



SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

www.siena.edu/sri

For Immediate Release:

Contact:

PDF version; crosstabs; website:

Monday, April 27, 2015

Steven Greenberg, 518-469-9858

www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY

Siena College Poll:

Voters Don't Think New Laws Will Reduce Corruption; Say Cuomo was Right to not Hold Up Budget for Bigger Changes

Voters Say (50-44 Percent) Parents Right to Opt Out of State Exams; NY Doesn't Spend Enough on Education but Voters Are Divided on Increasing Their Income Taxes to Pay for More Education Funding

Dems Happy with Clinton as Nominee; Reps Divided on Their Choice

Loudonville, NY. Nearly two-thirds of voters say that the ethics package recently enacted along with the state budget will have no real effect on corruption in state government, however, by a 54-36 percent margin, they say that Governor Andrew Cuomo did the right thing in dropping some ethics measures in order to get the budget passed on time, according to a new Siena College poll of New York State registered voters released today.

By a small 50-44 percent margin, voters say that parents were right to have their children opt out of the recent state exams. And while 60 percent of voters say that the state doesn't spend enough on education, they are nearly evenly divided on whether or not they would be willing to pay more in income taxes to fund more state aid to education. More than two-thirds of Democrats prefer that Hillary Clinton be their party's nominee, while Republicans are more divided with Chris Christie and Jeb Bush leading the pack. Clinton beats five potential Republican candidates in head-to-head general election matchups by margins of between 20 and 33 points.

“To boil it down, here's what New York voters say: Corruption remains a serious problem in Albany. One in five voters agrees with the Governor that the new ethics laws will create the strongest ethics laws in the nation, while 68 percent agree with critics that say large loopholes remain. A plurality believes the new disclosure requirements do not go far enough. And by an overwhelming 65-25 percent margin, they say the new laws will have no real effect on reducing corruption in state government,” said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. “Yet, despite all that, a clear majority say that Cuomo was right not to hold up the budget for bigger ethics law changes.

“Ethics and corruption are not issues that divide New Yorkers by party or geography. Democrats, Republicans, independents, upstaters, and downstaters all agree that the Governor did the right thing in not holding up the budget, and at least 60 percent of voters from every region and party say the new laws will have no real effect on reducing corruption,” Greenberg said.

“A plurality of voters – 45 percent – thinks that the new requirements for legislators to disclose outside clients do not go far enough, compared to 16 percent who think they go too far and 32 percent who think they’re about right,” Greenberg said. “And more than three-quarters of voters – including at least 72 percent of every party and region – are opposed to allowing lawmakers to continue to use campaign funds for legal fees if they are charged with wrongdoing.”

By Small Margin, Voters Say Parents Were Right to Have Children ‘Opt Out’ of Recent State Exams

“By small margins, Democrats, Republicans and independents all agree that parents were right to have their children opt out of the recent round of state exams for third through eighth graders,” Greenberg said. “Downstate suburbanites think parents were right by a 12-point margin, while upstaters thought parents were right by a nearly two-to-one margin but New York City voters thought parents were wrong by a 57-38 percent margin. A majority of whites thought parents were right, while majorities of blacks, Latinos and Jews thought they were wrong.

Voters: More State Money for Ed. (Split on Taxes to Pay for It) & Less Test Emphasis on Teacher Evals.

“Only 15 percent think New York spends too much on education and another 22 percent say the state spends the right amount. However, 60 percent say the state does not spend enough on education, including a plurality of independents, half of downstate suburbanites and strong majorities of upstaters, New York City voters, Republicans, and Democrats,” Greenberg said. “And when asked if they were willing to pay more in state income taxes to fund more state money for education aid, voters are split, with 47 percent saying yes and 49 percent saying no. Among those who say the state does not spend enough, they support a tax increase 63-33 percent.

“More than two-thirds of voters think student standardized test results should count for no more than 25 percent of a teacher’s evaluation score, with 39 percent saying about 25 percent and 30 percent saying student test results should not count at all toward a teacher’s evaluation scores,” Greenberg said. “Only 28 percent of voters said test scores should count for 50 percent or more of a teacher’s evaluation. A majority of voters from every party and region say test scores should be 25 percent or less of teacher evaluation scores.”

Support for Easing School Districts’ Ability to Dismiss Ineffective Teachers

“By a 59-36 percent margin – including majority support from every party and region – voters support allowing school district to dismiss teachers that have been rated as ineffective for two years in a row. And by an even larger 67-27 percent margin, voters support requiring school districts to initiate dismissal proceedings against any teachers found to be ineffective for three consecutive years,” Greenberg said.

“While voters support those two proposals put forth by the Governor, they are evenly divided on whether they agree – 48 percent – or disagree – 47 percent – with the Governor when he says that the budget comprehensively transforms New York’s school system. Slightly more Democrats agree with the Governor than disagree, while slightly more Republicans and independents disagree with the Governor,” Greenberg said.

Dems Want Clinton; Christie, Bush Rep Frontrunners; Clinton Beats All Reps by At Least 20 Points

Favorability							Electability					
Democratic Candidate Favorability							Clinton v. Someone Else					
Candidate		ALL	Dem	Rep	Men	Women	Candidate		ALL	Men	Women	
Hillary Clinton	Fav	58%	76%	32%	52%	62%	Hillary Clinton		69%	66%	70%	
	Unfav	38%	20%	63%	44%	33%	Someone Else		22%	22%	23%	
Republican Candidate Favorability							GOP Nomination					
Candidate		ALL	Dem	Rep	Men	Women	ALL	Republican v. Hillary Clinton				
Marco Rubio	Fav	30%	22%	43%	37%	24%	9%	Rubio	30%	10%	60%	39%
	Unfav	32%	40%	17%	36%	29%		Clinton	59%	82%	26%	46%
Rand Paul	Fav	25%	15%	38%	33%	19%	8%	Paul	29%	8%	63%	38%
	Unfav	40%	47%	30%	44%	38%		Clinton	58%	81%	26%	43%
Chris Christie	Fav	41%	34%	54%	37%	44%	25%	Christie	34%	13%	69%	40%
	Unfav	47%	54%	38%	55%	41%		Clinton	54%	78%	22%	39%
Jeb Bush	Fav	33%	24%	51%	36%	30%	20%	Bush	32%	12%	69%	36%
	Unfav	49%	58%	30%	53%	46%		Clinton	55%	80%	21%	42%
Ted Cruz	Fav	22%	13%	32%	24%	20%	6%	Cruz	26%	8%	60%	31%
	Unfav	41%	52%	23%	50%	33%		Clinton	59%	83%	25%	46%

Siena College Poll – April 27, 2015

Clinton, who has a 76-20 percent favorability rating among Democrats ó 58-38 percent among all registered voters ó is the preferred choice of 69 percent of Democrats, including 77 percent of liberals, for her party's 2016 nomination for president. Only 22 percent of Democrats would prefer another candidate, Greenberg said.

Among New York Republicans, the nomination is clearly up for grabs. Christie has the support of 25 percent of Republicans, Bush has the support of 20 percent, and Marco Rubio, Rand Paul and Ted Cruz split another 23 percent, while one-third of Republicans are undecided or want another candidate, Greenberg said.

With a year and a half until the general election, New York is showing no signs of moving into the red column for the first time in three decades, Greenberg said. Clinton has a 20-point lead over Christie, who runs closest among the Republicans, and stretches it to 33 points against Cruz.

Overwhelming Support for Increasing Minimum Wage Beyond Next Year's Scheduled \$9.00

Only 26 percent of voters support keeping New York's minimum wage at \$9.00 next year, while 72 percent want to see it higher than that, with 39 percent supporting \$10.50 and 33 percent supporting an increase to \$15.00 per hour, Greenberg said. Support for a higher than \$9.00 per hour minimum wage is across the board, including 78 percent of Democrats, 64 percent of Republicans and 63 percent of independents.

By a narrow 50-46 percent margin, voters support a higher minimum wage downstate compared to upstate, a reversal from March when a geographic minimum wage differential was opposed 51-46 percent, Greenberg said. Downstate voters support the differential 57-40 percent, while upstaters oppose it 57-38 percent.

Opponents of Dream Act Outnumber Supporters; Significant Partisan, Racial and Geographic Differences

By a small 50-44 percent margin, opponents of the Dream Act continue to outnumber supporters, largely unchanged from the 48-44 percent opposition in December, Greenberg said. The Dream Act is strongly supported by Democrats, black, Latino, young and New York City voters. It is strongly opposed by Republicans, independents, downstate suburbanites, upstaters, and white voters.

Cuomo Ratings Hold Steady

Cuomo's favorability rating is 56-39 percent, essentially unchanged from 57-39 percent last month, and he has a negative 44-55 percent job performance rating, essentially unchanged from a negative 43-56 percent last month.

Despite a fifth straight on-time budget and a brief jaunt to Cuba, voters' views of Cuomo are little changed over the last month. He continues to be well liked by two-thirds of Democrats, who also give him a positive job performance rating, and while his standing improved slightly with Republicans, it was offset by a comparable dip among independents, Greenberg said.

Ratings for Both Houses of State Legislature – and Its Leaders – Fall a Little

The State Assembly's favorability rating is 38-49 percent, down from 41-46 percent last month, and Speaker Carl Heastie has an 11-19 percent favorability rating, down a little from 11-15 percent last month. The State Senate's favorability rating is 42-48 percent down from 44-46 percent last month, and Majority Leader Dean Skelos has a 12-28 percent favorability rating, down from 13-22 percent last month.

With the continued swirl of corruption and investigation stories, not even an on-time budget could help the Legislature's favorability ratings from dropping over the last month, Greenberg said. Both the new Speaker and the longtime Republican Senate leader hit record highs for their unfavorable ratings, although each remains unknown to at least 60 percent of voters.

Direction of State Holds Constant, Barely Positive; Direction of Nation Slides Down More Negative

By a 46-42 percent margin, voters say the state is on the right track, exactly the same as last month. New York City voters have a two-to-one positive view of the state's direction, while the downstate suburbs fall into negative territory, joining upstate voters, who have long had a negative view of the direction of the state, Greenberg said. The country is headed in the wrong direction by a margin of 55-37 percent, up from 52-40 percent last month.

###

This Siena College Poll was conducted April 19-23, 2015 by telephone calls conducted in English to 785 New York State registered voters. Respondent sampling was initiated by asking for the youngest male in the household. It has an overall margin of error of ± 4.0 percentage points (Democrats ± 6.3 , Republicans ± 6.6) 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, party, region 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. SRI, 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 cross-tabs: www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY.



SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

www.siena.edu/sri

Siena College Poll Trends – April 2015

Q. 4 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Andrew Cuomo?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	56	39	5
March 2015	57	39	4
February 2015	59	37	4
January 2015	60	35	5
December 2014	58	37	4
October 2014*	54	43	3
September 2014*	55	40	5
August 2014*	57	36	7
July 2014*	61	35	4
June 2014	63	31	6
HIGHEST EVER	77 (2/11)	43 (10/14)	24 (1/06, 2/06, 9/07)
LOWEST EVER	44 (8/06, 10/06)	14 (8/09)	3 (10/20/10)

Q. 16 How would you rate the job that Andrew Cuomo is doing as Governor? Would you rate it excellent, good, fair, or poor?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	9	35	35	20	1
March 2015	6	37	37	19	1
February 2015	9	35	38	17	1
January 2015	11	36	35	16	1
December 2014	7	35	40	17	1
October 2014*	9	34	32	25	0
September 2014*	7	35	35	21	1
August 2014*	9	35	38	17	1
July 2014*	9	41	31	18	1
June 2014	8	41	34	16	1
HIGHEST EVER	17 (1/12)	47 (4/12, etc.)	39 (11/13)	25 (10/14)	28 (1/11)
LOWEST EVER	6 (3/15)	34 (10/14, 1/11)	24 (1/11)	4 (2/11, 1/11)	0 (10/14)

Q. 5 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the New York State Assembly?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	38	49	13
March 2015	41	46	14
February 2015	43	45	12
January 2015	42	41	17
December 2014	39	41	20
September 2014*	40	44	16
July 2014*	39	43	17
HIGHEST EVER	45 (1/13)	61 (7/10)	20 (12/14)
LOWEST EVER	25 (7/10)	40 (12/12)	12 (4/13, 1/10)

Q. 7 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Carl Heastie?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	11	19	69
March 2015	11	15	74
February 2015	14	14	73
HIGHEST EVER	14 (2/15)	19 (4/15)	74 (3/15)
LOWEST EVER	11 (4/15, 3/15)	14 (2/15)	69 (4/15)

Siena College Poll Trends – April 2015

Q. 6 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the New York State Senate?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	42	48	10
March 2015	44	46	10
February 2015	45	44	11
January 2015	45	44	11
December 2014	41	44	14
September 2014*	40	46	14
July 2014*	41	45	14
HIGHEST EVER	46 (1/14, 5/12)	74 (7/09)	14 (12/14, 7/14, 12/12, 6/11)
LOWEST EVER	20 (7/09)	41 (12/12)	6 (7/09)

Q. 8 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Dean Skelos?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	12	28	60
March 2015	13	22	65
February 2015	16	20	64
January 2015	13	18	68
March 2014	19	21	61
HIGHEST EVER	19 (3/14)	28 (4/15)	82 (11/08)
LOWEST EVER	9 (12/10)	8 (7/08)	60 (4/15)

Q. 17 How serious a problem would you say corruption is in state government in Albany? Would you say it's very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious?

DATE	VERY SERIOUS	SOMEWHAT SERIOUS	NOT VERY SERIOUS	NOT AT ALL SERIOUS	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	49	39	7	2	4
March 2015	49	38	7	2	4
February 2015	51	41	4	2	2
August 2014	47	39	8	1	5
HIGHEST EVER	51 (2/15)	41 (2/15)	8 (8/14)	2 (4/15, 3/15, 2/15)	5 (8/14)
LOWEST EVER	47 (8/14)	38 (3/15)	4 (2/15)	1 (8/14)	2 (2/15)

Q. 18 How serious a problem would you say corruption is among state legislators from your areas? Would you say it's very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious?

DATE	VERY SERIOUS	SOMEWHAT SERIOUS	NOT VERY SERIOUS	NOT AT ALL SERIOUS	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	21	37	27	8	8
March 2015	23	34	24	11	7
February 2015	21	39	24	9	7
HIGHEST EVER	23 (3/15)	39 (2/15)	27 (4/15)	11 (3/15)	8 (4/15)
LOWEST EVER	21 (4/15, 2/15)	34 (3/15)	24 (3/15, 2/15)	8 (4/15)	7 (3/15, 2/15)

Q. 34 In general, do you support or oppose the New York Dream Act, which would allow the children of undocumented immigrants to receive financial aid for higher education? (Previously, this question was asked with a split sample of half of respondents being asked about 'undocumented immigrants' and half being asked about 'illegal aliens'.)

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	44	50	5
December 2014	44	48	8
April 2014	48	47	5
HIGHEST EVER	48 (4/14)	50 (4/15)	8 (12/14)
LOWEST EVER	44 (4/15, 12/14)	47 (4/14)	5 (4/15, 4/14)

Siena College Poll Trends – April 2015

Page 3

Q. 33 Some have suggested having a higher minimum wage downstate, compared to upstate. Do you think there should or should not be a higher minimum wage downstate?

DATE	SHOULD	SHOULD NOT	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	50	46	4
March 2015	46	51	4
HIGHEST EVER	50 (4/15)	51 (3/15)	4 (4/15, 3/15)
LOWEST EVER	46 (3/15)	46 (4/15)	4 (4/15, 3/15)

Q. 9 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Barack Obama?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	52	45	3
March 2015	57	41	3
February 2015	56	42	2
December 2014	54	43	3
September 2014*	50	46	4
July 2014*	53	45	1
HIGHEST EVER	81 (1/09)	46 (9/14, 10/31/10)	40 (11/06)
LOWEST EVER	48 (11/06)	10 (1/09)	1 (7/14, 1/13, 8/12)

Q. 10 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Hillary Clinton?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	58	38	5
March 2015	59	38	3
February 2015	62	33	5
December 2014	63	32	5
March 2014	65	32	3
HIGHEST EVER	75 (12/12)	46 (4/08)	8 (3/05, 6/06, 3/07)
LOWEST EVER	48 (4/08)	23 (12/12)	2 (many)

Q. 11 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Marco Rubio?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	30	32	38
December 2014	24	32	44
HIGHEST EVER	30 (4/15)	32 (4/15, 12/14)	44 (12/14)
LOWEST EVER	24 (12/14)	32 (4/15, 12/14)	38 (4/15)

Q. 12 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Rand Paul?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	25	40	34
December 2014	29	38	34
HIGHEST EVER	29 (12/14)	40 (4/15)	34 (4/15, 12/14)
LOWEST EVER	25 (4/15)	38 (12/14)	34 (4/15, 12/14)

Q. 13 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Chris Christie?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	41	47	12
December 2014	46	43	11
January 2014	49	39	12
November 2013	63	25	12
HIGHEST EVER	63 (11/13, 12/12)	47 (4/15)	18 (12/12)
LOWEST EVER	41 (4/15)	18 (12/12)	11 (12/14)

Q. 14 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Jeb Bush?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	33	49	18
December 2014	31	47	22
HIGHEST EVER	33 (4/15)	49 (4/15)	22 (12/14)
LOWEST EVER	31 (12/14)	47 (12/14)	18 (4/15)

Siena College Poll Trends – April 2015

Q. 15 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Ted Cruz?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	22	41	38
December 2014	19	35	46
HIGHEST EVER	22 (4/15)	41 (4/15)	46 (12/14)
LOWEST EVER	19 (12/14)	35 (12/14)	38 (4/15)

Q. 36 (REPUBLICANS ONLY:) As things stand now, who would you like to be the Republican presidential nominee in 2016? Jeb Bush, Chris Christie, Ted Cruz, Rand Paul, Marco Rubio, or someone else. (Choices were rotated. In December, Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan were also included in this question.)

DATE	JEB BUSH	CHRIS CHRISTIE	TED CRUZ	RAND PAUL	MARCO RUBIO	OTHER/DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	20	25	6	8	9	32
December 2014	14	25	2	7	4	48
HIGHEST EVER	20 (4/15)	25 (4/15, 12/14)	6 (4/15)	8 (4/15)	9 (4/15)	48 (12/14)
LOWEST EVER	14 (12/14)	25 (4/15, 12/14)	2 (12/14)	7 (12/14)	4 (12/14)	32 (4/15)

Q. 38 If the 2016 election for president was held today and the candidates were Hillary Clinton on the Democratic line and Chris Christie on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (Choices were rotated.)

DATE	CLINTON	CHRISTIE	OTHER/WON'T VOTE/DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
April 2015	54	34	12
December 2014	56	32	12
January 2014	60	32	8
HIGHEST EVER	60 (1/14)	34 (4/15)	12 (4/15, 12/14)
LOWEST EVER	54 (5/15)	32 (12/14, 1/14)	8 (1/14)

Q. 2 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
April 2015	37	55	8
March 2015	40	52	9
February 2015	42	51	8
January 2015	38	55	7
December 2014	34	57	9
October 2014*	33	60	7
September 2014*	36	55	9
July 2014*	38	56	7
HIGHEST EVER	62 (5/09)	74 (10/13, 8/11)	17 (9/08)
LOWEST EVER	19 (10/13, 10/08)	24 (12/09)	5 (1/13)

Q. 3 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
April 2015	1	26	44	26	3
February 2015	2	26	45	25	2
December 2014	3	26	40	28	2
September 2014*	2	28	41	25	4
July 2014*	2	29	41	25	2
HIGHEST EVER	3 (12/14, 8/13)	29 (7/14)	49 (8/12)	67 (3/22/10)	4 (9/14, etc.)
LOWEST EVER	0 (many)	6 (3/22/10, etc.)	25 (3/22/10)	25 (2/15, 9/14, 7/14)	0 (4/11, etc.)

Siena College Poll Trends – April 2015

Page 5

Q. 1 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
April 2015	46	42	12
March 2015	46	42	12
February 2015	49	41	10
January 2015	46	45	9
December 2014	41	45	14
October 2014*	46	46	8
September 2014*	48	43	10
August 2014*	47	40	13
July 2014*	49	40	10
June 2014	50	39	11
HIGHEST EVER	57 (1/13)	76 (10/31/10)	30 (1/07)
LOWEST EVER	14 (10/10)	26 (1/07)	7 (5/13)

Poll Trend Notes: * All surveys are of registered voters except for the polls of July thru October 2014, August/October 2012, October 2010, September/October 2008, and September/October 2006, which are polls of likely 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 since June 2014. “Highest Ever” and “Lowest Ever” is provided at the bottom of each question.
 ^ Inconsequential wording change.