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SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

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Contact:

Steven Greenberg, 518-469-9858

Website/Twitter:

[www.Siena.edu/SCRI/SNY](http://www.Siena.edu/SCRI/SNY)

[@SienaResearch](https://twitter.com/SienaResearch)

## Siena College Poll:

### **MLK Day 2021: Over the Last Year, New Yorkers' Views on Race Relations and Discrimination in NY Are Little Changed**

Fewer than One-Third Say Race Relations in NY are Excellent (7%) or Good (24%); Little Difference Between Blacks & Whites or Democrats & Republicans  
*Majority Views Black Lives Matter Movement Favorably; Nearly Half Think It Has Had a Positive Impact on America; One-Third Say Its Impact Has Been Negative*

**Loudonville, NY.** As we commemorate the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., only 31 percent of New Yorkers think race relations in the state are excellent (seven percent) or good (24 percent) – compared to 64 percent who say they are fair (40 percent) or poor (24 percent), according to a new Siena College poll of New York State registered voters released today. That 31-64 percent finding is identical to what it was in June 2020 and down slightly from 33-64 percent on MLK Day 2020. In 2011, 55 percent viewed race relations positively.

The Black Lives Matter movement has a 56-33 percent favorability rating, down from 66-26 percent in June. Forty-eight percent of voters think the Black Lives Matter movement has had a positive impact on America, while 32 percent say it has had a negative impact and 13 percent say it has had no real impact.

“The more things change, the more things stay the same? Despite all the events, headlines and protests, and despite the national conversation that has taken place over the last year about race in America, little has changed – good or bad – regarding New Yorkers’ views about race relations and discrimination in the state,” said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. “Consistently over the last six years, fewer than 40 percent of New Yorkers have said that race relations are excellent or good. Today, only 31 percent say it, compared to a decade ago, MLK Day 2011, when 55 percent of New Yorkers thought race relations were positive.

“While 27 percent of Black and Latino voters view race relations in the state positively, a slightly larger 33 percent of white voters share that view, as do 34 percent of Democrats, 33 percent of Republicans and 27 percent of independents,” Greenberg said. “Voters are a little more upbeat in New York City, where 36 percent have a positive view of race relations, compared to 28 percent in the rest of the state.”

Seventy percent of voters say minorities – including African Americans, Hispanics and Asians – who live in New York experience racial discrimination, compared to 22 percent who say they don't, little changed from 73-19 percent in June and 72-18 percent on MLK Day last year. By a similar 69-22 percent margin, voters say religious minorities – including Jews, Muslims and others – who live in New York experience discrimination based on their religious affiliation, down from 78-17 percent last year.

“While about two-thirds of whites believe that minorities experience racial discrimination, more than three-quarters of Latinos and 90 percent of Blacks say that people of color experience discrimination in the Empire State,” Greenberg said. “And while 85 percent of Democrats and two-thirds of independents say minorities face discrimination, Republicans are closely divided – 45 percent say they experience discrimination and 41 percent say they do not. More than three-quarters of voters from New York City and about two-thirds from the rest of the state say minorities face discrimination in New York.”

**Majority View BLM Movement Favorably; Plurality Credit BLM with Positive Impact on America**

“Democrats overwhelmingly view the Black Lives Matter movement favorably, 77-16 percent, and more than two-thirds of Democrats think the BLM movement has had a positive impact on America. Independent voters are more mixed, viewing BLM favorably by a narrow 44-40 percent margin and a plurality thinking the movement has had a negative impact on the country,” Greenberg said. “Republicans view BLM unfavorably by a strong 62-27 percent margin, and a strong majority say BLM has had a negative impact on the nation.

“While BLM is viewed favorably by 77 percent of Blacks and 70 percent of Latinos, it is also viewed favorably by a majority of whites, 51-39 percent,” Greenberg said. “Sixty-three percent of Blacks and 58 percent of Latinos say BLM has had a positive impact on America, as do a small plurality of whites, 43 percent.

