the State Legislature. Governor Andrew Cuomo was chosen by 18 percent and local county district attorneys and the Legislature itself were each chosen by 10 percent. Voters overwhelmingly support legislative term limits 82-17 percent and favor limiting candidates to one party line 55-40 percent. And support for a full-time Legislature with no outside jobs is 54-42 percent.

More than half of voters describe themselves as "distrustful" and "cynical" of New York politics and 91 percent say legislative corruption is a serious problem. A staggering 81 percent of voters think it's not only possible but likely there will be more legislators arrested in the near future," said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg.

"Clearly, the recent arrests have eroded confidence in the Legislature. In fact, voters are closely divided with 50 percent saying most legislators are "honest and law-abiding" and 47 percent saying most "cannot be trusted,"

"Favorability ratings for both houses of the Legislature are down and about one-third of voters think it likely that their local assemblymember or senator could receive a visit from law enforcement and get arrested on corruption charges," Greenberg said. "While 60 percent hope the arrests a few weeks ago are a big step in cleaning up the system, 39 percent said they were not surprised since "a lot of politicians are crooks."

“When it comes to who should take the lead in trying to clean up the corruption, voters think it should be federal prosecutors or Schneiderman,” Greenberg said. “Surprisingly, local district attorneys are not seen as any better leading the effort than is the Legislature itself, and Cuomo falls somewhere in the middle.

“Even so, 62 percent of voters say they are confident Cuomo will succeed in pushing through reforms to reduce corruption in the state political system, including nearly three-quarters of Democrats and small majorities of Republicans and independents,” Greenberg said. “But when it comes to what kinds of reforms are most important in fighting corruption, voters are evenly divided with 46 percent, including a majority of Democrats, saying electoral reforms, while 45 percent, including a majority of independents, say law enforcement reforms.

“On the electoral reform side, there is overwhelming support for legislative term limits by at least three-quarters of every demographic group. There is also support, albeit much narrower, for limiting candidates to being on only one party line, and making the Legislature full time rather than part time, prohibiting outside jobs for legislators and increasing their salary accordingly,” Greenberg said.

“Despite the fact that a majority of voters define themselves as cynics rather than idealists when it comes to New York politics, 31 percent say that given all the events surrounding the recent corruption arrests they are more confident New York will move forward in the right direction, compared to 20 percent who are less confident. Nearly half of voters, 47 percent, say recent events have not affected their confidence in the state moving forward,” Greenberg said. “Forty percent of Democrats are more confident of the state moving forward, compared to only 25 percent of Republicans and 19 percent of independents.”

Favorability ratings for the Legislature and individual legislators are:

Assembly ó 39 percent favorable, 49 percent unfavorable, 12 percent don’t know/no opinion (down from 44-42-14 percent in February)

Senate ó 40-53-7 percent (down from 45-46-9 percent in February)

Sheldon Silver ó 28-39-33 percent (up from 28-39-38 percent in January)

Dean Skelos ó 15-24-61 percent (down from 16-20-65 percent in January)

Jeff Klein ó 17-15-68 percent (up from 12-14-73 percent in January)

Malcolm Smith ó 11-31-58 percent (little changed from 11-29-61 percent in July 2009)

Schneiderman has a 27-18-55 percent favorability rating, up from 19-17-65 percent last month. U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara has a 13-12 percent favorability rating, with 75 percent having no opinion about him.

“Even with his big time busts, Bharara is far from being New York’s Eliot Ness, as he remains largely unknown to three-quarters of voters,” Greenberg said. “And despite coverage of his arrest, Smith is no more known, nor viewed any more unfavorably than in the aftermath of the Senate coup debacle four years ago,” Greenberg said.

Cuomo, Still Popular, Sees Ratings Drop – Slightly Again – for Fourth Consecutive Month

Cuomo now has 62-33 percent favorability rating, down from 64-30 percent last month and 72-21 percent in December 2012. Fifty-two percent say Cuomo is doing an excellent or good job as governor and 47 percent say he's doing only a fair or poor job (down from 54-44 percent last month and 60-38 percent in January).

“Drip, drip, drip. That seems to be what's happening to Cuomo's approval ratings. Over the last four months, there has been a small drop each month, however, when his current ratings are compared to those four months ago, there is noticeable erosion. His favorable rating is down 10 points since December, while his unfavorable rating is up 12 points. His positive job performance rating is down eight points, while his negative rating is up nine points,” Greenberg said. “Over the same four months, the percentage of voters who say the state is headed on the right track has fallen seven points, while the percentage of those who say the state is headed in the wrong direction is up 10 points.

“Similarly those who are inclined to re-elect him next year has fallen from 62 percent in December to 54 percent last month and 53 percent today,” Greenberg said. “While clearly not in free fall, the Governor's standing with voters has fallen from spectacular to merely very good.”

Fracking Continues to Divide Voters, with Small Plurality Opposed

“By a narrow 45-40 percent margin, voters oppose fracking moving forward, little changed from 43-39 percent opposition last month. This month, Democrats are a little more negative than last month, with 53 percent opposing fracking, while independents now have a plurality supporting fracking compared to a plurality opposing last month. Republicans continue to be supportive by a nearly two-to-one margin,” Greenberg said.

Casino Gambling Amendment Also Divides Voters, with Small Plurality Supportive

“A near majority of 49 percent of voters currently supports a constitutional amendment to allow non-Indian casinos in New York, with 44 percent opposed, up slightly from 46-43 in favor last month,” Greenberg said. “Democrats are evenly divided, while a majority of Republicans and independents support the amendment. Half of New York City voters continue to oppose the amendment, while upstate and the downstate suburbs remain supportive.”

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Siena College Poll Trends – April 2013

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	62	33	4
March 2013	64	30	6
February 2013	67	29	4
January 2013	71	24	5
December 2012	72	21	7
October 2012	67	24	9
August 2012	71	24	5
July 2012	69	22	9
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)

Q. 12 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 2013	11	41	31	16	1
March 2013	12	42	31	13	1
February 2013	16	42	28	13	1
January 2013	16	44	28	10	1
December 2012	15	45	30	8	2
October 2012	15	43	32	8	3
August 2012	16	44	33	7	1
July 2012	13	45	33	8	1
HIGHEST EVER	17 (1/12)	47 (4/12, etc.)	36 (9/11, 5/11)	16 (4/13)	28 (1/11)
LOWEST EVER	8 (3/11)	34 (1/11)	24 (1/11)	4 (2/11, 1/11)	1 (many)

Q. 11 I know it's a long way off, but if Andrew Cuomo runs for re-election as Governor in 2014, as things stand now, would you vote to re-elect him or would you prefer someone else?

DATE	RE-ELECT CUOMO	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	53	39	7
March 2013	54	37	9
February 2013	56	36	8
January 2013	60	32	8
December 2012	62	29	9
HIGHEST EVER	62 (12/12)	39 (4/13)	9 (3/13, 12/12)
LOWEST EVER	53 (4/13)	29 (12/12)	7 (4/13)

Q. 13 In light of what you've heard or read about actions taken by Governor Cuomo recently, overall, which of the following two statements comes closest to your view: the Governor makes decisions based on what he thinks is best for New Yorkers, or the Governor makes decisions based on what he thinks is best for his political future? (Choices were rotated.)

DATE	BEST FOR NYERS	BEST FOR HIS POLITICAL FUTURE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	49	48	3
March 2013	49	47	3
HIGHEST EVER	49 (4/13, 3/13)	48 (4/13)	3 (4/13, 3/13)
LOWEST EVER	49 (4/13, 3/13)	47 (3/13)	3 (4/13, 3/13)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	39	49	12
February 2013	44	42	14
January 2013	45	42	13
December 2012	41	40	19
October 2012	41	41	18
July 2012	42	45	13
HIGHEST EVER	45 (1/13)	61 (7/10)	19 (12/12)
LOWEST EVER	25 (7/10)	40 (12/12)	12 (4/13, 1/10)

Q. 5 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Sheldon Silver?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	28	39	33
January 2013	24	38	38
December 2012	24	34	42
October 2012	21	39	41
July 2012	25	37	39
HIGHEST EVER	28 (4/13, 7/05)	42 (12/10)	50 (4/05)
LOWEST EVER	19 (2/11, 4/05)	30 (4/05)	33 (4/13)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	40	53	7
February 2013	45	46	9
January 2013	45	45	10
December 2012	45	41	14
October 2012	45	42	13
July 2012	43	48	9
HIGHEST EVER	46 (5/12)	74 (7/09)	14 (12/12, 6/11)
LOWEST EVER	20 (7/09)	41 (12/12)	6 (7/09)

