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SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

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For Immediate Release:
Contact:

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Joe Caruso at 518-783-2901

Siena New York Poll: Death Penalty: NY Split; Favor Life Without Parole Hillary: Run for Senate, Not for President Governor's Popularity & Support Continue to Slide NYers Like Their Legislators; Split on Senate; 2:1 Unfavorable Toward Assembly

Loudonville, NY – By a margin of 46-42 percent, New Yorkers do not want to see the death penalty reinstated. And by a nearly two-to-one margin (56-29 percent) they favor life without parole over the death penalty for first-degree murderers, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll of New York voters released today.

“Nearly half of New York voters are opposed to reinstating the death penalty and a clear majority (56 percent) support life without parole as the preferred punishment for first-degree murderers,” said Joe Caruso, Director of Polling for the Siena Research Institute (SRI). “Even among death penalty supporters, more than one-quarter (26-61 percent) support life without parole as the most appropriate punishment.”

While 58 percent of New Yorkers want to see Hillary Clinton run for re-election to the Senate, only 38 percent believe she should run for President in 2008. Twenty-nine percent of New York voters (50 percent of Republicans) would prefer if she ran for neither office.

“Hillary’s popularity continues to run high in New York, with nearly three out of five voters having a favorable opinion of her. One-third of voters say ‘run for re-election next year and President two years later.’ One-quarter of voters want her to run for Senate but not President. And nearly one third of voters say ‘don’t run at all,’ ” Caruso said.

Since last month, Eliot Spitzer’s favorable rating inched up to 50-18 percent (up from 48-17 percent), while George Pataki’s continues to slide, down to 37-50 percent (from 39-45 percent).

New Yorkers are strengthening their view that the Governor should not run for re-election. Only 24 percent say they would vote to re-elect him, while 60 percent would prefer someone else. This 36 point negative margin has grown from 30 points one month ago (27-57 percent).

In a head-to-head match up, Spitzer beats Pataki by 23 points (53-30 percent), up from last month's 16 points (51-35 percent).

"Twenty months is a long time, particularly in New York politics, but George Pataki has a lot of ground to make up if he intends to match Governor Rockefeller's run of four terms," Caruso said. "Spitzer continues to do better among Democrats than Pataki does with Republicans and he has a substantial lead with independents at this point. Spitzer leads in every region of the state and with voters of every religion, race and age group."

New York voters have a favorable view of *their* assemblymember (50-18 percent) and state senator (56-23 percent). They are divided on the State Senate (38-36 percent favorable) but they have a very negative view of the State Assembly (46-21 percent unfavorable).

"New Yorkers love their individual legislators – senators and assemblymembers – which explains the overwhelming re-election rate for incumbents. But they have very different views of the two houses. While there is a very neutral view of the Senate, there is a better than two-to-one unfavorable opinion of the State Assembly," Caruso said. "Interestingly, Democrats and Republicans feel almost exactly the same about each house of the Legislature."

Voters' support increased spending for education (63-33 percent) and health care (61-34 percent) "even if it meant increasing state taxes." Democrats overwhelmingly support both of these proposals and both questions had a majority of Republicans supporting them. Both questions had support in every region and among every demographic group.

New York voters see "improving education" (24 percent) as the most important issue for state government to address, beating out "improving health care" (18 percent), "creating new jobs" (14 percent), and "passing the state budget" (11 percent). Less important were "reforming state government" (6 percent) and "fighting crime" and "protecting the environment" (3 percent each).

"The mood of state voters continues to be very pessimistic about the direction New York is headed in. Only one-quarter of people think things are on the right track, while nearly half believe New York is headed in the wrong direction," Caruso said. "If his own favorability numbers weren't enough to worry George Pataki, certainly the mood of the voters should."

The Empire Page, in partnership with the Siena Research Institute, previously released the results of three questions concerning the recent news coverage of First Lady Libby Pataki and a hypothetical match-up of three potential Republican gubernatorial candidates in 2006.