“One-third of New Yorkers – similar to the last three years – say that they themselves have been treated unfairly over the last year because of their race, religion, gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation. More than two-thirds say that racial and religious minorities experience discrimination because of how they look or how they choose to pray,” Greenberg said. “As we honor Dr. King 92 years after his birth and 53 years after his assassination, New York still has a lot of work to do to continue bending that long arc of the moral universe toward justice.”

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This Siena College Poll was conducted January 10-13, 2021 among 804 New York State registered voters with 504 voters contacted through a dual frame (landline and cell phone) mode and 300 responses drawn from a proprietary online panel (Lucid) of New Yorkers. Telephone calls were conducted in English and respondent 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 (ASDE) and cell phone (Dynata) telephone numbers within New York State weighted to reflect known population patterns. Data from both collection modes (phone and web) was merged and statistically adjusted by age, party by region, race/ethnicity, education, and gender 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, call Steve Greenberg at (518) 469-9858. For survey crosstabs: [www.Siena.edu/SCRI/SNY](http://www.Siena.edu/SCRI/SNY).



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## Siena College Poll Trends – January 2021

**Q. 19** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Black Lives Matter Movement?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
January 2021	56	33	10
June 2020	66	26	8
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>66 (6/20)</b>	<b>33 (1/21)</b>	<b>10 (1/21)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>56 (1/21)</b>	<b>26 (6/20)</b>	<b>8 (6/20)</b>

**Q. 36** As we look to the upcoming commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, how would you describe the state of race relations in New York State? Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
January 2021	7	24	40	24	5
June 2020 <sup>^</sup>	4	27	41	23	4
January 2020	5	28	42	22	3
January 2019	5	30	43	19	2
January 2018	4	35	43	15	3
January 2015	4	27	38	28	3
January 2014	7	40	37	14	2
January 2013	7	47	35	11	1
January 2012	7	44	36	11	2
January 2011	7	48	33	10	2
January 2010	6	45	38	8	2
January 2008	3	45	36	13	3
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>7 (many)</b>	<b>48 (1/11)</b>	<b>44 (1/18)</b>	<b>28 (1/15)</b>	<b>5 (1/21)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>3 (1/08)</b>	<b>24 (1/21)</b>	<b>33 (1/11)</b>	<b>8 (1/10)</b>	<b>1 (1/13)</b>

**Q. 37** Do you think minorities, including African Americans, Hispanics and Asians who live in New York State experience racial or ethnic discrimination?

DATE	YES	NO	SOMETIMES/OCCASIONALLY/ DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
January 2021	70	22	8
June 2020	73	19	9
January 2020	73	18	9
January 2019	68	24	8
January 2018	68	22	10
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>73 (6/20, 1/20)</b>	<b>24 (1/19)</b>	<b>10 (1/18)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>68 (1/19, 1/18)</b>	<b>18 (1/20)</b>	<b>8 (1/21, 1/19)</b>

**Q. 38** Do you think religious minorities, including Jews, Muslims, and others who live in New York State experience discrimination based on their religious affiliation, or not?

DATE	YES	NO	SOMETIMES/OCCASIONALLY/ DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
January 2021	69	22	10
January 2020	78	17	5
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>78 (1/20)</b>	<b>22 (1/21)</b>	<b>10 (1/21)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>69 (1/21)</b>	<b>17 (1/20)</b>	<b>5 (1/20)</b>

**Q. 39** And what about you personally, can you think of any occasion over the last year when you were treated unfairly because of your race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation? (NOTE: "religion" added in 2020; not included previously.)

DATE	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
January 2021	32	66	2
January 2020	35	63	2
January 2019	30	69	2
January 2018	29	70	1
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>35 (1/20)</b>	<b>70 (1/18)</b>	<b>2 (1/21, 1/20, 1/19)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>29 (1/18)</b>	<b>63 (1/20)</b>	<b>1 (1/18)</b>

**Poll Trend Notes:** All surveys are of registered voters.  
Trends reflect questions asked at least twice since the first Siena College Poll in February 2005.  
Results listed here include all times questions have been asked.  
“Highest Ever” and “Lowest Ever” are provided at the bottom of each question.  
^ Inconsequential wording change.