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Special New York State Coronavirus Crisis and Racism Poll

62% NY'ers Say Worst of Coronavirus Pandemic Still to Come; 70% Want Government Priority to Contain Spread Even if it Hurts Economy
Large Majorities Predict Local Schools Will Reopen & Another Outbreak in Fall
81% Think Systemic Racism a Serious Problem in NY; 1/3 Often Witness Discrimination

Loudonville, NY – Sixty-two percent of New Yorkers think that the worst of the coronavirus pandemic is still to come while only 27 percent think that the worst is over according to a new statewide survey of residents released today by the Siena College Research Institute (SCRI). By 70-22 percent, residents prefer the government's priority be containing the spread of the coronavirus, even if it hurts the economy, rather than restarting the economy, even if it increases the risk to public health.

Looking to the future, 18 percent of New Yorkers think it very likely and 46 percent somewhat likely that by September schools in their area will reopen. A larger majority, 82 percent think it is either very (39 percent) or somewhat (43 percent) likely that in the fall, we will face another large outbreak of COVID-19.

“Majorities of every demographic, except Republicans, think that we haven't seen the worst of the pandemic, and majorities of every demographic want the government to concentrate on containing the virus even if the economy suffers,” according to SCRI Director, Don Levy. “Nearly 80 percent are concerned that they, or another member of their household, will get sick with COVID-19.”

Eighty-one percent think systemic racism is either a very (47 percent) or somewhat (34 percent) serious problem here in New York. One-third of all New Yorkers and 71 percent of Blacks across the state often witness or hear about people in New York being discriminated against because of their race or ethnicity. Only 29 percent of residents say they seldom or never are aware of racial or ethnic discrimination.

“New Yorkers agree, systemic racism is a problem. Dramatic majorities of every demographic by party, age, race and region think systemic racism is at least a somewhat serious if not a very serious problem. And while 36 percent describe themselves as ‘not racist’, 53 percent prefer to say that they are ‘anti-racist,’” Levy said.

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Overwhelming percentages of New Yorkers are adhering to public health recommendations including social distancing, hand washing and wearing a mask at least as much as they can if not completely. Seventy-three percent are always wearing a protective mask when outside their home when social distancing may not be possible, and an additional 17 percent wear a mask as much as they can. Sixty-four percent always, and an additional 31 percent usually, wash their hands after touching any surface or after coughing or sneezing, and 56 percent completely adhere to the social distancing recommendations while 36 percent social distance as much as they can.

As New York reopens, between 56 and 64 percent are at least somewhat or very comfortable with eating in an outdoor area at a restaurant (64 percent), enjoying recreational activities like tennis or golf (64 percent), going to a playground or park (61 percent), going to a barbershop or salon (60 percent), and visiting a beach or lakeshore (56 percent). However, 65 percent are either not very (30 percent) or not at all (35 percent) comfortable with eating in an indoor area at a restaurant.

The SCRI special Coronavirus/Racism Poll was conducted June 28 – July 2, 6-8 2020 by random telephone calls to 410 New York adults via landline and cell phones and 400 responses drawn from a proprietary panel (Lucid) of New Yorkers. Telephone sampling was initiated by asking for the youngest person in the household. Telephone sampling was conducted via a stratified dual frame probability sample of landline and cell phone telephone numbers (land from ASDE Survey Sampler, cell from Dynata) from within New York State weighted to reflect known population patterns. Data from the telephone and web samples were blended and statistically adjusted by age, race/ethnicity, party and gender to ensure representativeness. SCRI reports this data at a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of ± 3.7 points including the design effects resulting from weighting. 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, call Dr. Don Levy, Director Siena College Research Institute, at 518-783-2901. For survey cross-tabs: www.Siena.edu/SCRI/research.