



SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

www.siena.edu/sri

For Immediate Release:

Friday, November 2, 2012

Contact:

Steven Greenberg at 518-469-9858

PDF version; crosstabs by district:

www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY

Siena College State Senate Polls:

In 43rd SD, ‘McDonald’ Seat, Republican Marchione Leads; McDonald (I) Finishes 2nd, Ahead of Democrat Andrews; 46th SD, New Open Seat, Shows Tight Race with Republican Amedore Holding 3-Point Lead Over Democrat Tkaczyk; In 55th SD, Open ‘Alesi’ Seat, Democrat O’Brien Turns Race Around & Now Holds 11-Point Lead Over Republican Hanna

Loudonville, NY. The Siena College Research Institute today released polls of likely voters in three State Senate districts – two in open seats currently represented by Republican senators and one new district.

In the 43rd SD (currently held by Roy McDonald who lost a Republican primary and remains on the ballot on the Independence Party line) Republican Kathy Marchione has the support of 40 percent of voters, compared to 29 percent for McDonald, and 25 percent for Democrat Robin Andrews.

In the 46th SD (a new district with no incumbent senator) Republican Assemblyman George Amedore leads Democratic Cecilia Tkaczyk 47-44 percent.

In the 55th SD (currently held by retiring James Alesi) Democrat Ted O’Brien, who trailed by eight points last month, now leads Republican Assemblyman Sean Hanna by a 50-39 percent margin.

“These three seats – two currently held by Republicans – are seen as among the key races in the Democrats’ attempt to retake the majority in the Senate next year. In order for there to be 32 Democrats in the new 63-member Senate, Democrats have to hold two downstate seats – the 15th in Queens and the 37th in Westchester – that previous Siena polling showed to be tight races, and win three additional seats,” Greenberg said. “The Republicans believe they have a strong chance of maintaining the majority and of winning one or both of those seats. It had been our intention to poll again in those two Democratic seats but obviously in light of the devastating impact of Sandy on those communities, that became an impossibility, as did polling in any downstate district after Sunday.”

SD	Candidate	Senate Race		Favorability Rating						Presidential Horse Race					
				Fav		Unfav		DK/NO		Obama		Romney		DK/NO/Other	
43	Kathy Marchione (R)	40%		41%		36%		23%		50%		45%		5%	
	Roy McDonald (I)	29%		45%		37%		17%							
	Robin Andrews (D)	25%		16%		16%		67%							
	Undecided / Not Voting	6%													
46	George Amedore (R)	47%		43%		34%		23%		48%		44%		7%	
	Cecilia Tkaczyk (D)	44%		32%		26%		42%							
	Undecided / Not Voting	9%													
55		11/2	10/3	11/2	10/3	11/2	10/3	11/2	10/3	11/2	10/3	11/2	10/3	11/2	10/3
	Ted O'Brien (D)	50%	39%	39%	22%	35%	26%	26%	52%	56%	53%	41%	39%	3%	6%
	Sean Hanna (R)	39%	47%	34%	37%	47%	29%	18%	34%						
	Undecided / Not Voting	11%	14%												

Siena College State Senate Polls – November 2, 2012

43rd SD – Columbia, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Washington Counties –

Kathy Marchione (R) vs. Roy McDonald (I) vs. Robin Andrews (D)

Marchione has the support of 40 percent of likely voters, followed by McDonald with 29 percent and Andrews at 25 percent, with six percent undecided or not voting in this race. The question respondents were asked to answer was as follows: “After losing the Republican primary, Roy McDonald announced that despite remaining on the Independence Party line on the ballot, he would not be campaigning for re-election. In light of that, if the election for State Senator was held today, who would you vote for if the candidates were:” the order of the three candidates and their party affiliation was rotated.

Marchione has the support of 62 percent of Republicans, in this district with a seven-point Republican enrollment edge, with McDonald getting 26 percent and Andrews eight percent. Andrews gets 55 percent support among Democrats, followed by McDonald 25 percent and Marchione 13 percent. Independents are divided with 38 percent supporting Marchione, 35 percent supporting McDonald and 20 percent Andrews.

Among likely voters in the two-thirds of the district McDonald currently represents, Marchione leads McDonald 40-32 percent, with Andrews getting 21 percent. In the one-third of the district that’s new, Marchione leads Andrews 40-34 percent, with McDonald getting 22 percent.

Seven in ten Marchione voters say they are certain to stick with their candidate, while 65 percent of Andrews voters say that, as do 55 percent of McDonald voters. Two-thirds of voters said the position taken by candidates on the issue of same-sex marriage was very (40 percent) or somewhat (26 percent) important to them in choosing who to support for State Senator.

President Obama leads Mitt Romney 50-45 percent among voters in this Senate district, and he leads among independent voters by seven points. Obama has a three point net positive favorability rating, while Romney has a three point net negative favorability rating.

