



# SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

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## Siena College Poll:

# **NY and Southern Tier Voters Nearly Evenly Divided on Fracking; Opponents More Passionate than Supporters**

## **Cuomo's Standing with Voters Slips a Little Overall, While Remaining Strong; More Dramatic Drop with Reps & Upstaters 2/3 Support New Gun Law; Majority: It Was Not Rushed Through**

**Loudonville, NY.** New Yorkers remain divided on the issue of hydrofracking and Southern Tier residents are just as split, according to a new Siena College Research Institute poll of New York voters released today. When asked initially, voters statewide are evenly divided with 40 percent in support of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) allowing fracking to move forward in parts of upstate and 40 percent opposed (40-44 percent last month), with 47 percent of Southern Tier voters supportive and 48 percent opposed. After reviewing arguments in support and opposition to fracking and limitations on fracking that DEC could impose, 45 percent of voters statewide support fracking and 42 percent are opposed (50-46 percent among voters in the Southern Tier).

Governor Andrew Cuomo's rating slipped a little with voters. Currently, 67 percent of voters have a favorable view of Cuomo and 29 percent view him unfavorably (down from 71-24 percent last month). His 58-41 percent job performance rating is down slightly from 60-38 percent. And 56 percent of voters are prepared to re-elect him, while 36 percent would prefer someone else (down from 60-32 percent). By a better than two-to-one margin (65-30 percent) voters support the state's new gun law, with 56 percent saying the law was needed and the right thing to do, while 42 percent say it was rushed through without adequate consideration.

"With DEC expected to soon issue a decision on whether or not to allow fracking to move forward, voters across the state remain evenly divided, and voters in the Southern Tier – the area that makes up the majority of the Marcellus Shale in New York – are also evenly divided on the issue," said Siena pollster Steven Greenberg.

"The Governor is in a position that chief executives hate: making a decision on a controversial issue where voters are split down the middle. Unlike his position on guns, which angered a vocal minority, Cuomo's decision on fracking is likely to anger far more voters – no matter what he decides," Greenberg said. "However, fracking opponents will be much more upset if it moves forward than fracking supporters will be if it does not."

If fracking moves forward, 88 percent of opponents will be upset, including 54 percent who will be very upset. If fracking does not move ahead, 59 percent of supporters will be upset, including 20 percent who will be very upset.

Issue	Agree (Completely)	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree (Completely)	Don't know/no opinion
Unacceptable risk of contaminating drinking water	49% (29%)	8%	18% ( 9%)	25%
Unsafe/gas & chemicals come to surface	46% (26%)	8%	20% ( 8%)	26%
Too dangerous/unsafe levels of methane release	41% (23%)	9%	20% ( 9%)	29%
Generate much needed jobs for New Yorkers	61% (27%)	7%	16% ( 8%)	16%
Economic benefits for Southern Tier communities	55% (25%)	6%	18% ( 9%)	19%
Only way to obtain abundant supply of gas	28% ( 9%)	9%	31% (16%)	31%
<b>Siena College Poll – February 4, 2013</b>				

“By better than two-to-one margins, a plurality of voters agrees with three statements that highlight the potential negative environmental impacts of hydrofracking. However, a majority of voters overwhelmingly agrees with two statements highlighting potential economic benefits of hydrofracking,” Greenberg said. “While Southern Tier voters are much more likely to have read or heard about hydrofracking, and more likely to have opinions on the statements in support or opposition to fracking, their views on these statements don’t differ substantially from the views expressed by voters from the rest of upstate or across the state.”

Five potential regulatory actions DEC could take if fracking moves forward – meet conditions of Safe Drinking Water Act of 2005, strictly monitor impact on groundwater, strictly regulate methane release, approve it for a trial period, and limit fracking fluids on site – all produce a majority or plurality of voters who say it makes them more likely to support fracking. Between 16 and 19 percent of voters oppose each of these potential regulations.

“Voters in the Southern Tier – while having more informed views – do not have significantly different views than voters from the rest of the state when it comes to fracking. This is clearly going to be a divisive issue for the foreseeable future. Nearly half of voters support fracking and nearly half oppose it. However, opponents – including a majority of Democrats – are much more passionate about their views than supporters – including an overwhelming majority of Republicans,” Greenberg said.

**Cuomo Ratings Dip a Little – Particularly with Reps & Upstater – But He Still Remains Strongly Popular**

“There is no question that Andrew Cuomo spent some of the political capital he had built up in two years as Governor with the recent passage of New York’s new gun control law. On all three measures – favorability, job performance and re-electability – Cuomo’s support among voters dropped a little over the last few weeks,” Greenberg said. “The operative phrase, however, is ‘a little.’ He continues to be viewed favorably by more than two-thirds of voters and a clear majority continues to say he’s doing an excellent or good job as governor and they are prepared to re-elect him.”

“For the first time since he’s been governor, more Republicans (54 percent) now have an unfavorable view of Cuomo than have a favorable view (42 percent). And although a majority of upstaters continue to view Cuomo favorably, his favorability rating among upstaters fell to 54-41 percent, down from 61-31 percent last month,” Greenberg said. “On every measure of how voters feel about the Governor, since last month he has lost considerable support among Republicans, who strongly oppose the new gun law, and upstaters, who support the new gun law far less strongly than downstaters.

### **Voters Strongly Support New Gun Law; Majority Do Not Feel It was ‘Rushed Through’**

“Nearly two-thirds of voters – including strong majorities of Democrats, independents and downstaters – support the state’s new gun control law. It has strong support across the board, except it is opposed by a majority of Republicans, conservatives and voters from the Southern Tier, and it has only tepid support from the rest of upstate voters. Those who view the NRA favorably oppose the new law two-to-one,” Greenberg said.

“Nearly three-quarters of Republicans and those favorable to the NRA, and a solid majority of upstate voters believe the law was rushed through without careful consideration. However, about three-quarters of Democrats, New York City voters and those unfavorable to the NRA, and narrow majorities of independents and downstate suburban voters believe the law, while passed quickly, was the right thing to do,” Greenberg said.

### **Majority Glad that State Senate is Controlled by Republicans and Democrats**

“Although 39 percent of voters – including 60 percent of Democrats – wish all the Democrats in the Senate had stuck together to control the Senate, a majority of voters, 56 percent – including overwhelming majorities of Republicans and independents, as well as strong majorities from upstate and the downstate suburbs – are glad that six Democratic senators have partnered with the Republicans to have the Senate controlled by senators from both parties,” Greenberg said.

### **Casino Amendment Supported by Plurality of Voters**

“By a 48-42 percent margin, voters favor a constitutional amendment to allow casinos in New York, down a little from last month’s 52-43 percent support,” Greenberg said. “Democrats, upstaters and New York City voters are nearly evenly divided, while the amendment is supported by small majorities of Republicans, independents and downstate suburban voters. With lots of special interest money to be spent between now and November and an unclear picture of what the statewide electorate will look like in this year’s election, passage of the amendment by voters, is still an iffy proposition and far from a sure bet.”

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This Siena College Poll was conducted January 27-31, 2013 by telephone calls to 1,154 New York State registered voters including an oversampling of 401 registered voters from 14 counties defined as the Southern Tier. It has an overall margin of error of  $\pm 3.7$  percentage points and a margin of error of  $\pm 5.3$  for the Southern Tier. Data was statistically adjusted by age, party, region (NYC, NYC Suburbs, Southern Tier and Upstate not Southern Tier) and gender to ensure representativeness. Sampling was conducted via random digit dialing to landline and cell phones weighted to reflect known population patterns. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in New York State. 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 and frequencies: [www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY](http://www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY).



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## Siena College Poll Trends – February 2013

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
June 2012	70	24	5
May 2012	68	24	8
April 2012	73	22	6
March 2012	69	25	6
February 2012	74	18	8
January 2012	73	20	7
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>77 (2/11)</b>	<b>42 (10/06)</b>	<b>24 (1/06, 2/06, 9/07)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>44 (8/06, 10/06)</b>	<b>14 (8/09)</b>	<b>3 (10/20/10)</b>

**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
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
June 2012	16	44	31	9	1
May 2012	14	42	33	10	1
April 2012	16	47	29	7	1
March 2012	14	43	33	9	1
February 2012	14	47	31	6	2
January 2012	17	45	29	8	2
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>17 (1/12)</b>	<b>47 (4/12, etc.)</b>	<b>36 (9/11, 5/11)</b>	<b>13 (2/13)</b>	<b>28 (1/11)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>8 (3/11)</b>	<b>34 (1/11)</b>	<b>24 (1/11)</b>	<b>4 (2/11, 1/11)</b>	<b>1 (many)</b>

**Q. 8** 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
February 2013	56	36	8
January 2013	60	32	8
December 2012	62	29	9
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>62 (12/12)</b>	<b>36 (2/13)</b>	<b>9 (12/12)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>56 (2/13)</b>	<b>29 (12/12)</b>	<b>8 (2/13, 1/13)</b>

**Q. 7** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the National Rifle Association or NRA?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2013	36	58	6
January 2013	36	57	6
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>36 (2/13, 1/13)</b>	<b>58 (2/13)</b>	<b>6 (2/13, 1/13)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>36 (2/13, 1/13)</b>	<b>57 (1/13)</b>	<b>6 (2/13, 1/13)</b>

# Siena College Poll Trends – February 2013

Page 2

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
May 2012	42	44	14
March 2012	37	49	14
January 2012	39	46	15
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>45 (1/13)</b>	<b>61 (7/10)</b>	<b>19 (12/12)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>25 (7/10)</b>	<b>40 (12/12)</b>	<b>12 (1/10)</b>

**Q. 5** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the New York State Senate?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
May 2012	46	43	11
March 2012	42	46	12
January 2012	39	49	13
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>46 (5/12)</b>	<b>74 (7/09)</b>	<b>14 (12/12, 6/11)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>20 (7/09)</b>	<b>41 (12/12)</b>	<b>6 (7/09)</b>

**Q. 16** The State Department of Environmental Conservation is expected to soon issue a decision on whether or not to allow hydrofracking – that is the proposed method to recover natural gas from parts of upstate New York – to move forward. How much have you heard or read about it – 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
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
May 2012	33	33	14	20	0
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>33 (5/12)</b>	<b>39 (10/12)</b>	<b>22 (2/13, 8/12)</b>	<b>20 (5/12)</b>	<b>1 (8/12)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>27 (12/12, etc)</b>	<b>33 (1/13, 5/11)</b>	<b>14 (5/12)</b>	<b>12 (10/12)</b>	<b>0 (many)</b>

**Q. 17** 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
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
May 2012	37	36	27
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>42 (12/12, 10/12)</b>	<b>44 (1/13)</b>	<b>27 (5/12)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>37 (5/12)</b>	<b>36 (12/12, 10/12, 5/12)</b>	<b>16 (1/13)</b>

# Siena College Poll Trends – February 2013

**Q. 14** 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
February 2013	48	42	10
January 2013	52	43	5
August 2012	52	38	9
April 2012	50	46	4
March 2012	48	49	3
February 2012	52	44	4
January 2012	53	42	5
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>53 (1/12)</b>	<b>49 (3/12)</b>	<b>10 (2/13)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>48 (2/13, 3/12)</b>	<b>38 (8/12)</b>	<b>3 (3/12)</b>

**Q. 15** 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 – all in upstate New York – 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
February 2013	51	42	7
January 2013	57	40	3
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>57 (1/13)</b>	<b>42 (2/13)</b>	<b>7 (2/13)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>51 (2/13)</b>	<b>40 (1/13)</b>	<b>3 (1/13)</b>

**Q. 3** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Barack Obama?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2013	66	32	2
January 2013	66	33	1
December 2012	62	36	2
October 2012	61	37	2
August 2012	64	35	1
July 2012	59	38	3
June 2012	59	38	2
May 2012	60	38	2
April 2012	58	39	3
March 2012	61	36	3
February 2012	64	34	2
January 2012	59	38	3
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>81 (1/09)</b>	<b>46 (10/31/10)</b>	<b>40 (11/06)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>48 (11/06)</b>	<b>10 (1/09)</b>	<b>1 (1/13, 8/12)</b>

**Q. 10** 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
February 2013	0	19	44	35	2
January 2013	1	18	47	32	2
December 2012	2	18	42	35	2
October 2012	0	19	47	31	2
August 2012	1	19	49	31	1
July 2012	0	19	44	36	1
June 2012	1	18	46	32	2
May 2012	2	16	47	34	1
April 2012	1	17	48	33	1
March 2012	1	15	46	37	1
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>2 (12/12, 5/12)</b>	<b>19 (2/13, etc.)</b>	<b>49 (8/12)</b>	<b>67 (3/22/10)</b>	<b>4 (9/08)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>0 (many)</b>	<b>6 (3/22/10, etc.)</b>	<b>25 (3/22/10)</b>	<b>31 (10/12, 8/12)</b>	<b>0 (4/11, etc.)</b>

# Siena College Poll Trends – February 2013

Page 4

**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
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
June 2012	53	37	10
May 2012	55	34	10
April 2012	55	34	11
March 2012	50	40	10
February 2012	52	36	12
January 2012	51	38	11
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>57 (1/13)</b>	<b>76 (10/31/10)</b>	<b>30 (1/07)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>14 (10/10)</b>	<b>26 (1/07)</b>	<b>9 (2/13, 7/10)</b>

**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 January 2012.

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