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Siena College Poll:

Cuomo Ratings Edge Up; Seen as Popular for Making State Govt. Work More Effectively, Addressing Average New Yorkers' Concerns

Strong Support for Minimum Wage Hike, Small Biz Tax Cuts & Medical Marijuana
Gillibrand Stays Strong As Republicans Remain Unknown Heading to Primary
Voters Split on Re-electing Incumbent State Senators; Majority Wants Dems in Control

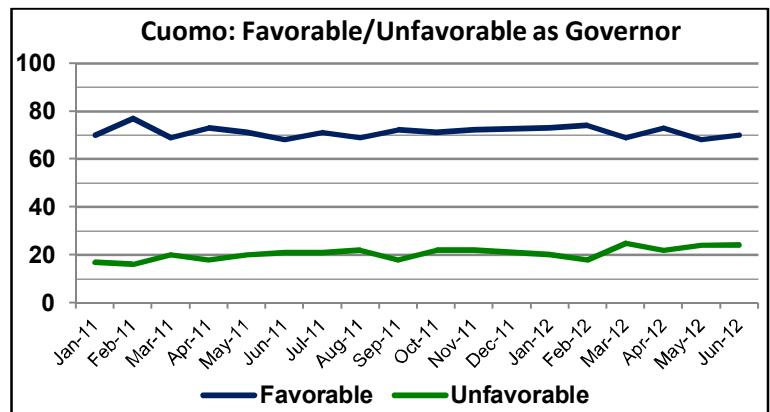
Loudonville, NY. Governor Andrew Cuomo is viewed favorably by 70 percent and unfavorably by 24 percent (up slightly from 68-24 percent last month) and 60 percent give him a positive job performance rating as governor while 40 percent give him negative job performance rating (up from 56-43 percent last month), according to a new Siena College Research Institute poll of registered voters released today. Thirty-two percent of voters say Cuomo is popular because he's made state government work more effectively, 30 percent say it's because he's addressed the concerns of average New Yorkers, 14 percent say it's because he's kept his promises, and 11 percent say he's popular because he's improved New York's economy.

Support remains very strong for increasing the minimum wage, offering tax relief to small businesses and legalizing the use of medical marijuana. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, with a two-to-one favorability rating, leads by at least 38 points against each of her potential Republican opponents, all of whom continue to be largely unknown to voters, even Republicans. By a small 43-40 percent margin, voters say they are prepared to re-elect their incumbent state senators as opposed to preferring someone else (down from 47-34 percent last month).

“For the 12th time in 17 months as governor, Cuomo is viewed favorably by at least 70 percent of voters,” said Siena pollster Steven Greenberg. “Perhaps most startling about the Governor’s high favorability rating is how little it has changed since his inauguration.

“Cuomo has a net 20 point positive job performance rating (60-40 percent), up from a net 13 point positive rating last month. This marks the fourth time that at least 60 percent of voters saying he’s doing an excellent or good job as governor,” Greenberg said.

“But why do voters think Cuomo has remained so popular?”



“When presented with four potential reasons for the Governor’s continued popularity in the Siena College Poll and other public opinion polls, nearly one-third of voters say it’s because he’s making state government work more effectively, and nearly as many say it’s because he’s addressing average New Yorkers’ concerns,” Greenberg said. “Far fewer credit his popularity on keeping campaign promises or improving the economy.

“According to the Broadway show *Wicked*, being popular is about hanging with the “right cohorts” and being “good at sports.” But when it comes to their governor, voters say being popular is about getting Albany to be less dysfunctional and fighting for average New Yorkers. And clearly that’s what voters think that Cuomo has done in his first year and a half in office,” Greenberg said.

Big Thumbs Up for Hiking Minimum Wage, Small Business Tax Cuts & Legalizing Medical Marijuana
Support for raising the minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$8.50 holds steady at 77-18 percent (from 78-17 percent last month), while support for a \$200 million tax cut and credit package for small business increased to 70-14 percent (up from 65-13 percent). Support also increased for legalizing medical marijuana to 61-33 percent (up from 57-33 percent). Voters remain divided, 40-39 percent, on criminalizing synthetic marijuana.

