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Siena College Poll:

Cuomo Still Popular; Gets 'Fair' Grade on Improving NY Economy

Property Tax Cap & Ethics Reform Still Dominate Voters' Session Wish List

View on Direction of NYS Falls; Significant Uptick on Direction of Country; Voters Optimistic about NY Economy Being Better One Year from Today

Obama, Gillibrand Both Have Majorities Prepared to Re-elect them Next Year

Loudonville, NY. Voters continue to have a very favorable view of Andrew Cuomo and a majority still believes he's doing an excellent or good job as Governor. On his efforts to improve the state's economy, 44 percent of voters give him a grade of "A" or "B," 37 percent give him a "C" and 14 percent either "fail" him or give him a "D," according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll of registered voters released today.

A property tax cap, supported by nearly three-quarters of voters, and ethics reform, supported by four of five voters, remain the top two issues that voters want addressed by the end of the legislative session. Strong majorities continue to support extending rent protections and creating an independent redistricting commission, and while support is down slightly from last month, legalizing same sex marriages still has majority support.

Voters' view on the direction of the state fell, with more voters now thinking the state is headed in the wrong direction, and while more voters still think the country is headed in the wrong direction, the mood of voters about the direction of the country improved since March. Nearly half of voters believe the state's economy will have improved a year from today, compared to only 14 percent who say it will be worse. Half of voters are prepared to re-elect Senator Kirsten Gillibrand next year and 54 percent are prepared to re-elect President Barack Obama.

"Andrew Cuomo's honeymoon with voters is five months and counting as 71 percent continue to have a favorable view of Cuomo and only 20 percent view him unfavorably. He has a better than two-to-one favorability rating with Republicans and a nearly two-to-one favorability rating with conservatives. At least two-thirds of voters in every region of the state view him favorably," said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. "And while his job performance rating fell a little in the last month, it's still positive by a 52-45 percent margin.

"On addressing New York's economy, voters give Cuomo a 'GPA' of 2.35, with virtually identical numbers giving him As and Bs as give him Cs and Ds. Only six percent say he's earned a failing grade," Greenberg said.

Property Tax Cap Continues to be Voters' Top Session Priority

“By a better than three-to-one majority (71-22 percent), voters overwhelmingly support the Governor’s proposal for a two percent property tax cap. The cap has the support of at least two-thirds of voters from every party and at least three-quarters of voters from upstate and the downstate suburbs,” Greenberg said. “When asked to choose among five issues as the single most important for the Legislature to address before the end of session, 39 percent said the property tax cap, far ahead of every other issue.

“Among the 71 percent of voters who support the cap, nearly two-thirds, including a majority of every group, said that they would be less likely to re-elect their legislator if they knew he or she opposed the cap,” Greenberg said.

“Siena gave voters two arguments that supporters of the cap have made – it will make New York more affordable and more business friendly – and two from opponents – it will damage education and limit local government and school district revenues without the means to control costs. The two arguments in favor of the cap each had about two-thirds of voters saying the argument made them more supportive of a cap. Only about one-third of voters said the arguments against the cap made them less supportive of a cap, while more than four in ten said the arguments neither made them more supportive nor less supportive of a property tax cap,” Greenberg said.

Ethics Disclosure Law Has Overwhelming Support and is Second Largest Session Priority

“By an overwhelming 80-14 percent margin, voters favor requiring full disclosure of legislators’ outside income and clients. It is supported by more than three-quarters of voters from every region and party,” Greenberg said.

“Nearly one-quarter of voters (23 percent) said it was their top legislative priority for this session.”

“More than two-thirds of voters that support full ethics disclosure by the Legislature – or 55 percent of all voters – say that legislators who oppose this issue will be less likely to receive their vote in the future,” Greenberg said.

Support for Legalizing Same Sex Marriage Falls Slightly; Still Represents Majority Opinion

“Support for legalizing same sex marriages in New York fell slightly in the last month, however, it is still supported by a 54-42 percent majority of voters. It is overwhelmingly supported by Democrats, liberals and moderates, and younger and Jewish voters. It is strongly opposed by Republicans and conservatives. Catholic and older voters are nearly evenly divided,” Greenberg said.

“Supporters are evenly divided when it comes to how they would react to a legislator who opposes same sex marriages, with 49 percent (26 percent of all voters) saying they’d be less likely to re-elect that legislator and 49 percent saying it would have no effect on their vote. Opponents, however, are much more likely to be influenced by legislators who support same sex marriage, with 60 percent of them (25 percent of all voters) saying they’d be less likely to vote for that legislator and only 38 percent saying it would have no effect,” Greenberg said.