“It’s not often that we see a major party candidate in third place, however, there are clearly a large number of voters in the 43rd district who continue to have good feelings about their incumbent Senator,” Greenberg said. “Marchione is garnering the lion’s share of Republican votes, a bare plurality of independent votes and a modicum of Democratic votes. Combined that’s enough to give her an 11-point lead in what is surprisingly a three-person race involving two active candidates. These results can inspire a lot of ‘what if’ questions but the real question four days before Election Day is will more than a quarter of the voters actually vote for a candidate who has said he is not seeking to win?”

**46th SD – Albany, Greene, Montgomery, Schenectady, and Ulster Counties –
George Amedore (R) vs. Cecilia Tkaczyk (D)**

Amedore has the support of 47 percent of likely voters and Tkaczyk has the support of 44 percent, with nine percent either undecided or not voting in this race. While Tkaczyk has the support of 75 percent of Democrats, Amedore does better with his party, winning the support of 80 percent of Republicans, and he has a narrow lead among independent voters, 48-42 percent.

Tkaczyk has a seven point lead in the Ulster/Greene portion of the district, while Amedore leads by 13 points in the Albany/Montgomery/Schenectady portion. Amedore leads by six points with men and he trails Tkaczyk by a single point among women.

Amedore is viewed favorably by 43 percent of likely voters and unfavorably by 34 percent, with 23 percent having no opinion. Tkaczyk has a 32-26 percent favorability rating, with 42 percent having no opinion.

One-quarter of voters say that Amedore has been running the more negative campaign and one-quarter of voters says it is Tkaczyk. Roughly 90 percent of supporters of both candidates say they are absolutely or fairly certain to support their candidate.

In this district with a four-point Democratic enrollment edge, Obama leads Romney 48-44. More than three-quarters of Democrats are with the President and more than three-quarters of Republicans are with the former Massachusetts Governor. Independents are evenly divided with 45 percent for each.

“The race, in this newly created senate district that was seen by many pundits as a seat drawn for Assemblyman Amedore, is too close to call. Tkaczyk has been through one election in this district, having won the September Democratic primary, and now she finds herself in the closing days of a tight general election campaign,” Greenberg said. “Extensive money on both sides has been filling mailboxes and funding a seemingly endless campaign of commercials. Now it all comes down to which candidate can better attract the few undecided voters and which campaign does a better job of getting their voters to the polls on Tuesday. As we move from the air war to the ground game, this race appears to be wide open.”

55th SD – Monroe and Ontario Counties – Ted O’Brien (D) vs. Sean Hanna (R)

After trailing by eight points (47-39 percent) in the October 3rd Siena poll, O’Brien now has an 11-point, 50-39 percent lead over Hanna, with 11 percent undecided or not voting in this race. O’Brien has picked up support across the board. He leads among Democrats 76-14 percent (up from 66-20 percent). Hanna leads among Republicans 71-21 percent (down from 76-12). O’Brien, who had trailed among independents 50-34 percent, now leads among independents 51-39 percent.

While Hanna has a slim four-point lead in the southern part of the district (after leading there by 15 points last month), O’Brien has an overwhelming 26-point lead in the north (where he was previously within one point). In the last Siena poll, Hanna had led by eight points with both men and women. Now, O’Brien has a tiny two point edge with men and 21-point lead with women.

O’Brien is viewed favorably by 39 percent of likely voters and unfavorably by 35 percent, with 26 percent having no opinion (it was 22-26-52 percent last month). Hanna has a negative 34-47 percent favorability rating (down from a positive 37-29 percent last month), with 18 percent having no opinion.

Both candidates’ supporters are strongly locked in, with 88 percent of O’Brien voters and 87 percent of Hanna voters saying they are absolutely or fairly certain they will stick with their candidate. By a nearly two-to-one margin, voters say that Hanna has been waging the more negative campaign.

Obama continues to have a significant lead over Romney, 56-41 percent, compared to 53-39 percent last month. Obama has a 19-point net positive favorability rating, while Romney has an 11-point net negative favorability rating.

“Hanna had the early lead and the early advantage. He was better known and had a stronger favorability rating than O’Brien. That has changed in the last four weeks in this district with a five-point Democratic enrollment edge,” Greenberg said. “While O’Brien is still unknown to more voters than Hanna, he is viewed more favorably than Hanna and Hanna is viewed considerably more unfavorably than O’Brien. Voters overwhelmingly say that Hanna, not O’Brien, is running a more negative campaign. And what hasn’t changed is that Obama has a significant lead over Romney. Taken all together, O’Brien has been able to reverse the course of this race and he heads into the closing days in a very strong position.”

###

These SRI State Senate surveys were conducted from October 30 - November 1, 2012 by telephone calls to likely voters in each State Senate district. For the 43rd SD, 489 voters were included in the sample, with a margin of error of ± 4.4 percentage points. For the 46th SD, 461 voters were included in the sample, with a margin of error of ± 4.6 percentage points. For the 55th SD, 476 voters were included in the sample, margin of error ± 4.5 . In each district a likely voter screen was applied to a weighted representative sample of registered voters. 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, please call Steven Greenberg at 518-469-9858. Cross-tabulations and frequencies for these six polls can be found at: www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY.