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Siena College Poll:

Suspend PEF Layoffs & Return to Bargaining Table, 70% Tell Gov Nearly Three-Quarters of Voters Support a New York 'Millionaire's Tax' **Cuomo Remains Popular with NYers as His Job Performance Inches Up** *Voters Favor Budget Cuts Rather than New Revenues to Close Budget Deficit*

Loudonville, NY. More than two-thirds of voters think Governor Andrew Cuomo should suspend layoff notices to 3,500 Public Employee Federation (PEF) employees and sit at the bargaining table with PEF, while only about one-quarter believe he should move forward with the layoffs whether or not there are new contract negotiations, according to a new Siena College Research Institute poll of registered voters released today. By a nearly three-to-one margin voters support increasing the personal income tax on New Yorkers earning at least one million dollars per year, even after knowing that opponents say it will hurt the state's competitiveness and put jobs at risk.

Cuomo's favorability rating remains high at 71-22 percent, down very slightly from last month's 72-18 percent, while his job performance rating edged up to 58-41 percent positive, up from 55-43 percent last month.

When asked to look ahead to next year's state budget, by a 51-35 percent margin voters prefer that an anticipated \$2 billion deficit be closed by cutting spending rather than increasing revenues. If spending is cut in the budget, nearly two-thirds prefer spending cuts in state workforce and parks, while nearly three-quarters would least like to see spending cuts on education and health. If revenues are increased, a plurality says increase business taxes, while nearly half say personal income taxes would be their least preferable revenue.

"By an overwhelming 70-27 percent margin, voters think Governor Cuomo should suspend the layoffs and sit at the bargaining table with PEF, rather than move ahead with the 3,500 planned layoffs irrespective of new contract negotiations," said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. "A solid majority of voters from every party, region and demographic group think the Governor should suspend the layoffs.

"While a plurality of voters would like to see state workforce cuts if spending reductions are used to close next year's state budget deficit, right now, the vast majority of voters do not want to see 3,500 state employees being handed their pink slips," Greenberg said. "Advice to gov: keep speaking and hold back on the stick."

Overwhelming Support for New York ‘Millionaire’s Tax’

“Voters give a resounding yes, 72-26 percent, to increasing taxes on New Yorkers earning more than one million dollars a year,” Greenberg said. “And they do so after being told that supporters – including many Assembly Democrats – say it will raise enough money from those who can most afford it to offset additional education and health care cuts, and opponents – including Cuomo and Senate Republicans – say it will make New York less attractive to business, putting new and existing jobs at risk. In March, and without the arguments in support and opposition, voters supported the millionaire’s tax 71-27 percent.

“A millionaire’s tax has support across the spectrum, including 83 percent of Democrats, 70 percent of independents and even 55 percent of Republicans. It is supported by three-quarters of New Yorkers earning less than \$50,000 per year and two-thirds of those earning more than \$100,000,” Greenberg said. “It is supported by more than two-thirds of voters from every region of the state.”

Cuomo’s ‘Honeymoon’ with Voters Shows No Sign of Faltering

“Democrats have a favorable view of Cuomo by a five-to-one margin. Independents view him favorably by a three-to-one margin. And even Republicans have a two-to-one favorable view of the Democratic Governor,” Greenberg said. “Since he’s been Governor, Cuomo’s favorability has not fallen below 68 percent and in seven out of ten months, including this month, his favorability rating has been at least 70 percent.

“Nearly two-thirds of Democrats and a majority of Republicans and independents say Cuomo is doing an excellent or good job as Governor. He has a positive job performance rating from voters in every region of the state. And while 63 percent of liberals and 61 percent of moderates view his job performance as positive, so too do 47 percent of conservative voters,” Greenberg said.

Spending Cuts Favored over Revenue Increases to Close Deficit in 2012-13 State Budget

“When voters were asked how they would like the Governor to close next year’s budget deficit, which he projects at \$2 billion, 51 percent prefer to close the deficit by cutting spending, 35 percent prefer increasing revenues and eight percent volunteered a combination of both,” Greenberg said. “A majority of Republicans, independents, voters from upstate and the downstate suburbs, and voters from all income brackets favor spending reductions over revenue increases. A plurality of Democrats and New York City voters prefer revenues.

“It’s not a slam dunk majority, but it’s clear that more New Yorkers would prefer the Governor attempt to balance next year’s budget by cutting spending rather than raising taxes, despite the overwhelming support for a millionaire’s tax,” Greenberg said. “While voters’ attitudes on this may provide some guidance to state leaders, exactly where voters would prefer spending cuts or how they would like to see revenue raised may present challenges for the Governor and Legislature.”

Workforce Cuts OK, Not Education; Business Taxes OK, Not Personal Income Taxes

If the Governor proposes to close the state budget deficit by reducing spending...		
Issue	MOST like to see cut	LEAST like to see cut
Education	4%	51%
Health Care	9%	22%
Roads & bridges	12%	11%
Parks & recreation	29%	6%
State workforce	35%	5%

If the Governor proposes to close the state budget deficit by increasing revenues...		
Issue	MOST like to see increased	LEAST like to see increased
Personal income taxes	16%	45%
Sales tax	17%	18%
Gas tax	8%	15%
Business taxes	38%	10%
Tolls	11%	7%

“When it comes to spending cuts, voters feel very strongly that cuts should not come in the areas of education and health care. Cuts in state workforce lead the pack, followed closely by cuts to parks and recreation,” Greenberg said. “Voters from every region and party identify parks and state workforce as the two areas they would most like to see cut and education and health care as the two areas in which they would least like to see cuts.

“On the revenue side of the equation, there is less uniformity although voters from every party and region agree that business taxes are the first place they would look for revenue and the personal income tax is their least favorite way to raise revenue,” Greenberg said. “On the other hand, sales tax was identified by 17 percent of voters as the revenue source they’d most like to see, finishing in second place, and it was chosen by 18 percent, also second place, as the revenue they would least like to see increased.

“There is certainly a little irony in a plurality of voters identifying state workforce reductions as their preferred spending cut while overwhelmingly being opposed to the Governor moving forward with PEF layoffs. Similarly, voters send a mixed signal when saying that personal income taxes are the revenue source they would least like increased, while they strongly support raising the personal income tax on millionaires,” Greenberg said.

Gillibrand Standing with Voters Unchanged in Last Month

“Senator Kirsten Gillibrand has a 46-24 percent favorability rating, virtually unchanged from 46-25 percent last month. When it comes to her reelection effort, 46 percent of voters are prepared to re-elect her, while 34 percent would prefer ‘someone else,’ virtually unchanged from 45-34 percent last month,” Greenberg said.

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This Siena College Poll was conducted October 10-12, 2011 by telephone calls to 800 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, under the direction of 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, 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 – October 17, 2011

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2011	71	22	7
September 2011	72	18	10
August 2011	69	22	8
July 2011	71	21	8
June 2011	68	21	12
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
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
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
June 2011	11	44	32	9	5
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	15 (7/11)	47 (10/11, 2/11)	36 (9/11, 5/11)	9 (10/11, etc.)	28 (1/11)
LOWEST EVER	8 (3/11)	34 (1/11)	24 (1/11)	4 (2/11, 1/11)	1 (7/11)

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Michael Bloomberg?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2011	57	33	10
August 2010	59	28	13
HIGHEST EVER	67 (3/08)	33 (10/11)	21 (9/08)
LOWEST EVER	58 (12/08)	16 (9/08)	10 (10/11)

Siena College Poll Trends – October 17, 2011

Page 2

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2011	46	24	30
September 2011	46	25	29
August 2011	46	24	30
July 2011	49	21	30
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
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
October 2011	46	34	21
September 2011	45	34	22
August 2011	49	34	18
July 2011	50	29	21
May 2011	50	30	20
February 2011	52	29	19
HIGHEST EVER	52 (2/11)	34 (10/11, 9/11, 8/11)	22 (9/11)
LOWEST EVER	49 (8/11)	29 (7/11, 2/11)	18 (8/11)

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
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
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
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.)

Siena College Poll Trends – October 17, 2011

Page 3

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
October 2011	40	48	12
September 2011	45	44	10
August 2011	44	47	10
July 2011	48	40	12
June 2011	38	47	15
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
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 July 2010.

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

^ Inconsequential wording change.