“At least 70 percent of voters from every region and of every income or age group support increasing the minimum wage. It has the support of 88 percent of Democrats, 70 percent of independents and 63 percent of Republicans,” Greenberg said. “Similarly, at least two-thirds of voters from every party, region, income and age group support a small business tax cut package.

“Voters strongly want the Speaker’s minimum wage hike and they strongly want the Senate Majority Leader’s business tax cut plan. Forgetting the merits of these issues, there is the potential for a politically popular deal to be made between Assembly Democrats and Senate Republicans in the final weeks of session,” Greenberg said.

Gillibrand Leads Each Potential Republican Opponent by at Least 38 Points

Gillibrand has a 50-24 percent favorability (from 48-27 percent last month) and by a margin of 54-29 percent voters say they are prepared to re-elect her rather than support “someone else” (from 54-32 percent last month). Congressman Bob Turner has a 16-16 percent favorability rating, while both Nassau County Comptroller George Maragos and Wendy Long both have 9-11 percent favorability ratings.

“With just two weeks until Republicans choose Gillibrand’s November opponent, 70 percent of Republicans are undecided on who to vote for. Turner has the support of 16 percent, followed by Long at 11 percent and Maragos at three percent,” Greenberg said. “The Republican primary winner will have a lot of work ahead of him or her as Gillibrand currently leads Turner by 38 points, Maragos by 42 points and Long by 43 points. Five months is a long time in the political world but a 40-point deficit against a popular incumbent is hard to overcome.”

Voters Divided on Re-electing their State Senator; Majority Want Democrats to Win Senate Control

While 43 percent of voters say they are prepared to re-elect their incumbent state senator, 40 percent say they would prefer someone else (down from 47-34 percent in support of re-election last month). By a 54-37 percent margin (down slightly from 56-38 percent last month) voters say they would like the Democrats to win Senate control in November.

A plurality of New York City voters, 48-33 percent, is prepared to re-elect their incumbent senator. A tighter plurality, 44-39 percent, of suburban voters is prepared to re-elect their incumbent senator. And a plurality of upstate voters, 47-38 percent would rather elect someone else to the Senate, Greenberg said. While interesting, since Democrats hold most New York City seats and Republicans hold most suburban and upstate seats, this simply reflects a statewide sentiment rather than an indication of any individual senator's vulnerability. As in past years, Siena will again be monitoring and polling in the most hotly contested Senate races this Fall.

While a majority of voters say they would like to see Democratic control of the State Senate next year, it's really a story of party loyalty. Eighty-three percent of Democrats say their team should be in control, 80 percent of Republicans want their team to continue to control the Senate and independents are virtually evenly divided, giving a tiny 46-43 percent edge to the Democrats, Greenberg said.

Sixth Straight Month with Majority Saying NY is Headed on Right Track

By a 53-37 percent margin, voters say New York is headed on the right track rather than in the wrong direction, down a little from 55-34 percent last month, Greenberg said. However, it represents the sixth straight month that at least half of New Yorkers have said the state is headed on the right track. New York City voters say so by a nearly two-to-one margin, while suburbanites say so by a 52-38 percent margin, and upstaters are nearly evenly divided, siding with right track 47-45 percent.

Voters see modest improvement in the state's fiscal condition as 19 percent describe it as excellent or good – the best it's been in Siena's four years of asking voters this question – 46 percent say it's fair, and 32 percent call it poor, the lowest that number has ever been, Greenberg said. New Yorkers do not see the state's economic condition as bullish, but they're certainly not as bearish as they were just a year ago.

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This Siena College Poll was conducted June 3-6, 2012 by telephone calls to 807 New York State registered voters. It has a margin of error of ± 3.4 percentage points. There were 201 Republicans included with a margin of error of ± 6.9 percent. Data was statistically adjusted by age, party 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.



