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Siena New York Poll:

Voters Keep Gov's Approval Ratings at Record Lows

47% of Voters Think Cuomo Should Run for Gov & 64% Think He Will

Voters Now Evenly Divided on Bill to Legalize Same Sex Marriages

Property Tax Cap & Circuit Breaker Both Enjoy Strong Voter Support

Loudonville, NY. Governor David Paterson's favorability and job performance ratings remain at record low levels, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll of registered voters. A plurality of voters thinks Attorney General Andrew Cuomo should run for Governor in 2010, rather than re-election, while nearly two-thirds think he will run for Governor next year. Voters are now evenly divided on whether the State Senate should pass a bill to legalize same sex marriages, while they continue to overwhelmingly support property tax relief either through a cap or a circuit breaker.

Paterson's Numbers Stay Low on Every Measure

Paterson is viewed favorably by 27 percent of voters and unfavorably by 60 percent, virtually identical to last month's 27-63 percent. His job performance rating is 18 percent positive, 81 percent negative, unchanged from last month. Only 15 percent of voters are prepared to elect Paterson as Governor in 2010, compared to 71 percent who prefer "someone else," barely up from 12-71 percent in April.

"Voters are continuing to deliver bad news to the Governor. His popularity remains at record low levels, with more than twice as many voters having an unfavorable view of him as have a favorable view and fewer than one in five voters saying he's doing an excellent or good job as Governor," said Siena New York pollster Steven Greenberg. "If a Democratic primary were held today, Andrew Cuomo would beat David Paterson by a 70-19 percent margin, with African American voters supporting Cuomo by better than two-to-one."

In general election matchups, Paterson loses to former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani 59-31 percent, while Cuomo beats Giuliani 53-41 percent. Cuomo would easily beat 2006 Republican gubernatorial candidate John Faso 65-16 percent, while Faso is virtually tied with Paterson, leading 38-37 percent.

Governor Cuomo?

“When voters were asked whether Cuomo should run for re-election or run for Governor in 2010, 47 percent said go for the top job and 33 percent said run for re-election,” Greenberg said. “Democrats favor him running for Governor by a 52-29 percent margin, with Republicans nearly evenly divided. While Cuomo publicly downplays the notion of running for Governor, by a 64-18 percent margin voters think he will.”

Spitzer Rebounding with Voters

In choosing who they would like to see be Governor today among Governor Paterson and former Governors Eliot Spitzer, George Pataki and Mario Cuomo, voters give a slight edge to Cuomo with 31 percent support (down from 39 percent last month) followed by Pataki at 30 percent (down from 33 percent last month), Spitzer at 21 percent (up from 11 percent) and Paterson at 11 percent (up from eight percent).

“While Governor Paterson may not be making a comeback with voters, former Governor Spitzer seems to be gaining in popularity with voters, particularly Jewish and young voters,” Greenberg said. “While a plurality of Democrats would choose Cuomo and a plurality of Republicans go for Pataki, independent voters are split with Cuomo and Pataki each supported by 26 percent, Spitzer close at 24 percent and Paterson at 18 percent.”

Same Sex Marriage Divides Voters Down the Middle

Voters are evenly divided, 46-46 percent, on whether the Senate should pass the bill to legalize same sex marriages in New York. A majority of Democrats, young and Jewish voters support Senate passage. It is opposed by a majority of Republicans, older voters, African Americans, Protestant and Catholic voters. Last month, voters supported passage 53-39 percent. Support for passage dropped by at least 10 percentage points among independent voters, New York City voters, young voters, women, and African Americans.

“This is an issue that is getting a lot of public attention. And it is clearly an issue where voters’ opinions are shifting as they hear more and think more about it,” Greenberg said. “In the last month, support dropped seven percentage points while opposition rose by the same amount, shifting the issue from a 14-point margin of support to an issue dividing New York voters down the middle.

“While 54 percent of same sex marriage legislation supporters say they will be very (16 percent) or somewhat (38 percent) upset if the bill doesn’t pass, 76 percent of opponents of the legislation say they will be very (39 percent) or somewhat (37 percent) upset if the bill does pass,” Greenberg said. “Overwhelmingly, by a 78-15 percent margin, voters say that Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith should bring the bill to a vote, regardless of whether or not he thinks it will pass, and let all senators vote yes or no on the bill.”

