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PDF version; crosstabs; website:

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Siena New York Poll:

Obama Surges and Now Leads McCain 58%-36%

Palin Popularity Plummet; McCain Now Viewed Unfavorably

*Voters: Obama Won 1st Debate; ¾ Say They Will Watch VPs Tonight
NYers Say Obama Better to Address Economy & Fiscal Challenges*

Loudonville, NY. As the Vice Presidential candidates prepare to debate, Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) has opened a commanding 22-point lead over Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), up from five points three weeks ago, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll of likely voters released today. Obama leads McCain 58-36 percent, increasing his lead among Democrats and now leading with independent voters by 15 points, after being tied among independents in the last Siena poll. Gov. Sarah Palin's (D-AK) favorability rating has dropped dramatically in three weeks. She is now viewed favorably by 36 percent and unfavorably by 52 percent. McCain's favorability is negative (43-49 percent) for the first time since June, while Obama has his highest favorable rating (64-29 percent) ever. By a margin of 51-21 percent, voters think Obama won the first debate, and 79 percent say they plan to watch Palin and Sen. Joe Biden (D-DE) debate tonight.

"New York appears to be flexing its 'blue' again," said Steven Greenberg, spokesman for the Siena New York Poll. "Whether it's the state of the nation's economy, the ebbing favorability of both McCain and Palin, or the fact that the majority of voters think that Obama won the first debate, New Yorkers have given the Democrats a huge lead. Obama has the support of 81 percent of Democrats, while McCain gets 71 percent of Republicans in a state where Democrats have a huge enrollment edge.

"Obama has a better than two-to-one favorability rating – his best ever – and Biden's favorability rating is nearly two-to-one favorable. McCain's favorability rating has fallen into negative territory and Palin's unfavorable rating has gone from 30 percent to 52 percent in just three weeks, as more voters have gotten to know her," Greenberg said.

	Fav	Unfav	Don't Know/ No Opinion
BARACK OBAMA			
October 2008	64%	29%	7%
September 2008	56%	32%	12%
JOHN MCCAIN			
October 2008	43%	49%	9%
September 2008	50%	37%	13%
JOE BIDEN			
October 2008	54%	28%	18%
September 2008	46%	26%	28%
SARAH PALIN			
October 2008	36%	52%	12%
September 2008	46%	30%	24%

On a series of five questions about issues in the campaign – economy, Iraq, terrorism, health care, and Supreme Court appointments – voters believe Obama will do a better job on four. On six attributes voters often look at in choosing a candidate –

compassion, patriotism, experience, intelligence, integrity, and leadership – New York voters favor Obama on four, up from two in the last poll.

“Obama has strengthened his lead over McCain on revitalizing the economy, ending the war in Iraq and improving health care. While McCain still has a lead on keeping America safe from terrorism, it’s down to eight points from 21 points three weeks ago. Obama also has the lead on Supreme Court appointments,” Greenberg said.

“On personal attributes, Obama widened his lead on compassion and intelligence. McCain maintained strong leads on patriotism and experience. But voters now say Obama is stronger on integrity and leadership, two traits which McCain won in the last Siena poll,” Greenberg said.

Nearly two-thirds of voters have been paying a great deal of attention to the recent financial news and the proposed bailout plan. More than three-quarters say the current financial situation poses an ‘extremely serious’ problem for the American economy, and 42 percent say it creates an ‘extremely serious’ problem for their household economic health, with another 43 percent saying it is a ‘somewhat serious’ problem. By a margin of 43-36 percent, a plurality of voters support the proposed \$700 billion bailout.

“Democrats and Republicans found something they agree on: both support the bailout plan by small margins, while independent voters oppose it,” Greenberg said.

“Republicans and Democrats go their separate ways, however, on which candidate will do a better job addressing the nation’s economic and fiscal challenges,” Greenberg said. “Democrats say Obama by an 80-13 percent margin, and Republicans say McCain by a smaller 61-23 percent margin. Overall, by a nearly two-to-one margin (58-30 percent) voters think Obama will do a better job addressing the economy.”

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I’m going to read a list of issues that the next president will have to deal with and I’d like you to tell me which of the candidates – John McCain or Barack Obama (rotated) – you think will be more effective in solving that issue.				
	McCain		Obama	
Issue	Oct.	Sept.	Oct.	Sept.
Revitalizing the American Economy	30%	38%	57%	49%
Successfully ending the war in Iraq	35%	39%	57%	49%
Keeping America safe from terrorism	48%	54%	40%	33%
Improving our health care system	22%	27%	66%	55%
Enhancing America’s strength in the world	NA	47%	NA	41%
Building a 21 st century education system	NA	25%	NA	57%
Making best appointments to Supreme Court	34%	NA	54%	NA

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 (rotated) – you think more fully embodies that attribute.				
	McCain		Obama	
Attribute	Oct.	Sept.	Oct.	Sept.
Compassion	28%	32%	60%	52%
Patriotism	59%	59%	26%	21%
Experience	74%	73%	17%	18%
Intelligence	27%	30%	58%	50%
Integrity	36%	43%	51%	38%
Leadership	43%	49%	48%	39%



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Siena New York Poll Trends – October 2, 2008

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
October 2, 2008	58	36	6
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

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
November 15, 2006	48	12	40

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Joe Biden?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2, 2008	54	28	18
September 2008	46	26	28

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2, 2008	43	49	9
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

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Sarah Palin?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2, 2008	36	52	12
September 2008	46	30	24

Tell me which of the candidates you think will be more effective in solving....Revitalizing the American economy?

DATE	MCCAIN	OBAMA	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2, 2008	30	57	12
September 2008	38	49	13

Tell me which of the candidates you think will be more effective in solving....Successfully ending the war in Iraq?

DATE	MCCAIN	OBAMA	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2, 2008	35	57	9
September 2008	39	49	12

Tell me which of the candidates you think will be more effective in solving....Keeping America safe from terrorism?

DATE	MCCAIN	OBAMA	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2, 2008	48	40	12
September 2008	54	33	13

Tell me which of the candidates you think will be more effective in solving....Improving our health care system?

DATE	MCCAIN	OBAMA	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2, 2008	22	66	12
September 2008	27	55	18

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Tell me which of the candidates you think more fully embodies the attribute....Compassion?

DATE	MCCAIN	OBAMA	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2, 2008	28	60	12
September 2008	32	52	16

Tell me which of the candidates you think more fully embodies the attribute....Patriotism?

DATE	MCCAIN	OBAMA	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2, 2008	59	26	15
September 2008	59	21	20

Tell me which of the candidates you think more fully embodies the attribute....Experience?

DATE	MCCAIN	OBAMA	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2, 2008	74	17	9
September 2008	73	18	9

Tell me which of the candidates you think more fully embodies the attribute....Intelligence?

DATE	MCCAIN	OBAMA	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2, 2008	27	58	14
September 2008	30	50	20

Tell me which of the candidates you think more fully embodies the attribute....Integrity?

DATE	MCCAIN	OBAMA	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2, 2008	36	51	13
September 2008	43	38	19

Tell me which of the candidates you think more fully embodies the attribute....Leadership?

DATE	MCCAIN	OBAMA	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
October 2, 2008	43	48	10
September 2008	49	39	12

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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
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
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

Poll Notes: 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.