This SRI survey was conducted February 28-March 4, 2005 by telephone calls to 600 New York State registered voters. It has a margin of error of \pm 4.0 points. For more information or comments, please call Joe Caruso, SRI Director of Polling, at 518-783-2901.



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Siena New York Poll Trends

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
March, 2005	26	47	27
February, 2005	32	44	24

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March, 2005	37	50	13
February, 2005	39	45	16

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Eliot Spitzer?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March, 2005	50	18	32
February, 2005	48	17	34

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March, 2005	58	34	8
February, 2005	61	33	6

If George Pataki runs for Governor in 2006, would you vote to re-elect him or would you prefer someone else?

DATE	RE-ELECT	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March, 2005	24	60	16
February, 2005	27	57	16

If the election for Governor were held tomorrow and the candidates were George Pataki on the Republican line and Eliot Spitzer on the Democratic line, for whom would you vote? (Rotate choices)

DATE	PATAKI	SPITZER	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
March, 2005	30	53	17
February, 2005	35	51	15

1. Is New York State on the right track, or is it headed in the wrong direction?																				
	Party				GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion			
	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other
right track	26%	26%	33%	19%	28%	25%	32%	30%	37%	13%	23%	26%	47%	37%	25%	23%	26%	28%	23%	26%
wrong direction	47%	47%	39%	54%	45%	49%	44%	34%	36%	66%	49%	54%	27%	40%	49%	49%	49%	37%	51%	47%
don't know/no opinion	27%	26%	28%	27%	27%	26%	24%	37%	27%	20%	28%	20%	27%	24%	26%	29%	25%	35%	26%	27%

2. What is the single most important issue New York State government should address in 2005?																				
	Party				GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion			
	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other
passing the state budget	11%	7%	12%	18%	14%	8%	7%	9%	17%	14%	13%	7%	13%	4%	10%	16%	12%	13%	13%	3%
fighting crime	3%	2%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	0%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	7%	3%	1%
improving education	24%	32%	20%	15%	19%	29%	38%	25%	16%	13%	21%	33%	37%	33%	25%	18%	22%	30%	23%	31%
protecting the environment	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%	3%	4%	1%	0%	6%	2%	3%	3%	4%	1%	2%
improving health care	18%	23%	15%	14%	15%	22%	16%	18%	27%	16%	18%	21%	17%	10%	18%	21%	19%	17%	19%	15%
creating new jobs	14%	11%	15%	16%	16%	12%	12%	12%	10%	18%	14%	11%	13%	18%	14%	11%	16%	15%	11%	11%
reforming state government	6%	8%	5%	5%	8%	4%	4%	4%	5%	10%	7%	3%	3%	6%	5%	8%	6%	0%	10%	6%
other	17%	9%	25%	22%	20%	14%	10%	22%	20%	19%	18%	19%	10%	16%	21%	14%	17%	11%	18%	22%
don't know/no opinion	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	7%	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%	3%	5%	2%	4%	3%	2%	3%	8%

3. Do you think New York should re-institute the death penalty?																				
	Party				GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion			
	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other
1. Yes	42%	30%	62%	43%	48%	36%	32%	49%	42%	46%	46%	29%	37%	30%	48%	43%	46%	39%	48%	36%
2. No	46%	58%	25%	47%	41%	51%	56%	38%	46%	44%	43%	54%	50%	56%	42%	45%	44%	50%	37%	48%
3. don't know/no opinion	12%	12%	13%	10%	12%	12%	12%	13%	12%	11%	11%	17%	13%	14%	10%	13%	10%	11%	15%	16%

