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PDF version; crosstabs; website:

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Siena College Poll:

Strong Majority Supports Legalizing Medical Marijuana NY'ers Evenly Split on Fracking; Rep's in Favor, Dem's Oppose *Only 1/4 Tuned in to MMA Debate; Plurality in Support, 38% Need More Info* Voters Divided on Criminalizing Synthetic Pot

Loudonville, NY. Fifty-seven percent of voters support the legalization of the use of medical marijuana in New York State according to a new Siena College Research Institute poll of registered voters released today. Voters are split - 37 percent support and 36 percent oppose - on allowing the Department of Environmental Conservation to permit hydrofracking to move forward in parts of Upstate. While only one in four New Yorkers have heard or read either a great deal or some about legalizing Mixed Martial Arts in New York, overall supporters top opponents 32 to 26 percent, but 38 percent do not have enough information in order to say.

“Over two-thirds of voters are paying attention to the debate over legalizing medical marijuana in New York State. Democrats and independents strongly support legalization and at least a majority of every demographic agree except Republicans and self-described conservatives, who are divided on the issue. Among the sixty-eight percent that are following the issue most closely, support is running high at sixty-two percent in favor while thirty-one percent are opposed,” according to Dr. Don Levy, Siena College Research Institute Director.

“Voters remain divided on hydrofracking. In September of 2011, forty-four percent were in favor of allowing fracking on private lands outside of areas that provide drinking water under strict regulation by the DEC while forty percent opposed. Today voters continue to be split with thirty-seven percent supporting and thirty-six percent opposing a DEC move to allow fracking in Upstate,” Levy said.

Sixty-six percent of New Yorkers are paying either some or a great deal of attention to the hydrofracking debate. Of those, 46 percent oppose moving forward and 41 percent are in favor. Among those not following the issue closely, supporters of moving forward outweigh opponents by nearly two to one (30 percent to 16 percent). Republicans, conservatives and NYC suburbanites support allowing fracking to proceed while Democrats, liberals, and Upstaters oppose.

Thirty-two percent of voters support legalizing mixed martial arts (MMA) in New York State while 26 percent oppose and the largest group, 38 percent, says they would require more information before they could take a position. By an overwhelming margin, 62 to 9 percent, young voters are in favor while older New Yorkers oppose MMA by 38 to 12 percent. Men support MMA while women currently are split.

“Surprisingly, only one in four voters say that they are following the MMA question with some or a great deal of interest. In fact, of eight issues, medical marijuana, fracking, minimum wage, synthetic marijuana, small business tax cuts, campaign finance reform, legislative pay raises and MMA, mixed martial arts scored lowest in the level of public interest. Of those following the issue however, support is high at fifty-six percent for and thirty-six percent opposed while the vast majority that are not currently interested in the question are split,” Levy notes.

Forty-one percent of voters support making both the sale and possession of synthetic marijuana crimes while 38 percent oppose. Republicans are in support of criminalization, 47 to 33 percent while Democrats and independents are split. Strongest support for criminalizing synthetic marijuana comes from Upstaters and New Yorkers between 35 and 54.

	Support	Oppose	Heard or Read About Issue Great Deal/Some
Legalizing medical marijuana in New York	57%	33%	68%
Making the sale and possession of synthetic marijuana crimes	41%	38%	54%
DEC allowing hydrofracking to move forward in parts of upstate New York	37%	36%	66%
Legalizing mixed martial arts (MMA) in New York	32%	26%	25%
Increasing the minimum wage in New York from \$7.25 to \$8.50 per hour*	78%	17%	64%
\$200 million package of tax cuts for small business*	65%	13%	47%
Creating a system of public campaign financing*	40%	36%	36%
Increasing the pay of state legislators*	21%	65%	32%

This Siena College Poll was conducted May 6-10, 2012 by telephone calls to 766 New York State registered voters. It has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percentage points. 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 Don Levy at (518) 783-2901. For survey cross-tabs and frequencies: www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY.

* Full results for these questions can be found in the release dated May 14, 2012