Q. 6 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Dean Skelos?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	15	24	61
January 2013	16	20	65
December 2012	16	18	67
October 2012	14	20	67
July 2012	13	22	64
HIGHEST EVER	16 (1/13, 12/12)	24 (4/13)	82 (11/08)
LOWEST EVER	9 (12/10)	8 (7/08)	61 (4/13)

Q. 7 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Jeff Klein?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	17	15	68
January 2013	12	14	73
HIGHEST EVER	17 (4/13)	15 (4/13)	84 (11/09)
LOWEST EVER	9 (11/09)	7 (11/09)	68 (4/13)

Q. 8 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Malcolm Smith?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	11	31	58
HIGHEST EVER	12 (6/09)	32 (6/09)	79 (11/08)
LOWEST EVER	10 (11/08)	11 (11/08)	56 (6/09)

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Q. 10 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Eric Schneiderman?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	27	18	55
March 2013	19	17	65
December 2012	21	15	63
August 2012	21	14	64
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)

Q. 31 Do you support or oppose passing an amendment to the state constitution to allow non-Indian, Las Vegas style casinos to be built in New York?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION/ DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	49	44	7
March 2013	46	43	11
February 2013	48	42	10
January 2013	52	43	5
August 2012	52	38	9
HIGHEST EVER	53 (1/12)	49 (3/12)	11 (3/13)
LOWEST EVER	46 (3/13)	38 (8/12)	3 (3/12)

Q. 32 While the proposed constitutional amendment would allow for seven casinos to be built in New York, Governor Cuomo has proposed that initially only three casinos ó all in upstate New York ó be built. Do you support or oppose the Governor's proposal to initially build only three casinos, all upstate?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	51	44	5
March 2013	50	43	8
February 2013	51	42	7
January 2013	57	40	3
HIGHEST EVER	57 (1/13)	44 (4/13)	8 (3/13)
LOWEST EVER	50 (3/13)	40 (1/13)	3 (1/13)

Q. 33 The State Department of Environmental Conservation is expected to soon issue a decision on whether or not to allow hydrofracking ó that is the proposed method to recover natural gas from parts of upstate New York ó to move forward. How much have you heard or read about it ó a great deal, some, not very much, or nothing at all?

DATE	A GREAT DEAL	SOME	NOT VERY MUCH	NOTHING	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	32	32	18	19	0
March 2013	32	32	21	15	0
February 2013	26	34	22	18	0
January 2013	31	33	18	17	0
December 2012	27	36	20	17	0
October 2012	27	39	21	12	0
August 2012	28	35	22	15	1
HIGHEST EVER	33 (5/12)	39 (10/12)	22 (2/13, 8/12)	20 (5/12)	1 (8/12)
LOWEST EVER	27 (12/12, etc.)	32 (4/13, 3/13)	14 (5/12)	12 (10/12)	0 (many)

Q. 34 Do you support or oppose the Department of Environmental Conservation allowing hydrofracking to move forward in parts of upstate New York?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION/ DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2013	40	45	15
March 2013	39	43	18
February 2013	40	40	20
January 2013	40	44	16
December 2012	42	36	22
October 2012	42	36	23
August 2012	39	38	23
HIGHEST EVER	42 (12/12, 10/12)	45 (4/13)	27 (5/12)
LOWEST EVER	37 (5/12)	36 (12/12, 10/12, 5/12)	15 (4/13)

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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
April 2013	48	42	10
March 2013	50	42	8
February 2013	55	35	9
January 2013	57	33	10
December 2012	55	32	13
October 2012	53	35	11
August 2012	56	33	10
July 2012	53	36	11
HIGHEST EVER	57 (1/13)	76 (10/31/10)	30 (1/07)
LOWEST EVER	14 (10/10)	26 (1/07)	8 (3/13)

Poll Trend Notes: All surveys are of registered voters except for the polls of August and October 2012, 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 July 2012.
“Highest Ever” and “Lowest Ever” is provided at the bottom of each question.