4. What do you think is the more appropriate punishment for first-degree murderers?																				
	Party				GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion			
	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other
1 death penalty	29%	20%	42%	30%	34%	24%	21%	35%	35%	29%	31%	19%	17%	22%	33%	28%	30%	33%	31%	27%
2 life without parole	56%	64%	44%	56%	50%	62%	61%	49%	51%	59%	54%	69%	67%	56%	56%	55%	57%	48%	57%	53%
3 other	8%	8%	8%	8%	9%	7%	8%	9%	10%	6%	8%	4%	7%	13%	6%	7%	5%	11%	4%	11%
4. don't know/no opinion	8%	8%	7%	6%	8%	7%	11%	7%	5%	6%	7%	9%	10%	9%	4%	9%	7%	9%	7%	9%

5. Would you want to see state funding for education increased, even if it meant increasing state taxes?																				
	Party				GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion			
	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other
1. Yes	63%	77%	50%	56%	61%	65%	78%	60%	60%	54%	58%	71%	93%	80%	63%	56%	59%	67%	57%	75%
2. No	33%	22%	45%	38%	36%	29%	19%	37%	37%	40%	38%	26%	7%	16%	33%	41%	38%	30%	40%	20%
3. don't know/no opinion	4%	1%	5%	6%	3%	5%	3%	3%	2%	6%	4%	3%	0%	4%	5%	3%	4%	2%	4%	4%

5.b Would you want to see state funding for health care increased, even if it meant increasing state taxes?

	Total	Party			GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion			
		Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other
1. Yes	61%	70%	51%	57%	62%	61%	71%	58%	65%	54%	58%	71%	60%	65%	62%	58%	54%	65%	62%	71%
2. No	34%	25%	44%	38%	36%	32%	25%	37%	31%	39%	37%	21%	37%	31%	34%	35%	40%	33%	34%	22%
3. don't know/no opinion	5%	4%	5%	5%	3%	7%	4%	5%	4%	6%	5%	7%	3%	4%	4%	7%	5%	2%	4%	7%

6. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the New York State Assembly?

	Total	Party			GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion			
		Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other
favorable	21%	23%	22%	17%	19%	23%	22%	21%	23%	19%	21%	23%	20%	22%	22%	20%	21%	24%	23%	22%
unfavorable	46%	41%	40%	57%	50%	40%	42%	37%	52%	53%	45%	51%	37%	42%	45%	48%	42%	30%	47%	52%
don't know/no opinion	34%	36%	38%	25%	30%	37%	35%	42%	25%	28%	34%	26%	43%	37%	33%	32%	38%	46%	31%	26%

7. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of YOUR Assemblymember?

	Total	Party			GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion			
		Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other
favorable	50%	49%	56%	44%	47%	52%	47%	47%	62%	48%	51%	47%	53%	38%	50%	54%	47%	54%	58%	39%
unfavorable	18%	16%	15%	25%	21%	14%	14%	14%	12%	26%	17%	21%	7%	18%	19%	17%	20%	11%	16%	24%
don't know/no opinion	33%	35%	29%	31%	32%	34%	39%	39%	26%	25%	32%	31%	40%	44%	31%	29%	33%	35%	26%	37%

8. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the New York State Senate?

	Total	Party			GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion			
		Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other
favorable	38%	40%	39%	35%	37%	40%	46%	32%	43%	35%	36%	51%	37%	40%	41%	36%	38%	35%	41%	38%
unfavorable	36%	31%	33%	46%	39%	32%	33%	32%	38%	40%	37%	27%	40%	31%	35%	38%	35%	28%	33%	40%
don't know/no opinion	26%	28%	28%	20%	24%	28%	21%	36%	19%	25%	27%	21%	23%	29%	24%	26%	27%	37%	26%	21%

9. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of YOUR State Senator?

	Total	Party			GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion			
		Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other
favorable	56%	64%	54%	47%	54%	57%	56%	53%	58%	56%	55%	61%	53%	53%	52%	61%	55%	63%	57%	53%
unfavorable	23%	15%	25%	33%	25%	21%	19%	23%	22%	26%	24%	14%	20%	19%	30%	17%	25%	9%	25%	22%
don't know/no opinion	22%	21%	21%	20%	21%	22%	25%	24%	20%	17%	21%	24%	27%	28%	18%	22%	19%	28%	18%	25%

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

	Total	Party			GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion			
		Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other
favorable	37%	26%	53%	36%	37%	36%	35%	43%	41%	31%	38%	27%	40%	43%	38%	33%	38%	37%	39%	27%
unfavorable	50%	59%	35%	53%	50%	51%	52%	44%	46%	56%	49%	64%	50%	42%	52%	52%	51%	50%	50%	53%
don't know/no opinion	13%	15%	12%	12%	13%	13%	13%	13%	14%	13%	13%	9%	10%	15%	10%	15%	12%	13%	11%	20%

11. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Eliot Spitzer?																					
	Total	Party			GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion				
		Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other	
favorable	50%	55%	46%	47%	49%	51%	55%	52%	54%	42%	51%	50%	50%	40%	52%	52%	48%	74%	50%	40%	
unfavorable	18%	13%	20%	24%	23%	13%	15%	22%	19%	17%	17%	19%	20%	25%	20%	14%	20%	7%	20%	20%	
don't know/no opinion	32%	32%	34%	29%	29%	36%	30%	27%	27%	40%	32%	31%	30%	36%	29%	34%	32%	20%	30%	39%	

12. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Hillary Clinton?																					
	Total	Party			GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion				
		Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other	
favorable	58%	79%	30%	53%	52%	65%	71%	49%	53%	56%	50%	91%	73%	61%	54%	59%	51%	74%	55%	64%	
unfavorable	34%	14%	61%	39%	40%	28%	22%	44%	36%	36%	41%	6%	20%	29%	35%	36%	41%	22%	36%	26%	
don't know/no opinion	8%	7%	10%	8%	8%	8%	7%	7%	11%	8%	9%	3%	7%	9%	11%	5%	8%	4%	9%	10%	

13. Do you think Hillary Clinton:																					
	Total	Party			GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion				
		Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other	
1. should run for senate in 2006 and then president in 2008	32%	49%	13%	25%	26%	38%	45%	22%	27%	32%	24%	64%	60%	42%	30%	30%	30%	22%	30%	47%	
2. should run for senate in 2006 and not run for president in 2008	26%	28%	25%	24%	24%	28%	20%	35%	28%	23%	29%	16%	17%	21%	26%	28%	24%	43%	28%	13%	
3. should not run for senate in 2006 and instead prepare to run for president in 2008	6%	6%	4%	8%	8%	4%	7%	3%	4%	9%	5%	14%	3%	8%	9%	3%	5%	2%	5%	10%	
4. or would you rather that she not run for either office?	29%	10%	50%	34%	32%	24%	21%	34%	31%	30%	34%	3%	20%	25%	28%	31%	34%	20%	30%	24%	
5. don't know/no opinion	7%	7%	7%	9%	9%	6%	7%	7%	10%	7%	8%	3%	0%	5%	7%	9%	7%	13%	8%	6%	

14. If George Pataki runs for Governor in 2006, would you vote to re-elect him or would you prefer someone else?																					
	Total	Party			GENDER		Region				Ethnic			AGE			Religion				
		Dem	Rep	Ind./ Other	M	F	NYC	NYC Suburbs	Up. East	Up. West	White	Afr.Am./ Black	Latino	18-34	35-54	55+	Cath.	Jewish	Prot.	Other	
re-elect Pataki	24%	15%	42%	21%	23%	25%	21%	32%	31%	18%	26%	13%	23%	30%	24%	23%	27%	26%	26%	13%	
prefer someone else	60%	74%	41%	58%	60%	59%	65%	52%	47%	67%	57%	79%	67%	55%	59%	62%	56%	67%	57%	69%	
don't know/no opinion	16%	12%	17%	21%	17%	16%	15%	16%	22%	16%	18%	9%	10%	15%	17%	15%	17%	7%	16%	18%	

