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PDF version; crosstabs; website:

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Siena College Poll:

2/3 of Voters Want to Change System of How Part-Time Legislators Earn & Report Outside Income, But No Consensus on How

Plurality of Voters Disappointed Senate Rejected Same Sex Marriage Bill *Gillibrand Leads Dem Field; Trails Giuliani, Leads Pataki & 'Unknown' Rep*

Loudonville, NY. Fewer than one-third of voters favor the current system of defining state legislators as part time employees who can have other jobs. However, there is no consensus on how to change the system, with similar support for banning legislators from having other jobs and increasing public disclosure of the size and source of outside income, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll of registered voters. More voters were disappointed than pleased that the Senate last month rejected the same sex marriage bill. Heading into 2010, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand leads the Democratic field and would handily beat an 'unknown' Republican, however, she trails former Mayor Rudy Giuliani by seven points and leads former Governor George Pataki by three points.

“Only 31 percent of voters favor the current system of part-time state legislators who can have outside jobs and incomes, but voters cannot agree on how to best change the system. Better public disclosure of the size and source of outside income is the preferred reform of 27 percent of voters, while 31 percent favor prohibiting legislators from having outside employment,” said Siena pollster Steven Greenberg. “And of those 31 percent who favor banning outside employment, fewer than half support increasing the salary of legislators, while the majority suggest banning outside employment and not increasing legislative salaries.

“While there are some differences based on party and geography, they are not huge differences. Disclosure of outside income is most important to Democrats and upstate voters. Support for increasing legislative salaries as part of a ban on outside employment is strongest in New York City and weakest upstate,” Greenberg said.

Forty-seven percent of voters were disappointed that the Senate rejected the bill to legalize same sex marriages in New York, compared to 41 percent who were pleased by the Senate's vote. Liberals, young voters, Democrats and Jewish voters were most disappointed. Conservatives, Republicans, older, and African American voters were most pleased with the Senate vote. In August, 50 percent of voters told Siena that they supported the Senate passing the same sex marriage bill, with 44 percent then opposing Senate passage.

“New Yorkers remain fairly evenly divided on the issue of same sex marriages, with a small advantage for those supporting it despite the Senate’s defeat of the legislation,” Greenberg said. “Overall, 40 percent of voters – 42 percent of those who were disappointed in the Senate action and 47 percent of those who were pleased – said that their Senator’s vote on the issue would be a deciding factor in their vote for State Senator next years.”

Junior US Senator 2010: Gillibrand Leads Democrats; Giuliani Strongest Republican

“Gillibrand trails Giuliani by seven points. Giuliani does significantly better with Republicans, 82-11 percent, than Gillibrand does with Democrats, 59-33 percent. Against Pataki, Gillibrand increases her Democratic support to 65 percent, while

Pataki’s Republican support is only 75 percent, giving Gillibrand a tight three point lead. New York City Comptroller Bill Thompson doesn’t do as well

2010 Senate Horse Race Questions						
Date	Gillibrand v. Giuliani		Gillibrand v. Pataki		Gillibrand v. Blakeman	
	Gillibrand	Giuliani	Gillibrand	Pataki	Gillibrand	Blakeman
Dec. 15	42%	49%	46%	43%	52%	22%
Nov. 16	43%	49%	45%	44%		
Oct. 20	36%	53%	41%	46%		
Date	Thompson v. Giuliani		Thompson v. Pataki		Thompson v. Blakeman	
	Thompson	Giuliani	Thompson	Pataki	Thompson	Blakeman
Dec. 15	34%	56%	36%	49%	40%	23%

with Democrats against either Giuliani or Pataki and Thompson does considerably worse with independent voters than Gillibrand, explaining his trailing Giuliani by 22 points and Pataki by 13 points,” Greenberg said.

“In a potential Democratic primary, Gillibrand has a small lead with 32 percent support, trailed by Thompson at 23 percent, former Tennessee Representative Harold Ford at seven percent, and Jonathan Tasini at three percent. More than one-third of Democrats do not have a candidate they are currently supporting,” Greenberg said. “On the Republican side, Giuliani would easily beat Pataki in a one-on-one Republican primary 57-26 percent. If neither ‘big name’ Republican is in the race, a primary among Mike Balboni, Bruce Blakeman and Liz

	Fav	Unfav	DK/NO
Rudy Giuliani	58%	36%	5%
George Pataki	53%	35%	12%
<i>Kirsten Gillibrand</i>	31%	22%	47%
<i>Bill Thompson</i>	25%	17%	58%
<i>Harold Ford</i>	19%	7%	74%
Liz Feld	9%	6%	86%
Mike Balboni	6%	8%	86%
Bruce Blakeman	4%	6%	90%
Republicans (plain) / Democrats (<i>italics</i>)			

Feld, results in 82 percent of Republicans saying they don’t know who they would support.”

Voters Split on Support of Incumbent State Senators & Split on Which Party Should Control Senate

“Currently, voters are equally divided 42-42 percent on whether they would re-elect their incumbent State Senator or prefer ‘someone else.’ In 2010, 36 percent of voters say they want a bigger majority for the Democrats, 23 percent want the Republicans to take back the majority and 36 percent want to see the Senate continue to be closely divided,” Greenberg said.

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This SRI survey was conducted December 6-9, 2009 by telephone calls to 665 New York State registered voters. It has a margin of error of ± 3.8 percentage points. Data was statistically adjusted by age, party and geography to ensure representativeness. Sampling was conducted via random digit dialing weighted to reflect known population patterns. SRI is an independent, non-partisan research institute. SRI 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 – December 15, 2009

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2009	31	22	47
November 2009	34	24	43
October 2009	28	26	46
September 2009	29	24	47
August 2009	29	20	52
May 2009	33	21	46
April 2009	33	23	44
March 2009	26	20	54
February 2009	34	20	46
January 29, 2009	30	14	56
HIGHEST EVER	34 (11/09, 2/09)	26 (10/09)	56 (1/09)
LOWEST EVER	28 (10/09)	14 (1/09)	43 (11/09)

If Kirsten Gillibrand runs for United States Senator in 2010, would you vote to elect her or would you prefer someone else?

DATE	ELECT	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2009	30	34	35
November 2009	33	38	29
May 2009	27	39	34
April 2009	20	47	33
March 2009	23	37	39
January 29, 2009	21	29	50
HIGHEST EVER	33 (11/09)	47 (4/09)	50 (1/09)
LOWEST EVER	20 (4/09)	29 (1/09)	29 (11/09)

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Bill Thompson?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2009	25	17	58
November 2009	25	21	54
HIGHEST EVER	25 (12/09, 11/09)	21 (11/09)	58 (12/09)
LOWEST EVER	25(12/09, 11/09)	17 (12/09)	54 (11/09)

(DEMS ONLY): Looking ahead to next year and the election for United State Senator. If the Democratic primary for United States Senator were held today and the candidates were Kirsten Gillibrand, Bill Thompson, Harold Ford, and Jonathan Tasini who would you vote for? (CANDIDATE CHOICES WERE ROTATED)

DATE	GILLIBRAND	THOMPSON	FORD	TASINI	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2009	32	23	7	3	35
November 2009	43	NA	NA	13	39
HIGHEST EVER	43 (11/09)	23 (12/09)	7 (12/09)	13 (11/09)	39 (11/09)
LOWEST EVER	32 (12/09)	23 (12/09)	7 (12/09)	3 (12/09)	35 (12/09)

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Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Rudy Giuliani?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2009	58	36	5
November 2009	62	34	4
October 2009	60	35	5
September 2009	56	38	6
August 2009	57	35	8
July 2009	61	34	5
June 2009	62	33	5
May 2009	61	35	5
April 2009	55	41	4
March 2009	58	36	6
February 2009	58	35	7
January 29, 2009	60	35	5
January 26, 2009	59	33	8
December 2008	50	43	7
November 2008	57	39	4
August 2008	51	42	7
July 2008	51	39	10
January 2008	44	48	8
HIGHEST EVER	63 (1/07, 10/06, 4/05)	48 (1/08)	11 (11/07, 2/05)
LOWEST EVER	44 (1/08)	26 (4/05)	4 (11/09, 4/09, 11/08)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2009	53	35	12
November 2009	55	36	9
October 2009	53	34	12
August 2009	53	35	13
May 2009	53	36	11
April 2009	49	43	8
March 2009	49	41	10
February 2007	36	57	7
HIGHEST EVER	55 (11/09)	57 (2/07)	16 (2/05)
LOWEST EVER	36 (2/07)	34 (10/09)	7 (many; most recently 2/07)

If the 2010 election for United States Senator were held today and the candidates were Kirsten Gillibrand on the Democratic line and Rudy Giuliani on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (CANDIDATE CHOICES WERE ROTATED)

DATE	GILLIBRAND	GIULIANI	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2009	42	49	9
November 2009	43	49	8
October 2009	36	53	10
September 2009	38	46	16
January 2009	44	42	14
HIGHEST EVER	44 (1/09)	53 (10/09)	16 (9/09)
LOWEST EVER	36 (10/09)	42 (1/09)	8 (11/09)

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If the 2010 election for United States Senator were held today and the candidates were Kirsten Gillibrand on the Democratic line and George Pataki on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (CANDIDATE CHOICES WERE ROTATED)

DATE	GILLIBRAND	PATAKI	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2009	46	43	12
November 2009	45	44	12
October 2009	41	46	13
August 2009	39	42	18
May 2009	43	43	14
March 2009	41	41	18
HIGHEST EVER	46 (12/09)	46 (10/09)	18 (8/09, 3/09)
LOWEST EVER	39 (8/09)	41 (3/09)	12 (12/09, 11/09)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2009	60	28	13
November 2009	60	30	10
May 2009	63	25	12
January 29, 2009	66	23	11
December 2008	61	28	11
November 2008	60	27	13
May 2008	61	24	15
January 2008	60	26	14
HIGHEST EVER	70 (7/05)	30 (11/09)	17 (2/05)
LOWEST EVER	60 (12/09, etc.)	20 (2/05, 11/06)	9 (7/05)

As things stand now, if the election for State Senate were held today, would you vote to re-elect your incumbent Senator or would you prefer someone else?

DATE	RE-ELECT	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2009	42	42	16
October 2009	40	46	15
September 2009	38	45	17
August 2009	37	43	20
July 2009	31	40	28
HIGHEST EVER	42 (12/09)	46 (10/09)	28 (7/09)
LOWEST EVER	31 (7/09)	40 (7/09)	15 (10/09)

Poll Trend Notes: 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 2008

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

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