



SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

www.siena.edu/sri

For Immediate Release:

Monday, September 15, 2008

Contact:

Steven Greenberg at 518-469-9858

PDF version; crosstabs; website:

www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY0908

Siena New York Poll:

With 50 Days Left, New York Is Far From True Blue Obama's Lead Falls to 5 Points; Down From 18 Points in June

Obama Seen As Stronger Than McCain on 4 of 6 Issues; Voters See McCain As Better Than Obama on 4 of 6 of Attributes

Loudonville, NY. Seven weeks until Election Day, the race for President has tightened in New York, with Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) leading Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) 46-41 percent among likely voters, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll released today. Obama's five point lead is down from eight points in August, 13 points in July and 18 points in June, when he led 51-33 percent. On a series of six questions concerning current issues in the campaign – economy, Iraq, terrorism, health care, America's position in the world, and education – likely voters believe Obama will do a better job on four. Conversely, out of six attributes voters often look at in choosing a candidate – compassion, patriotism, experience, intelligence, integrity, and leadership – New York's electorate gives the edge to McCain on four.

“Although New York has long been regarded as a ‘safe’ state for the Democrats in presidential politics, likely voters in the Empire State are currently only giving Senator Obama a five-point cushion,” said Steven Greenberg, spokesman for the Siena New York Poll. “The conventions are over. The running mates are set. And as voters begin to focus on the race, New York's overwhelming Democratic enrollment advantage is not reflected in how voters tell Siena they plan to vote.”

Who's Qualified?

“Two-thirds of voters think Obama is qualified to be President. More

For each of the following people, tell me whether you think that person is very qualified, somewhat qualified, somewhat unqualified, or very unqualified to be president.						
Candidate	Total Qualified	Very Qualified	Somewhat Qualified	Total Unqualified	Somewhat Unqualified	Very Unqualified
John McCain	79%	43%	36%	17%	9%	8%
Barack Obama	67%	32%	35%	30%	12%	18%
Joe Biden	70%	31%	39%	18%	10%	8%
Sarah Palin	47%	12%	35%	41%	14%	27%

voters, however, believe his vice presidential running mate is qualified, and nearly four out of five voters believe McCain is qualified” Greenberg said. “New York voters are more evenly divided on Governor Sarah Palin's qualifications to be President, with 47 percent saying she's qualified and 41 percent saying she's not.”

Voters Rate the Candidates on the Issues – Obama Wins Four Out of Six

“By better than two-to-one, voters think Obama will be more effective on education and health care. A plurality also gives him the edge on the economy and the war in Iraq,” Greenberg said. “McCain gets the nod on terrorism and enhancing America’s strength in the world. Democrats give Obama the advantage on every issue, while Republicans say McCain is best on every issue. Interestingly, there is virtually no difference between men and women on any of these issues and only on strengthening America abroad is there a significant difference between younger and older voters.”

Now I’m going to read you a list of issues that the next president will have to deal with and I’d like you to tell me which of the two candidates – John McCain or Barack Obama (order rotated) – you think will be more effective in solving that issue.		
Issue	McCain	Obama
Revitalizing the American Economy	38%	49%
Successfully ending the war in Iraq	39%	49%
Keeping America safe from terrorism	54%	33%
Improving our health care system	27%	55%
Enhancing America’s strength in the world	47%	41%
Building a 21 st century education system	25%	57%

Voters Give McCain the Edge On Four of Six Personal Attributes

Now I’m going to read you a list of attributes that voters often look at when deciding which presidential candidate to vote for and I’d like you to tell me which of the two candidates – John McCain or Barack Obama (order rotated) – you think more fully embodies that attribute.		
Attribute	McCain	Obama
Compassion	32%	52%
Patriotism	59%	21%
Experience	73%	18%
Intelligence	30%	50%
Integrity	43%	38%
Leadership	49%	39%

“Voters overwhelmingly say that McCain is more patriotic and has more experience than Obama. By smaller margins, they give McCain the edge on integrity and leadership,” Greenberg said. “A majority of voters say Obama has the advantage on intelligence and compassion. Even Democrats give McCain a wide lead on experience. The only significant difference between men and women on attributes was on

leadership. While both say McCain is the better leader, women agree by a smaller margin. Younger voters disagree with older voters on leadership and integrity, with a plurality saying Obama is better on both.

“Seven weeks is a long time in politics. Will New York stay “blue?” Will McCain make it a battleground state? Siena will continue to track voters in a state where politics is not boring,” Greenberg said.

Candidate	Fav	Unfav	DK/NO
Barack Obama	56%	32%	12%
John McCain	50%	37%	13%
Joe Biden	46%	26%	28%
Sarah Palin	46%	30%	24%

New York likely voters are evenly divided on whether they want to see Republicans continue to control the State Senate or have the Democrats take control for the first time in more than 30 years, 44-44 percent.

Governor David Paterson continues to enjoy strong support from voters, with a 59-13 percent favorable rating and a 51-37 percent positive job performance rating. In 2010 gubernatorial match-ups, he loses to New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg by five points (45-40 percent) down from eight points last month, and beats former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani by the same ten-point margin (50-40 percent) as last month.

###



SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

www.siena.edu/sri

Siena New York Poll Trends – September, 2008

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about David Paterson?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
September 2008	59	13	28
August 2008	59	16	26
July 2008	57	15	28
June 2008	57	17	25
May 2008	48	17	35
April 2008	48	18	34
March 24, 2008	58	10	31
January 2007	17	8	76

How would you rate the job that David Paterson is doing as Governor – excellent, good, fair, or poor?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
September 2008	7	44	33	4	12
August 2008	7	45	30	5	12
July 2008	7	41	34	5	13
June 2008	6	38	31	6	19
May 2008	5	35	28	4	29
April 2008	4	30	30	4	32

I know it's a long way off, but if David Paterson runs for Governor in 2010, would you vote to elect him or would you prefer someone else?

DATE	ELECT	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
September 2008	35	25	39
August 2008	35	26	40
July 2008	34	27	40
June 2008	30	30	40
May 2008	29	25	47

If the 2010 election for governor were held today and the candidates were David Paterson on the Democratic line and Michael Bloomberg on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (CANDIDATE CHOICES WERE ROTATED)

DATE	PATERSON	BLOOMBERG	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
September 2008	40	45	15
August 2008	36	44	19
July 2008	37	45	18
June 2008	34	45	21
May 2008	36	45	20
April 2008	34	48	18

Siena New York Poll Trends – September, 2008

Page 2

If the 2010 election for governor were held today and the candidates were David Paterson on the Democratic line and Rudy Giuliani on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (CANDIDATE CHOICES WERE ROTATED)

DATE	PATERSON	GIULIANI	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
September 2008	50	40	10
August 2008	48	38	15
July 2008	47	40	13

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
September 2008	54	24	22
August 2008	54	25	21
July 2008	57	23	21
June 2008	57	22	21
May 2008	56	25	20
April 2008	55	24	21
March 24, 2008	53	25	22
January 2008	51	29	20
December 2007	52	29	19
November 2007	56	27	17
October 2007	54	29	17
September 2007	51	26	24
July 2007	55	26	19
June 2007	49	31	20
May 2007	51	32	18
April 2007	52	31	18
March 2007	50	32	19
February 2007	45	35	20
January 2007	48	29	23
November 15, 2006	50	36	15
November 3, 2006	49	36	15
October 2006	44	42	15
September 2006	50	35	15
August 2006	44	35	21
June 2006	47	29	24
January 2006	45	31	24

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
September 2008	63	16	21
August 2008	64	18	18
July 2008	64	20	16
June 2008	64	21	16
May 2008	65	19	16
April 2008	63	21	16
March 24, 2008	67	18	15
January 2008	59	24	17
October 2007	68	20	12
July 2007	65	19	17
June 2007	62	20	18

Siena New York Poll Trends – September, 2008

Page 3

Currently, Democrats have an overwhelming majority in the State Assembly. Republicans have a small 32-30 majority in the State Senate. The Governor is a Democrat. Which statement comes closest to your opinion (CHOICES WERE ROTATED): I agree with those who claim it is important for Republicans to keep control of the Senate, providing checks and balances so one party does not control all of state government, or I agree with those who claim that if Democrats gain control of the Senate, it would end the gridlock and make state government more effective.

DATE	REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATIC	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
September 2008	44	44	12
August 2008	42	47	11
July 2008	40	48	12
June 2008	41	48	12
May 2008	39	48	13
March 2008	47	45	9

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about George Bush?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
September 2008	29	65	6
May 2008	23	73	4
April 2007	29	65	6
January 2007	26	67	8
November 15, 2006	28	65	7
September 2006	36	61	3

If the 2008 presidential election were held today and the candidates were Barack Obama on the Democratic line and John McCain on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (CANDIDATE CHOICES WERE ROTATED)

DATE	OBAMA	MCCAIN	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
September 2008	46	41	13
August 2008	47	39	14
July 2008	50	37	13
June 2008	51	33	17
May 2008	49	38	14
April 2008	45	40	15
February 2008	47	40	13
January 2008	44	42	15
June 2007	49	35	16
May 2007	50	33	18
April 2007	50	37	13
March 2007	47	39	14
November 15, 2006	39	40	21

– more –

Siena New York Poll Trends – September, 2008

Page 4

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
September 2008	56	32	12
August 2008	54	34	12
July 2008	57	32	12
June 2008	58	30	13
May 2008	55	34	11
April 2008	54	34	12
March 24, 2008	56	32	13
March 3, 2008	56	31	13
February 2008	60	30	10
January 2008	57	28	15
December 2007	55	30	15
September 2007	56	24	20
June 2007	53	24	23
May 2007	58	22	20
April 2007	55	23	22
March 2007	52	20	28
February 2007	52	21	28
January 2007	50	17	34
November 15, 2006	48	12	40

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about John McCain?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
September 2008	50	37	13
August 2008	49	41	10
July 2008	45	42	13
June 2008	42	47	11
May 2008	49	39	12
April 2008	54	35	11
March 24, 2008	54	34	12
March 3, 2008	48	41	11
February 2008	55	34	11
January 2008	56	27	17
December 2007	53	29	18
June 2007	43	39	19
May 2007	42	44	14
April 2007	45	39	15
March 2007	45	34	21
February 2007	47	33	19
January 2007	51	29	21
November 15, 2006	56	24	20

Siena New York Poll Trends – September, 2008

Page 5

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Hillary Clinton?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
September 2008	56	39	5
August 2008	51	43	6
July 2008	55	38	7
June 2008	56	38	6
May 2008	52	43	5
April 2008	48	46	6
March 24, 2008	52	43	5
March 3, 2008	54	39	7
February 2008	53	43	4
January 2008	60	35	5
December 2007	51	44	5
November 2007	55	39	6
October 2007	53	41	6
September 2007	57	37	7
July 2007	59	35	6
June 2007	54	39	7
May 2007	56	39	5
April 2007	50	42	7
March 2007	56	37	8
February 2007	56	40	5
January 2007	60	33	7
November 15, 2006	65	29	6
November 3, 2006	61	33	6
October 2006	56	38	6
September 2006	60	37	4
August 2006	54	38	7
June 2006	54	38	8
May 2006	58	36	6
March 2006	55	39	6
January 2006	60	37	3
November 2005	60	34	6
October 2005	59	35	6
August 2005	59	37	4
July 2005	60	34	6
June 2005	60	33	7
May 2005	58	35	7
April 2005	60	33	6
March 2005	58	34	8
February 2005	61	33	6

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
September 2008	28	56	17
September 2007	23	64	13

– more –

Siena New York Poll Trends – September, 2008

Page 6

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
September 2008	35	37	28
August 2008	34	44	22
July 2008	36	39	25
June 2008	30	46	23
May 2008	32	43	26
April 2008	33	48	20
March 24, 2008	34	41	26
February 2008	33	43	24
January 2008	39	38	23
December 2007	35	45	21
November 2007	32	45	23
October 2007	42	36	22
September 2007	44	30	26
July 2007	37	38	25
June 2007	45	28	27
May 2007	46	29	25
April 2007	47	29	24
March 2007	37	37	26
February 2007	49	26	25
January 2007	45	26	30
November 15, 2006	52	30	18
November 3, 2006	36	43	21
October 2006	29	47	23
September 2006	33	39	28
August 2006	29	47	25
June 2006	29	45	26
May 2006	27	52	21
March 2006	35	39	26
January 2006	34	43	24
November 2005	38	41	22
October 2005	34	42	24
August 2005	36	44	20
July 2005	33	41	26
June 2005	30	44	26
May 2005	29	46	25
April 2005	29	44	27
March 2005	26	47	27
February 2005	32	44	24

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
September 2008	1	14	41	41	4
August 2008	0	13	37	48	1

Poll Notes: All surveys are of registered voters except for the polls of September 2008, September 2006 and October 2006, which are polls of likely registered voters.