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Q. 3 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Andrew Cuomo?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
November 2011	72	22	6
October 2011	71	22	7
September 2011	72	18	10
August 2011	69	22	8
July 2011	71	21	8
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. 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
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
November 2011	12	44	33	9	2
October 2011	11	47	32	9	2
September 2011	12	43	36	7	2
August 2011	12	46	31	9	2
July 2011	15	43	32	8	1
HIGHEST EVER	17 (1/12)	47 (4/12, etc.)	36 (9/11, 5/11)	10 (5/12)	28 (1/11)
LOWEST EVER	8 (3/11)	34 (1/11)	24 (1/11)	4 (2/11, 1/11)	1 (5/12, etc.)

Q. 14 As things stand now, if the election for State Senate were held today would you vote to re-elect your incumbent Senator or would you prefer someone else?

DATE	RE-ELECT	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	43	40	17
May 2012	47	34	19
HIGHEST EVER	47 (5/12)	40 (6/12)	19 (5/12)
LOWEST EVER	43 (6/12)	34 (5/12)	17 (6/12)

Q. 15 Republicans currently control the State Senate by a 33-29 majority. Looking at this year's election, would you prefer to see the Republicans continue to control the State Senate, or would you prefer to see the Democrats win control of the Senate? (Choices were rotated)

DATE	REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATIC	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	37	54	8
May 2012	38	56	7
HIGHEST EVER	38 (5/12)	56 (5/12)	8 (6/12)
LOWEST EVER	37 (6/12)	54 (6/12)	7 (5/12)

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Q. 18 Do you support or oppose legalizing the use of medical marijuana in New York State?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION/ DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	61	33	7
May 2012	57	33	10
HIGHEST EVER	61 (6/12)	33 (6/12, 5/12)	10 (5/12)
LOWEST EVER	57 (5/12)	33 (6/12, 5/12)	7 (6/12)

Q. 19 Do you support or oppose making both the sale and possession of synthetic marijuana a crime?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION/ DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	40	39	20
May 2012	41	38	20
HIGHEST EVER	41 (5/12)	39 (6/12)	20 (6/12, 5/12)
LOWEST EVER	40 (6/12)	38 (5/12)	20 (6/12, 5/12)

Q. 20 Do you support or oppose increasing the minimum wage in New York from the current \$7.25 per hour to \$8.50 per hour?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION/ DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	77	18	5
May 2012	78	17	5
HIGHEST EVER	78 (5/12)	18 (6/12)	5 (6/12, 5/12)
LOWEST EVER	77 (6/12)	17 (5/12)	5 (6/12, 5/12)

Q. 21 Do you support or oppose a \$200 million package of tax cuts and credits for small businesses?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION/ DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	70	14	16
May 2012	65	13	22
HIGHEST EVER	70 (6/12)	14 (6/12)	22 (5/12)
LOWEST EVER	65 (5/12)	13 (5/12)	16 (6/12)

Q. 5 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Kirsten Gillibrand?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	50	24	26
May 2012	48	27	25
April 2012	51	25	24
March 2012	54	24	22
February 2012	52	20	29
January 2012	49	25	26
November 2011	49	25	26
October 2011	46	24	30
September 2011	46	25	29
August 2011	46	24	30
July 2011	49	21	30
HIGHEST EVER	57 (2/11)	34 (10/31/10)	56 (1/09)
LOWEST EVER	26 (3/09)	14 (1/09)	14 (10/31/10)

Q. 6 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about George Maragos?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	9	11	79
May 2012	8	13	80
April 2012	6	12	82
March 2012	5	17	78
February 2012	8	14	78
January 2012	8	12	79
November 2011	5	14	82
HIGHEST EVER	9 (6/12)	17 (3/12)	89 (5/10)
LOWEST EVER	5 (3/12, 11/11)	6 (5/10)	78 (3/12, 2/12)

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Q. 7 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Wendy Long?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	9	11	80
May 2012	10	9	81
April 2012	8	10	82
HIGHEST EVER	10 (5/12)	11 (6/12)	82 (4/12)
LOWEST EVER	8 (4/12)	9 (5/12)	80 (6/12)

Q. 8 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Bob Turner?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	16	16	68
May 2012	12	16	72
April 2012	16	17	67
HIGHEST EVER	16 (6/12, 4/12)	17 (4/12)	72 (5/12)
LOWEST EVER	12 (5/12)	16 (6/12, 5/12)	67 (4/12)

Q. 22 (REPUBLICANS ONLY) Looking ahead to the upcoming election for United States Senator from New York. If the Republican primary for U.S. Senate was held today and the candidates were Wendy Long, George Maragos, and Bob Turner, who would you vote for? (Order of candidates was rotated.)

DATE	WENDY LONG	GEORGE MARAGOS	BOB TURNER	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	11	3	16	70
May 2012	12	6	15	67
April 2012	10	5	19	66
HIGHEST EVER	12 (5/12)	6 (5/12)	19 (4/12)	70 (6/12)
LOWEST EVER	10 (4/12)	3 (6/12)	15 (5/12)	66 (4/12)

Q. 13 Kirsten Gillibrand is running for re-election as United State Senator this year. As things stand now would you vote to re-elect her or would you prefer someone else? ^

DATE	RE-ELECT	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	54	29	17
May 2012	54	32	13
April 2012	54	28	18
March 2012	58	30	12
February 2012	53	27	20
January 2012	53	32	16
November 2011	53	30	17
October 2011	46	34	21
September 2011	45	34	22
August 2011	49	34	18
July 2011	50	29	21
HIGHEST EVER	58 (3/12)	34 (10/11, 9/11, 8/11)	22 (9/11)
LOWEST EVER	45 (9/11)	27 (2/12)	12 (3/12)

Q. 23 If that election for U.S. Senator was held today and the candidates were Kirsten Gillibrand on the Democratic line and Wendy Long on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (Order of candidates was rotated.)

DATE	GILLIBRAND	LONG	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	65	22	12
May 2012	60	26	14
April 2012	63	23	14
HIGHEST EVER	65 (6/12)	26 (5/12)	14 (5/12, 4/12)
LOWEST EVER	60 (5/12)	22 (6/12)	12 (6/12)

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Q. 24 If that election for U.S. Senator was held today and the candidates were Kirsten Gillibrand on the Democratic line and George Maragos on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (Order of candidates was rotated.)

DATE	GILLIBRAND	MARAGOS	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	65	23	13
May 2012	60	25	15
April 2012	65	21	14
March 2012	68	19	13
February 2012	63	20	17
January 2012	63	22	15
November 2011	65	17	18
HIGHEST EVER	68 (3/12)	25 (5/12)	18 (11/11)
LOWEST EVER	60 (5/12)	17 (11/11)	13 (6/12, 3/12)

Q. 25 If that election for U.S. Senator was held today and the candidates were Kirsten Gillibrand on the Democratic line and Bob Turner on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (Order of candidates was rotated.)

DATE	GILLIBRAND	TURNER	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
June 2012	63	25	11
May 2012	59	25	15
April 2012	65	24	11
HIGHEST EVER	65 (4/12)	25 (6/12, 5/12)	15 (5/12)
LOWEST EVER	59 (5/12)	24 (4/12)	11 (6/12, 4/12)

Q. 16 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
May 2012	1	18	46	32	2
June 2012	2	16	47	34	1
April 2012	1	17	48	33	1
March 2012	1	15	46	37	1
October 2011	0	11	38	50	1
September 2011	1	11	36	50	1
August 2011	1	11	39	48	1
July 2011	1	8	40	51	1
HIGHEST EVER	2 (5/12)	18 (6/12)	48 (4/12)	67 (3/22/10)	4 (9/08)
LOWEST EVER	0 (many)	6 (3/22/10, etc.)	25 (3/22/10)	32 (6/12)	0 (4/11, etc.)

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
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
November 2011	42	46	12
October 2011	40	48	12
September 2011	45	44	10
August 2011	44	47	10
July 2011	48	40	12
HIGHEST EVER	55 (5/12, 4/12)	76 (10/31/10)	30 (1/07)
LOWEST EVER	14 (10/10)	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 July 2011.

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

^ Inconsequential wording change.