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Siena New York Poll:

Paterson Is Weakest He's Ever Been by Every Measure
Voters Rate Direction & Fiscal Condition of New York as Worst Ever
Confidence in State Leaders to Resolve Budget Crisis Erodes

Loudonville, NY. Governor David Paterson's standing with New York voters has taken a major hit as his favorable rating, his job performance rating and his position in 2010 primary and general election head-to-head matchups have all fallen to their lowest levels since Paterson became Governor nearly one year ago, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll of registered voters. Also falling to record lows in the new Siena New York Poll are voters' views on the direction the state is headed in, the state's fiscal condition and the confidence voters have in state leaders to successfully address the budget crisis.

Paterson is now viewed favorably by 40 percent of voters and unfavorably by 47 percent, down from last month's 54-30 percent favorable rating, and his high of 64-19 percent in November. His job performance rating is 28 percent positive, 69 percent negative down from 51-45 percent positive last month. Currently, only 19 percent of voters are prepared to elect Paterson as Governor in 2010, compared to 57 percent who prefer "someone else." That's down from 32-36 percent last month, and 42-32 percent in November.

"David Paterson has reached a low water mark with voters since becoming Governor," said Steven Greenberg, spokesman for the Siena New York Poll. "Between the Senate appointment process, which is still the focus of negative reports one month later, and the attacks being waged across the media by those opposed to his budget proposals, the Governor is tumbling in the polls from record highs three months ago to new record lows."

In a hypothetical 2010 Democratic primary for Governor, Paterson trails Attorney General Andrew Cuomo 53-27 percent. Last month Paterson led 35-33 percent, and in November he led 53-25 percent. In potential general election matchups, Paterson trails former Mayor Rudy Giuliani 51-36 percent, after leading Giuliani 44-42 percent last month and 51-38 percent in December. Cuomo leads Giuliani 51-38 percent. Paterson leads former Congressman Rick Lazio 46-28 percent, and Cuomo beats Lazio 66-16 percent.

"The good news for the Governor is that the election is more than a year and a half away. The bad news is there is a lot of catching up to do and it's hard work trying to restore voters' faith," Greenberg said.

Only 31 percent of voters feel the state is headed on the right track, compared to 53 percent – the highest ever in a Siena poll – who think the state is headed in the wrong direction. Last month it was 39-42 percent. Nearly two-thirds of voters, 65 percent, also the highest ever, rate the state’s fiscal condition as poor, with another 28 percent calling it fair.

“More New Yorkers than at any time in the last four years are unhappy with the direction in which their state is headed,” Greenberg said. “And virtually every voter in the state – well, 93 percent of them – view the fiscal condition of New York as poor or fair.

“In addition, New Yorkers’ faith in the Governor and Legislature to successfully resolve the budget crisis has dropped dramatically in just the last month,” Greenberg said. “Now, far more voters have little or no confidence in state leaders’ ability to solve the budget crisis.”

Currently, 37 percent of voters are very or somewhat confident that the budget crisis will be solved, compared to 61 percent of voters who are not very or not at all confident. Last month it was 52-45 percent confident.

“Voters continue to overwhelmingly support increasing the personal income tax on millionaires – 77-19 percent – to close the budget gap, and 59 percent support an income tax increase on those making more than \$250,000 a year,” Greenberg said.

Views on Several Budget Proposals		
Statement	Support (Strongly)	Oppose (Strongly)
Raise income taxes on New Yorkers earning more than \$250,000	59% (36%)	36% (21%)
Raise income taxes on New Yorkers earning more than \$1 million	77% (59%)	19% (13%)
Make additional budget cuts in education and health rather than raising personal income taxes	22% (11%)	72% (54%)
Use additional Federal stimulus money to eliminate budget cuts proposed by the Governor	59% (32%)	26% (14%)
Use additional Federal stimulus money to eliminate new taxes & fees proposed by the Governor	58% (32%)	27% (14%)

“The commercials against the Governor’s

budget proposals are having an impact. More than 80 percent of voters are concerned that the proposed budget cuts in health and education would adversely affect the quality of health care and education in New York,” Greenberg said.

When presented with a choice, 51 percent of voters said the budget should be balanced primarily by using the Federal stimulus money and increasing the income tax on those earning \$250,000, while 38 percent prefer using the Federal stimulus money and budget cuts to balance the budget.

“Voters recognize the fiscal crisis New York and New Yorkers face. They understand that balancing the state budget is complicated. But their message to state leaders is consistent and clear: do not solve the budget crisis by endangering the quality of health care or education,” Greenberg said.

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Siena New York Poll Trends – February 2009

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2009	40	47	13
January 29, 2009	54	30	17
January 26, 2009	60	23	16
December 2008	63	22	16
November 2008	64	19	17
October 27, 2008	62	19	18
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
HIGHEST EVER	64 (11/08)	47 (2/09)	76 (1/07)

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
February 2009	2	26	46	23	3
January 26, 2009	8	43	35	10	4
December 2008	9	46	32	8	4
November 2008	9	46	34	7	4
October 27, 2008	7	48	35	5	5
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
HIGHEST EVER	9 (12/08)	48 (10/08)	46 (2/09)	23 (2/09)	32 (4/08)

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
February 2009	19	57	24
January 26, 2009	32	36	32
December 2008	36	31	33
November 2008	42	32	26
October 27, 2008	40	29	31
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
HIGHEST EVER	42 (11/08)	57 (2/09)	47 (5/08)

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(DEMS ONLY): Looking ahead to 2010 and the next election for Governor. If the Democratic primary for governor were held today and the candidates were David Paterson or Andrew Cuomo, who would you vote for? (CANDIDATE CHOICES WERE ROTATED) (NOTE: In April 2008, Tom Suozzi was included as a choice)

DATE	PATERSON	CUOMO	SUOZZI	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2009	27	53	NA	20
January 26, 2009	35	33	NA	33
December 2008	49	26	NA	25
November 2008	53	25	NA	22
July 2008	51	21	NA	28
June 2008	43	31	NA	26
May 2008	42	29	NA	29
April 2008	35	30	7	28
HIGHEST EVER	53 (11/08)	53 (2/09)	7 (4/08)	33 (1/09)

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
February 2009	36	51	13
January 26, 2009	44	42	14
December 2008	51	38	11
November 2008	49	43	8
October 27, 2008	51	40	9
September 2008	50	40	10
August 2008	48	38	15
July 2008	47	40	13
HIGHEST EVER	51 (10/08, 12/08)	51 (2/09)	15 (8/08)

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

DATE	PATERSON	LAZIO	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2009	46	28	26
January 26, 2009	52	22	26
HIGHEST EVER	52 (1/09)	28 (2/09)	26 (1/09, 2/09)

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

DATE	CUOMO	GIULIANI	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2009	51	38	11
January 26, 2009	48	39	13
December 2008	50	37	13
November 2008	44	46	10
July 2008	47	42	11
HIGHEST EVER	51 (2/09)	46 (11/08)	13 (12/08, 1/09)

If the 2010 election for governor were held today and the candidates were Andrew Cuomo on the Democratic line and Rick Lazio on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (CANDIDATE CHOICES WERE ROTATED)