Direction of State Falls; Direction of Country Jumps; Both Now Virtually the Same

Only 40 percent of voters say New York is headed on the right track (down from 46 percent last month), while 49 percent say the state is headed in the wrong direction (up from 41 percent). Slightly more, 43 percent, say the country is headed on the right track (up from 34 percent in March), while 49 percent also say the country is headed in the wrong direction.

“Voters’ view of the direction of the state has been on something of a seesaw over the last few months. In February and April more voters thought the state was headed on the right track, however, in January, March and again this month more voters say the state is headed in the wrong direction,” Greenberg said. “When looking at the direction of the country, voters are significantly more optimistic now than they were two months ago.

“And while voters continue to view the state’s economic condition as abysmal – only nine percent say it’s good, while 90 percent say it is fair or poor – they do have some optimism about the future economy of the state. Nearly half, 47 percent, say the state’s economy will be significantly (five percent) or somewhat (42 percent) improved a year from today, while only 14 percent say it will be significantly or somewhat worse. More than one-third, 36 percent, say it will be about the same” Greenberg said.

Obama Remains Strong with New York Voters

“Just as the changing mood of voters on the direction of the state has not impacted Cuomo’s favorability, the increased optimism about the direction of the nation has not affected Obama’s favorability rating, 62-36 percent, which has been in the low 60s since the start of 2011. He has a favorable rating with every group of voters other than Republicans and conservatives, who overwhelmingly view him unfavorably,” Greenberg said.

“With more than a year until election day, New York voters appear to be uninterested in breaking their blue streak, as 54 percent of voters say they are prepared to re-elect Obama and 39 percent say they would prefer ‘someone else,’ ” Greenberg said.

Gillibrand Viewed Favorably; Voters Inclined to Re-elect Her

“Gillibrand is viewed favorably by 51 percent of voters and unfavorably by 20 percent, down from 57-18 percent in February. Nearly one-third of voters don’t know enough about the junior senator to have an opinion,” Greenberg said. “Currently, 50 percent say they would vote to re-elect her, while 30 percent would prefer ‘someone else.’ A majority of Democrats and plurality of independents would re-elect her, while 50 percent of Republicans prefer ‘someone else.’

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This Siena College Poll was conducted May 11-17, 2011 by telephone calls to 807 New York State registered voters. It has a margin of error of ± 3.4 percentage points. Data was statistically adjusted by age, party, gender, and region to ensure representativeness. Sampling was conducted via random digit dialing to landline and cell phones 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 – May 2011

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	71	20	9
April 2011	73	18	8
March 2011	69	20	11
February 2011	77	16	7
January 2011	70	17	13
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	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)

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
May 2011	9	43	36	9	3
April 2011	11	43	34	7	4
March 2011	8	43	34	7	8
February 2011	10	47	29	4	10
January 2011	10	34	24	4	28
HIGHEST EVER	11 (4/11)	47 (2/11)	36 (5/11)	9 (5/11)	28 (1/11)
LOWEST EVER	8 (3/11)	34 (1/11)	24 (1/11)	4 (2/11, 1/11)	3 (5/11)

Based on what you've seen of him as Governor so far, would you describe Andrew Cuomo as a liberal, a moderate or a conservative?

DATE	LIBERAL	MODERATE	CONSERVATIVE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	22	57	12	9
April 2011	18	57	15	10
March 2011	20	60	11	9
February 2011	21	57	15	7
January 2011	25	55	10	10
HIGHEST EVER	25 (1/11)	60 (3/11)	15 (4/11, 2/11)	10 (4/11, 1/11)
LOWEST EVER	21 (2/11)	55 (1/11)	10 (1/11)	7 (2/11)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	32	54	14
March 2011	30	56	14
January 2011	29	57	14
July 2010	25	61	13
January 2010	29	59	12
HIGHEST EVER	40 (2/09)	61 (7/10)	18 (2/09)

LOWEST EVER

25 (7/10)

42 (2/09)

12 (1/10)

Siena College Poll Trends – May 2011

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	33	56	12
March 2011	32	60	8
January 2011	33	56	11
July 2010	25	66	8
January 2010	30	61	9
HIGHEST EVER	43 (2/09)	74 (7/09)	13 (2/09)
LOWEST EVER	20 (7/09)	43 (2/09)	6 (7/09)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	17	18	65
January 2011	26	14	60
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)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	21	25	54
January 2011	28	21	51
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)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	62	30	8
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)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	51	20	29
February 2011	57	18	25
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	57 (2/11)	34 (10/31/10)	56 (1/09)
LOWEST EVER	26 (3/09)	14 (1/09)	14 (10/31/10)

I know it's a ways off, but if Kirsten Gillibrand runs for re-election as United State Senator in 2012, would you vote to re-elect her or would you prefer someone else?

DATE	RE-ELECT	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	50	30	20
February 2011	52	29	19
HIGHEST EVER	52 (2/11)	30 (5/11)	20 (5/11)
LOWEST EVER	50 (5/11)	29 (2/11)	19 (2/11)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	62	36	2
April 2011	63	34	3
March 2011	60	37	3
February 2011	62	35	3
January 2011	61	36	3
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)	2 (5/11)

Barack Obama is running for re-election as President in 2012. I know it's a ways off, but as things stand now, would you vote to re-elect him or would you prefer someone else?^

DATE	RE-ELECT	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	54	39	6
April 2011	52	39	9
March 2011	49	43	8
February 2011	49	43	8
January 2011	50	40	10
December 2010	43	47	10
HIGHEST EVER	54 (5/11)	47 (12/10)	10 (1/11, 12/10)
LOWEST EVER	43 (12/10)	39 (5/11, 4/11)	6 (5/11)

Siena College Poll Trends – May 2011

Do you support or oppose: imposing a property tax cap, limiting increases to no more than two percent per year?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	71	22	7
April 2011	75	21	4
HIGHEST EVER	75 (4/11)	22 (5/11)	7 (5/11)
LOWEST EVER	71 (5/11)	21 (4/11)	4 (4/11)

Do you support or oppose: creating an independent redistricting commission to draw new legislative and congressional district boundaries?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	53	30	16
April 2011	58	26	16
HIGHEST EVER	58 (4/11)	30 (5/11)	16 (5/11, 4/11)
LOWEST EVER	53 (5/11)	26 (4/11)	16 (5/11, 4/11)

Do you support or oppose: requiring full disclosure of legislators' outside income and clients?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	80	14	5
April 2011	83	12	5
HIGHEST EVER	83 (4/11)	14 (5/11)	5 (5/11, 4/11)
LOWEST EVER	80 (5/11)	12 (4/11)	5 (5/11, 4/11)

Do you support or oppose: making same sex marriages legal in New York State?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	54	42	5
April 2011	58	36	6
HIGHEST EVER	58 (4/11)	42 (5/11)	6 (4/11)
LOWEST EVER	54 (5/11)	36 (4/11)	5 (5/11)

NOTE: THE QUESTION OF SAME SEX MARRIAGE HAS BEEN ASKED BY SIENA SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS. INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ABOUT WORDING AND RESULTS FOR PREVIOUSLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do you support or oppose: renewing a law that regulates rent for about one million apartment units in New York State – largely in New York City but in other communities as well?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	61	25	14
April 2011	62	29	9
HIGHEST EVER	62 (4/11)	29 (4/11)	14 (5/11)
LOWEST EVER	61 (5/11)	25 (5/11)	9 (4/11)

(Among ONLY supporters of the question above): Some have argued that the rent regulations should simply be renewed as is, others argue that the laws should be strengthened to provide additional protections for tenants. Do you think the rent regulation laws should be extended as is, or should be extended and strengthened?

DATE	EXTENDED AS IS	EXTENDED/STRENGTHENED	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	27	65	8
April 2011	28	61	11
HIGHEST EVER	28 (4/11)	65 (5/11)	11 (4/11)
LOWEST EVER	27 (5/11)	61 (4/11)	8 (5/11)

I'm going to read a list of issues and I'd like to you to tell me which is the single most important issue you want the Legislature to absolutely address before it adjourns session in June?

DATE	LEGALIZING SAME SEX MARRIAGES	IMPOSING PROPERTY TAX CAP	EXTENDING RENT REGULATIONS	NEW ETHICS LAW FOR STATE LEG.	INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2011	12	39	14	23	7	5
April 2011	13	37	12	27	8	3
HIGHEST EVER	13 (4/11)	39 (5/11)	14 (5/11)	27 (4/11)	8 (4/11)	5 (5/11)
LOWEST EVER	12 (5/11)	37 (4/11)	12 (4/11)	23 (5/11)	7 (5/11)	3 (4/11)

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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
May 2011	43	49	9
March 2011	34	57	9
February 2011	44	47	9
January 2011	36	54	10
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)

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 2011	0	9	33	57	1
April 2011	1	8	32	58	0
March 2011	1	7	30	62	1
February 2011	0	7	26	66	1
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 (4/11, etc.)

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
May 2011	40	49	11
April 2011	46	41	13
March 2011	43	45	12
February 2011	47	39	14
January 2011	36	50	14
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)

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 January 2010.

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

^ Inconsequential wording change.