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Siena Releases Mayoral Polls in Albany, Buffalo, Rochester with Media Partners

YNN / Siena College Albany Mayoral Primary Poll:

Sheehan Extends Lead to 68-20 Percent Over Ellis

Buffalo News / Channel 2-WGRZ / Siena College Buffalo Mayoral Primary Poll:

Mayor Brown Continues 2-to-1 Lead Over Tolbert

YNN / Democrat & Chronicle / WHAM-TV (Channel 13) / WXXI Public Broadcasting / WDKX-FM / Siena College Rochester Mayoral Primary Poll:

Richards Lead Over Warren Increases to 36 Points

Loudonville, NY. On the eve of Democratic mayoral primaries in Albany, Buffalo and Rochester, the Siena College Research Institute released the following polls of likely Democratic primary voters with its media partners:

- ☑ The YNN/Siena College Albany mayoral primary poll finds City Treasurer Kathy Sheehan leading Corey Ellis 68-20 percent, up from 54-23 percent on July 31, in the race to succeed retiring Mayor Jerry Jennings.
- ☑ The Buffalo News/Channel 2-WGRZ/Siena College Buffalo mayoral primary poll shows Mayor Byron Brown with a 63-30 percent lead over Bernie Tolbert, up slightly from 61-32 percent on August 18, as he seeks re-election to a third term.
- ☑ In the YNN/Democrat & Chronicle/WHAM-TV (Channel 13)/WXXI Public Broadcasting/WDKX-FM/Siena College Rochester mayoral primary poll, Mayor Thomas Richards leads with the support of 63 percent of likely voters, compared to 27 percent for City Council President Lovely Warren (up from 55-28 percent in an August poll) while seeking re-election to his first full term.

Popular Albany City Treasurer Has Huge Lead Over Popular Opponent

“Kathy Sheehan has a commanding lead over Cory Ellis heading into the final days of the campaign,” said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. “As a popular incumbent mayor prepares to step down, opening the way for the city’s first new mayor in two decades – and only the fourth mayor in seven decades – Sheehan is poised to capture the Democratic nomination, tantamount to victory in this overwhelmingly Democratic city.”

Sheehan is viewed favorably by 76 percent of likely primary voters and unfavorably by 12 percent (up from 63-11 percent in July). Ellis has a 58-24 favorability rating among likely primary voters, up from 49-21 percent in July.

“Both of these candidates are well liked by the electorate, however, Sheehan’s favorability rating is significantly better,” Greenberg said. “More than three-quarters of voters say they are satisfied with the candidates, with only one in five votes saying they would have preferred other candidates in the race.

“With a majority of voters saying the city is headed on the right track, Sheehan, a current citywide office holder, is seen as the likely winner by 83 percent of voters, including a majority of Ellis supporters,” Greenberg said. “While the votes need to be cast and counted, it appears likely that Sheehan will not be moving out of City Hall but rather moving into a new office.”

Buffalo Mayor Seeking Third Term has Two-to-One Lead Over Challenger

“As he seeks his third term as mayor, Byron Brown is maintaining a two-to-one lead over Bernie Tolbert heading into the Democratic primary,” Greenberg said. “Brown still holds a double-digit lead – garnering a majority of the support – among white voters, and he continues to have overwhelming support among black voters. He has more than 60 percent support among men and women, as well as younger and older voters.”

Brown has a 70-27 percent favorability rating, up significantly from 58-37 percent in August. Tolbert, who has become more known to likely primary voters has a 46-31 percent favorability rating, with 23 percent not having an opinion of him. It was 39-18 percent last month, with 44 percent having no opinion.

“Brown is better known and viewed more favorably than his challenger. His job performance rating is very strong with 63 percent of likely voters saying he’s doing an excellent or good job as mayor, compared to 36 percent saying he’s doing only a fair or poor jobs, up considerably from 53-47 percent last month,” Greenberg said. “More than 60 percent of voters are prepared to re-elect the Mayor, while only one-third say they would prefer ‘someone else.’ And more than three-quarters of voters say they are satisfied with the candidates.

“By an overwhelming 78-16 percent, voters say Buffalo is headed on the right track,” Greenberg said. “Likely Democratic primary voters think the city is headed on the right track, view Brown very favorably, think he’s doing a positive job as mayor, and by a 90-6 percent margin think the incumbent is going to win the primary. It’s hard to see how 90 percent can be wrong.”

Incumbent Rochester Mayor Extends Strong Lead Over Council President Challenger

“Attempting to win re-election to his first full term as mayor, Thomas Richards has extended his lead slightly over primary challenger Lovely Warren from 27 points in August to 36 percent on the cusp of the election,” Greenberg said. “While Warren has a sizeable lead among black voters, 54-29 percent, it is not nearly large enough to offset the 84-11 percent lead Richards holds among white voters. And there is no gender gap in this race, as Richards leads by 36 points with men and with women.”

Richards’ favorability rating among likely primary voters is 74-17 percent, up from 66-15 percent last month. Warren has a 59-26 favorability rating, up from 50-20 percent in August.

“While Warren is well known and viewed favorably by a better than two-to-one margin, Richards has a four-to-one favorability rating, and more than two-thirds of likely voters think he’s doing an excellent or good job as mayor,” Greenberg said. “Despite some racial polarization among Democratic voters in their primary choice for mayor, a majority of black voters has a favorable view of Richards and a plurality of white voters has a favorable view of Warren.

“With both candidates well liked, it’s not surprising that at least 80 percent of both Richards and Warren supporters are satisfied with the choice of candidates in this election,” Greenberg said. “More than two-thirds of likely primary voters think Rochester is headed on the right track, Richards is viewed favorably and as doing a good job as mayor, and the vast majority thinks he will be re-elected. That is almost always a combination that spells victory for the incumbent and defeat for the challenger.”

These three Siena College Democratic Primary surveys were conducted September 3 – 5, 2013 in Albany and Rochester and September 3-6 in Buffalo in partnership with media outlets listed above by landline and cell telephone calls to registered Democratic voters. A likely voter screen was applied to the sample of registered voters that had been statistically adjusted to reflect age, gender and in Albany, self-described race/ethnicity. The sample sizes and margins of error for each primary election are: Albany: 504 likely voters/ ± 4.4 , Buffalo: 502 likely voters/ ± 4.4 , Rochester: 503 likely voters/ ± 4.4 . The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in New York State. 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, please call Steven Greenberg at 518-469-9858. Survey cross-tabulations and frequencies can be found at: www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY.