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Embargoed Release:

Wednesday, August 22, 2018

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## **A Special Siena College Poll: New Yorkers' Life Satisfaction**

### **44% More Satisfied with Life Today than a Year Ago; 17% Less NY'ers Most Satisfied with Family, Significant Other, Friends & Spiritual Life; Least Satisfied with Financial Condition & Direction World is Going No More than 1/3 Completely Satisfied with Work, Health or Recreation**

**Loudonville, NY.** Forty-four percent of New Yorkers are more satisfied with their life today than they were a year ago while 17 percent are less satisfied and 39 percent are as satisfied today as they were a year ago according to a new Siena College (SCRI) poll of New Yorkers. Of eleven aspects of life, New Yorkers were most satisfied with relationships with their family – 57 percent completely satisfied – and their life partner or significant other – 56 percent completely satisfied – followed by their satisfaction with friends, acquaintances and contacts – 44 percent completely satisfied. Eighty-four percent are either somewhat (38 percent) or completely (46 percent) satisfied with matters that call to mind their religion or spiritual life.

Only 18 percent of New Yorkers are completely satisfied with their financial condition and 34 percent are either not very or not at all satisfied. A large majority, 70 percent, are either not very or not at all satisfied with the world as a whole including political, economic, social and environmental issues and trends, and the direction the world is going. One third of residents are completely satisfied with their work, that is, the job, vocation or tasks in which they engage on a daily basis, 31 percent are completely satisfied with their current health and vitality and 25 percent are completely satisfied with what they do for recreation including physical activities, travel or other activities.

“It’s been ten years since we asked New Yorkers these questions about life satisfaction,” said Siena College Research Institute Director, Don Levy. “We were surprised to find that the overall score in eight of the eleven areas were lower today than in 2008. Given that 2008 saw a recession, we expected satisfaction with personal finances to be higher today than ten years ago but it has fallen.”

In order to compare satisfaction across the eleven areas over time and today between various groups we compute scores based on whether a respondent said they were completely, somewhat, not very or not at all satisfied. A score of 100 would result from every person saying they were completely satisfied and a score of zero would result if every person said that they were not at all satisfied. The ‘Total Overall Score’ is the percentage of the possible score across all eleven areas.

**Life Satisfaction Scores, 2008, 2018 and by Age\*, Income\* and Race/Ethnicity**

	2018	2008	2018 18 to 34	2018 65+	2018 <50K	2018 100K+	2018 White	2018 Af-Am	2018 Latino
<b>Finances</b>	55%	58%	51%	68%	41%	64%	60%	39%	53%
<b>Residence</b>	76%	81%	69%	85%	72%	80%	80%	64%	69%
<b>Work</b>	69%	71%	65%	78%	59%	74%	72%	61%	63%
<b>Health</b>	68%	72%	73%	65%	64%	72%	69%	61%	67%
<b>Recreation</b>	61%	65%	58%	65%	52%	71%	65%	50%	58%
<b>Family</b>	81%	83%	79%	84%	78%	84%	83%	75%	80%
<b>Life Partner</b>	77%	77%	79%	82%	70%	82%	79%	67%	74%
<b>Friends</b>	76%	80%	73%	81%	72%	78%	78%	72%	75%
<b>Community</b>	69%	70%	63%	76%	64%	70%	72%	59%	66%
<b>World</b>	33%	32%	31%	34%	32%	34%	36%	21%	35%
<b>Religion</b>	78%	78%	74%	84%	78%	76%	80%	75%	73%
<b>Total Overall</b>	68%	70%	65%	73%	62%	71%	70%	59%	65%

\*in part, see appendix for other age and income categories

“The two lowest scores in both years and in every group are satisfaction with finances and satisfaction with the condition of the world. While we expected to see financial satisfaction up in 2018 relative to 2008 given a more vibrant economy today as compared with 2008, we find that financial satisfaction is slightly lower overall. Satisfaction with the political and economic condition of the world is dramatically lower than satisfaction with every other aspect of life and varies very little across time and demographics.

“Today young people, age 18-34 are less satisfied with every aspect of life than those that are 65 and older except when it comes to health and vitality. Young people are less satisfied than the overall population. And it does seem that money makes you more satisfied as those earning \$100K or more are more satisfied than those earning less than \$50K in not only the financial condition category but in every other category as well with the one exception of religion/spirituality.

“The racial satisfaction gap is striking. Overall satisfaction among blacks at 59 percent is the lowest of any group and their satisfaction with their financial condition, health and the condition of the world are far lower than the general population of the state,” Levy said.

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This Siena College Poll was conducted June 12-27, 2018 by telephone calls conducted in English to 807 New York State residents. Respondent sampling was initiated by asking for the youngest male in the household. It has an overall margin of error of  $\pm 4.3$  percentage points including the design effects resulting from weighting. Sampling was conducted via a stratified dual frame probability sample provided by Survey Sampling International of landline and cell phone telephone numbers from within New York State weighted to reflect known population patterns. Data was statistically adjusted by age, region, gender and race/ethnicity to ensure representativeness. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in NYS. SCRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For more information or comments, please call Don Levy at 518-783-2901. Survey cross-tabulations and satisfaction scores can be found at [www.siena.edu/scri](http://www.siena.edu/scri)