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Siena New York Poll:

Voters Approve of Governor's Selection of Gillibrand; Majority Call Gov's Handling of Process Poor or Fair Paterson's Favorability Rating Drops After Senate Selection *Dems Want Primary for Gillibrand; Reps Like Giuliani over King*

Loudonville, NY. By nearly two-to-one, voters approve of Governor David Paterson's selection of Kirsten Gillibrand as New York's new junior Senator, while almost two-thirds rate the way the Governor handled filling the vacancy as either poor or fair, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll of registered voters. Paterson's favorability rating has fallen to its lowest level since May, as the number of voters having an unfavorable view of the Governor has hit a new high.

Fifty-one percent of voters approve of Gillibrand's appointment, including nine percent who strongly approve, compared to 28 percent who disapprove, seven percent strongly. While there are only slight differences among Democrats, Republicans and independent voters, there are major differences between downstate voters and upstate voters. New York City voters approve by a 44-34 percent margin, similar to the downstate suburban approval of 44-43 percent. Upstate voters, however, approve of her appointment 63-19 percent.

"Most New York voters do not know enough about the new junior Senator to have an opinion about her, however, among those who do have a view of Gillibrand, 30 percent have a favorable view and 13 percent have an unfavorable view of her," said Steven Greenberg, spokesman for the Siena New York Poll.

"Gillibrand starts her Senate tenure with New Yorkers having an open mind and in fact approving her selection. And a plurality of voters thinks Gillibrand will do an excellent or good job as Senator."

Forty-three percent of voters say Gillibrand will do an excellent or good job and 30 percent say she will do only a fair or poor job. While 37 percent of downstaters anticipate an excellent or good job, 53 of upstaters think she will be excellent or good.

Paterson's favorability rating stands at 54-30 percent, down from 60-23 percent less than a week ago and 63-22 percent in December. Among independent voters his favorability rating fell in less than a week from 68-20 percent to 49-36 percent.

“Governor Paterson’s favorability rating fell below 55 percent for the first time since May, and the 30 percent of voters having an unfavorable view of him is the highest it’s ever been,” Greenberg said. “In less than one week, and in the midst of the media coverage of the fallout from his Senate selection, the Governor’s favorability dropped six points and his unfavorable rating rose seven points.”

Only six percent of voters say Paterson did an excellent job in the way he handled filling the Senate vacancy, with another 27 percent saying he did a good job, while 33 percent rated the job he did as fair job and 29 percent poor. In the downstate suburbs, 22 percent of voters rated the Governor’s actions as positive, while 73 percent rated them negatively. Upstate it was 43 percent positive, 54 percent negative.

“While voters largely approve of the Governor’s selection of Senator Gillibrand, they largely disapprove of the way he handled the selection process,” Greenberg said. “It’s not surprising that nearly two-thirds of all voters, including more than 60 percent from every party and every region of the state, want to see any future vacancies in the United States Senate filled by a vote of New Yorkers in a special election.”

For future Senate vacancies, 30 percent of voters would like to see the law unchanged and have the Governor make the appointment, while 65 percent want the law changed to require a special election.

“While she’s been in office for only two days and doesn’t have to face the voters for more than a year and a half, Senator Gillibrand has her work cut out for her – particularly with members of her own party – if she wants to be elected in 2010 to complete the last two years of the Senate term,” Greenberg said.

Currently, 21 percent of voters say they are prepared to vote for Gillibrand in 2010, while 29 percent prefer “someone else.” She does better with Republicans (24-28 percent) than with Democrats (20-28 percent). Among Democrats only, 11 percent would prefer she run unopposed for the Democratic nomination, while 63 percent would like to see another Democrat challenge her.

In hypothetical 2010 Senate match-ups, Gillibrand beats former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani 44-42 percent, and beats Congressman Peter King (R-Nassau County) 46-23 percent. If Giuliani and King were to square off in a Republican primary, Giuliani has a 69-16 percent lead among Republican voters.

“While the largely unknown Gillibrand has a commanding early lead over the largely unknown King, the margin of her lead largely reflects the party enrollment of New York voters,” Greenberg said. “Against Giuliani, however, she would start the race running neck and neck with the former Mayor, who is far more well known and well liked – at least right now – than Senator Gillibrand.”

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Siena New York Poll Trends – January 29, 2009

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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)	30 (1/29/09)	76 (1/07)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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 Charles Schumer?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
October 2007	65	24	11
June 2007	64	23	13
February 2007	66	24	11
HIGHEST EVER	70 (7/05)	28 (12/08)	17 (2/05)
LOWEST EVER	60 (1/08, 11/08)	20 (2/05, 11/06)	9 (7/05)

Siena New York Poll Trends – January 29, 2009

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
January 29, 2009	67	28	4
January 26, 2009	69	29	3
December 2008	66	30	4
November 2008	61	35	4
October 27, 2008	65	33	2
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
HIGHEST EVER	69 (1/09)	46 (4/08)	8 (3/05, 6/06, 3/07)
LOWEST EVER	48 (4/08)	28 (1/29/09)	2 (10/08)

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.