DATE	CUOMO	LAZIO	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2009	66	16	18
January 26, 2009	61	17	22
HIGHEST EVER	66 (2/09)	17 (1/09)	22 (1/09)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
December 2007	48	46	6
November 2007	49	41	11
September 2007	53	39	9
July 2007	53	40	7
June 2007	50	42	8
May 2007	51	43	6
April 2007	56	38	6
March 2007	60	33	8
February 2007	59	34	7
January 2007	63	29	9
HIGHEST EVER	63 (4/05, 10/06, 1/07)	48 (1/08)	11 (2/05, 11/07)
LOWEST EVER	44 (1/08)	26 (4/05)	4 (11/08)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2009	69	18	13
January 26, 2009	64	17	19
December 2008	59	24	17
November 2008	61	19	20
October 27, 2008	59	25	16
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
HIGHEST EVER	69 (2/09)	42 (10/06)	24 (1/06, 2/06, 9/07)
LOWEST EVER	44 (8/06, 10/06)	17 (1/08)	13 (2/09)

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Rick Lazio?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2009	23	23	54
January 26, 2009	19	18	64
HIGHEST EVER	23 (2/09)	23 (2/09)	64 (1/09)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2009	34	20	46
January 29, 2009	30	14	56
HIGHEST EVER	34 (2/09)	20 (2/09)	56 (1/09)

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Peter King?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2009	23	15	62
January 29, 2009	22	15	63
HIGHEST EVER	23 (2/09)	15 (1/09, 2/09)	63 (1/09)

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

DATE	GILLIBRAND	KING	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2009	40	27	33
January 29, 2009	46	23	31
HIGHEST EVER	46 (1/09)	27 (2/09)	33 (2/09)

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Thomas DiNapoli?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2009	16	13	71
November 2008	18	10	72
October 27, 2008	17	14	69
July 2008	18	12	70
April 2008	14	12	74
January 2008	11	16	73
November 2007	15	11	74
July 2007	14	12	74
June 2007	7	13	80
May 2007	7	18	75
April 2007	11	14	76
March 2007	9	14	78
February 2007	9	15	76
HIGHEST EVER	18 (7/08, 11/08)	18 (5/07)	80 (6/07)

How confident are you that the Governor and State Legislature will be successful in solving New York's budget crisis?

DATE	VERY CONFIDENT	SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT	NOT VERY CONFIDENT	NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2009	5	32	39	22	1
January 26, 2009	5	47	31	14	2
December 2008	8	39	33	17	3
HIGHEST EVER	8 (12/08)	47 (1/09)	39 (2/09)	22 (2/09)	3 (12/08)

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
February 2009	0	7	28	65	0
January 26, 2009	0	7	26	65	1
December 2008	1	7	33	59	1
November 2008	0	7	31	62	1
October 27, 2008	0	12	43	43	2
September 2008	1	14	41	41	4
August 2008	0	13	37	48	1
HIGHEST EVER	1 (12/08)	14 (9/08)	43 (10/08)	65 (2/09, 1/09)	4 (9/08)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
February 2009	74	18	8
January 26, 2009	81	10	9
December 2008	76	16	7
November 2008	70	23	8
October 27, 2008	67	28	5
October 2, 2008	64	29	7
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
HIGHEST EVER	81 (1/09)	34 (4/08, 5/08, 8/08)	40 (11/06)
LOWEST EVER	48 (11/06)	10 (1/09)	5 (10/27/08)

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
February 2009	48	39	13
January 26, 2009	61	24	15
December 2008	41	48	11
November 2008	44	44	13
October 27, 2008	19	69	12
September 2008	28	56	17
September 2007	23	64	13
HIGHEST EVER	61 (1/09)	69 (10/08)	17 (9/08)

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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
February 2009	31	53	16
January 26, 2009	39	42	19
December 2008	37	44	19
November 2008	39	43	18
October 27, 2008	39	41	19
October 2, 2008	35	40	25
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
HIGHEST EVER	52 (11/15/06)	53 (2/09)	30 (1/07)
LOWEST EVER	26 (3/05)	26 (1/07)	16 (2/09)

Poll Trend Notes: Trends reflect questions asked at least twice since the first Siena New York poll in February 2005. Results listed here include all times questions have been asked since January 2007

“Highest Ever” is provided at the bottom of each question. “Lowest Ever” is presented at the bottom of each question that was asked prior to 2007.

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