New Yorkers Are Seeking Property Tax Help

By a 72-20 percent margin, voters favor a property tax cap, virtually the same as the 69-20 percent support in August 2008. Support for the property tax circuit breaker is down from 75-17 percent support last August to 65-26 percent support today. Last year, when asked which one of the two property tax proposals would be their top choice if only one was enacted, circuit breaker won handily 52-36 percent. Currently it is virtually even with circuit breaker having a thin 47-45 percent edge.

“Voters are strongly and overwhelmingly supportive of both the circuit breaker and the property tax cap,” Greenberg said. “It is clear that voters are looking for any property tax relief they can get.”

Gillibrand Easily Beats King, Ties Pataki; Schumer Viewed Strongly for Re-election

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand has a 33-21 percent favorable rating, virtually unchanged from 33-23 percent last month. While 27 percent of voters are prepared to elect her Senator in 2010, 39 percent of voters prefer “someone else.” This is a significant improvement for Gillibrand since April when it was 20-47 percent. In head-to-head matchups, Gillibrand leads Nassau County Congressman Peter King 48-26 percent (up slightly from 47-23 percent in March), and she remains tied with Pataki 43-43 percent (was 41-41 percent in March).

“The election is well over a year away, and with the Democratic field for Senator Gillibrand becoming clearer by the day, focus on the general election increases,” Greenberg said. “Republican Pataki has won statewide in a state with an overwhelming Democratic enrollment advantage three times. Currently he’s polling support from one-third of Democrats, and it seems it would be a nail biter if he decides to challenge Gillibrand.

“The senior Senator, Charles Schumer, enjoys a 63-25 percent favorable rating, and 61 percent of voters are prepared to re-elect him, compared to only 31 percent who prefer ‘someone else,’” Greenberg said.

Early Lead for Dems in Race to Control State Senate After 2010

By a 57-31 percent margin, voters currently would prefer to see the Senate remain in Democratic hands after the 2010 elections, as opposed to seeing the Republicans regain control.

“While Republicans favor Republican control of the Senate 64-23 percent, Democrats are stronger for the Democrats 78-13 percent, and independent voters break for the Democrats 52-33 percent,” Greenberg said.

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This SRI survey was conducted May 18-21, 2009 by telephone calls to 622 New York State registered voters. It has a margin of error of ± 3.9 percentage points. Data was statistically adjusted by age, party and geography to ensure representativeness. 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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Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about David Paterson?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2009	27	60	13
April 2009	27	63	10
March 2009	29	58	13
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)	63 (4/09)	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
May 2009	2	16	43	38	1
April 2009	1	17	41	40	2
March 2009	1	18	46	32	2
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 (3/09, 2/09)	40 (4/09)	32 (4/08)

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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
May 2009	15	71	15
April 2009	12	71	17
March 2009	14	67	19
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)	71 (5/09, 4/09)	47 (5/08)

(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)

DATE	PATERSON	CUOMO	SUOZZI	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2009	19	70	NA	11
April 2009	11	64	8	17
March 2009	17	67	NA	17
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)	70 (5/09)	8 (4/09)	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
May 2009	31	59	10
April 2009	29	56	15
March 2009	33	56	11
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)	59 (5/09)	15 (4/09, 8/08)

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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
May 2009	53	41	6
April 2009	53	39	8
March 2009	51	41	9
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	53 (5/09, 4/09)	46 (11/08)	13 (12/08, 1/09)

If you got to choose who should be Governor today among the current and last three governors, who would you like to see be Governor today – David Paterson, Eliot Spitzer, George Pataki, or Mario Cuomo? (CHOICES WERE ROTATED)

DATE	PATERSON	SPITZER	PATAKI	M. CUOMO	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2009	11	21	30	31	7
April 2009	8	14	33	39	6
HIGHEST EVER	11 (5/09)	21 (5/09)	33 (4/09)	39 (4/09)	7 (5/09)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2009	66	20	14
April 2009	66	18	16
March 2009	68	17	15
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 (3/09, 1/09)	13 (2/09)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
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 (4/09, 11/08)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2009	19	16	65
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	19 (5/09)	18 (5/07)	80 (6/07)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2009	53	36	11
April 2009	49	43	8
March 2009	49	41	10
February 2007	36	57	7
HIGHEST EVER	53 (5/09, 3/06, 11/05)	57 (2/07)	16 (2/05)
LOWEST EVER	36 (2/07)	36 (5/09)	7 (many; most recently 2/07)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2009	15	15	70
HIGHEST EVER	27 (11/06)	28 (11/06)	78 (10/05)
LOWEST EVER	11 (10/05)	11 (10/05, 11/05)	46 (11/06)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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 (2/09)	23 (4/09)	56 (1/09)

If Kirsten Gillibrand runs for 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
May 2009	27	39	34
April 2009	20	47	33
March 2009	23	37	39
January 29, 2009	21	29	50
HIGHEST EVER	27 (5/09)	47 (4/09)	50 (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
May 2009	48	26	26
March 2009	47	23	30
February 2009	40	27	33
January 29, 2009	46	23	31
HIGHEST EVER	48 (5/09)	27 (2/09)	33 (2/09)

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
May 2009	43	43	14
March 2009	41	41	18
HIGHEST EVER	43 (5/09)	43 (5/09)	18 (3/09)

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
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)

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The State Assembly has passed a bill to legalize same sex marriages in New York State. Governor Paterson has said he supports it. To date, the State Senate has not voted on the bill. Do you support or oppose the State Senate passing a bill to legalize same sex marriages, virtually ensuring it would become law in New York?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2009	46	46	8
April 2009	53	39	8
HIGHEST EVER	53 (4/09)	46 (5/09)	8 (5/09, 4/09)

Which of the following five choices best describes how you currently feel about your future in New York State – I am never moving out of New York State; I currently have no plans to move out of New York; I may move out of New York State during my retirement, but not before; unless conditions in New York state get better, I'm going to leave; I would like to move out of New York State as quickly as I can?

DATE	NEVER MOVING	CURRENTLY NO PLANS	MAYBE IN RETIREMENT	UNLESS IMPROVEMENT	AS QUICKLY AS I CAN	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2009	16	36	25	11	10	2
July 2008	17	37	27	9	7	2
HIGHEST EVER	17 (7/08)	37 (7/08)	27 (7/08)	11 (5/09)	10 (5/09)	2 (5/09)

Governor Paterson supports passing a law that for most areas of the state would cap property tax increases to no more than four percent per year. Do you support or oppose such a cap?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2009	72	20	8
August 2008	66	23	11
HIGHEST EVER	72 (5/09)	23 (8/08)	11 (8/08)

Some legislators are advocating an alternative program, called a circuit breaker, which would ensure that property taxes do not exceed a certain percentage of a homeowner's income. Do you support or oppose such a property tax circuit breaker?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2009	65	26	8
August 2008	75	18	7
HIGHEST EVER	75 (8/08)	26 (5/09)	8 (5/09)

If the Governor and Legislature were to enact only ONE of those property tax proposals, which would be your top priority: a property tax cap or a property tax circuit breaker? (CHOICES WERE ROTATED)

DATE	TAX CAP	CIRCUIT BREAKER	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2009	45	47	8
August 2008	33	58	10
HIGHEST EVER	45 (5/09)	58 (8/08)	10 (8/08)

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
May 2009	1	8	33	59	0
April 2009	0	4	29	66	1
March 2009	0	6	33	60	1
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)	66 (4/09)	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
May 2009	72	23	5
April 2009	75	19	6
March 2009	70	23	7
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 (5/09, 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
May 2009	62	31	7
April 2009	61	29	11
March 2009	50	36	14
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	62 (5/09)	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
May 2009	33	52	14
April 2009	27	57	15
March 2009	30	52	19
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)	57 (4/09)	30 (1/07)
LOWEST EVER	26 (3/05)	26 (1/07)	14 (5/09)

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.