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Siena College Poll:

Cuomo Favorability Inches Up; Job Performance Inches Down; Gov Earns Big Kudos From Voters For Responding to Storms NYers Still Closely Divided on Hydrofracking; Trust Opponents More *Sen. Gillibrand Potentially Vulnerable; Below 50% on Fav and Re-Elect*

Loudonville, NY. Governor Andrew Cuomo now has a 72-18 percent favorability rating, up from 69-22 percent last month. While a majority of voters continues to say that Cuomo is doing an excellent or good job as governor, his overall job performance rating fell slightly over the last month to a 55-43 percent positive rating, down from 58-40 percent, according to a new Siena College Research Institute poll of registered voters released today. However, seven in ten voters say Cuomo has done an excellent (20 percent) or good (50 percent) job in responding to the recent hurricane, tropical storm and flooding.

Although a majority says they are both paying at least some attention to the debate over hydraulic fracturing – hydrofracking – and that they are more inclined to trust the opponents of hydrofracking over the supporters, New York voters remain closely divided on whether to support or oppose the Department of Environmental Conservation’s (DEC) recommendation to allow hydrofracking in a large portion of the Marcellus Shale.

New York’s junior Senator, Kirsten Gillibrand, maintains a nearly two-to-one favorability rating, 46-25 percent, and a plurality of voters, 45 percent, says they are prepared to re-elect her, down from 49 percent last month, while 34 percent say they would prefer ‘someone else,’ the same as last month.

“After nine months in a difficult economic climate, it’s impressive that Governor Cuomo has 72 percent of voters viewing him favorably. However, even more impressive is the consistency with which voters from different regions and demographic groups view him,” said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. “He is viewed favorably by 71 percent of voters upstate and in New York City, and by 73 percent of downstate suburban voters.

“Cuomo is viewed favorably by 75 percent of Democrats, 74 percent of independents and 63 percent of Republicans,” Greenberg said. “He is viewed favorably by 72 percent of white voters, 69 percent of African American voters, 75 percent of Jewish voters, 74 percent of Protestant voters, and 73 percent of Catholics. His ‘lowest’ favorability rating is with conservative voters, and it’s better than two-to-one, at 61-29 percent.”

“Although the job performance rating voters give Cuomo is down a little this month, it has remained consistent since February, with a majority of voters thinking he’s doing an excellent or good job as governor,” Greenberg said. “And when it comes to his handling of the natural disasters that struck the state earlier this month and for which recovery efforts continue, more than two-thirds of voters from every region and every party say he’s doing an excellent or good job.”

While 58 percent of voters think there has been no change in the level of transparency or openness in state government since Cuomo took office, 30 percent say he’s made Albany more open and transparent and four percent say he’s made it less open and transparent.

“Cuomo made government transparency and openness an important issue during his campaign last year. And while a majority of voters say he has not yet changed the level of openness in Albany, among those who think he’s made a difference, they think he’s had a positive impact by a seven-to-one margin,” Greenberg said.

Voters Trust Hydrofracking Opponents & Divided on DEC’s Recommendation to Allow It

About half of voters say they are paying at least some attention to the debate over hydrofracking, while about one-quarter say they are paying not very much attention to the issue and about one-quarter paying no attention. About two-thirds of upstaters are paying at least some attention to the debate. By a 51-33 percent margin, voters say they trust opponents more than supporters of hydrofracking, little changed from 54-33 percent in July.

“More than half of all voters, including a plurality or majority from every region, say they trust opponents of hydrofracking – who argue about the risks to the environment – rather than the supporters – who argue that it’s safe and creates jobs and new energy,” Greenberg said. “Pluralities of Republicans and conservatives are more likely to trust supporters.

“Right now, 44 percent of voters say they favor DEC’s recommendation to allow hydrofracking, while 40 percent are opposed,” Greenberg said. “This is virtually unchanged from July when it was 45-43 percent. A majority of Republicans, independents, conservatives, men and suburban voters favor the DEC recommendation, while the only group with majority opposition is liberals.”

Gillibrand Doing OK with Voters but Has not Yet Sealed the Deal for Next Year

“While almost half of voters view Gillibrand favorably, one-quarter, including a small plurality of Republicans, view her unfavorably,” Greenberg said. “After serving as Senator for two plus years, three in ten voters still don’t know enough about Gillibrand to have an opinion about her. Unusual for a Democrat, Gillibrand’s favorability rating is strongest upstate, 54-23 percent. Not surprisingly, it is weakest in the suburbs, 37-30 percent.”

“A majority of Democrats, 55 percent, are prepared to re-elect Gillibrand next year, however, by a 32-49 percent margin, Republicans would prefer ‘someone else’ over re-electing her. Independent voters are evenly divided. “While a plurality of voters in every region is prepared to re-elect Gillibrand, she does not have a majority of voters in any region prepared to re-elect her,” Greenberg said.

“Is the junior senator vulnerable? At this point only 37 percent of voters both view her favorably and are inclined to re-elect her while 21 percent see Gillibrand unfavorably and prefer someone else. Seventeen percent rest in the double don’t know category both on favorability and re-election. Right now Gillibrand is ahead but she is well below 50 percent of strong supporters while a sizable percentage of New York voters currently do not know where they stand and could go either way come November 2012,” Greenberg said.

Schumer Maintains Two-to-One Favorability Rating

“New York’s senior Senator, Charles Schumer, continues to have a two-to-one favorability rating, 59-30 percent. He is viewed favorably by nearly three-quarters of Democrats and about half of independents, and by a 49-40 percent margin, Republicans view Schumer unfavorably,” Greenberg said.

Do Voters Think New York is on the Right Track or Headed in the Wrong Direction? Half & Half

“Voters are currently evenly divided on the direction they feel New York State is headed, with 45 percent saying the state is on the right track and 44 percent saying it’s headed in the wrong direction,” Greenberg said. “A plurality of voters felt the state was headed in the wrong direction in January, March, May, June, and August, and a plurality felt the state was on the right track in February, April and July.

“This question has been on a bit of a roller coaster for most of the year, but what we are not seeing any more is the wide discrepancy between upstate and downstate,” Greenberg said. “While New York City voters say the state is on the right track by a 48-39 percent margin, upstate voters think the state is headed in the wrong direction but only by a 49-42 percent margin. By comparison, last November, New York City voters were evenly divided on this question while upstate voters said the state was headed in the wrong direction by a 69-19 percent margin.”

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This Siena College Poll was conducted September 15-21, 2011 by telephone calls to 808 New York State registered voters. It has a margin of error of ± 3.4 percentage points. Data was statistically adjusted by age, party and gender to ensure representativeness. Sampling was conducted via random digit dialing to landline and cell phones weighted to reflect known population patterns. The Siena College Research Institute, under the direction of 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.



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Siena College Poll Trends – September 27, 2011

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

| DATE | FAVORABLE | UNFAVORABLE | DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| September 2011 | 72 | 18 | 10 |
| August 2011 | 69 | 22 | 8 |
| July 2011 | 71 | 21 | 8 |
| June 2011 | 68 | 21 | 12 |
| May 2011 | 71 | 20 | 9 |
| April 2011 | 73 | 18 | 8 |
| March 2011 | 69 | 20 | 11 |
| February 2011 | 77 | 16 | 7 |
| January 2011 | 70 | 17 | 13 |
| December 2010 | 66 | 25 | 8 |
| November 2010 | 64 | 26 | 9 |
| October 31, 2010* | 57 | 38 | 5 |
| October 20, 2010* | 62 | 34 | 3 |
| October 5, 2010* | 56 | 37 | 7 |
| September 2010 | 60 | 31 | 9 |
| August 2010 | 61 | 27 | 13 |
| July 2010 | 62 | 25 | 13 |
| HIGHEST EVER | 77 (2/11) | 42 (10/06) | 24 (1/06, 2/06, 9/07) |
| LOWEST EVER | 44 (8/06, 10/06) | 14 (8/09) | 3 (10/20/10) |

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 |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| September 2011 | 12 | 43 | 36 | 7 | 2 |
| August 2011 | 12 | 46 | 31 | 9 | 2 |
| July 2011 | 15 | 43 | 32 | 8 | 1 |
| June 2011 | 11 | 44 | 32 | 9 | 5 |
| May 2011 | 9 | 43 | 36 | 9 | 3 |
| April 2011 | 11 | 43 | 34 | 7 | 4 |
| March 2011 | 8 | 43 | 34 | 7 | 8 |
| February 2011 | 10 | 47 | 29 | 4 | 10 |
| January 2011 | 10 | 34 | 24 | 4 | 28 |
| HIGHEST EVER | 15 (7/11) | 47 (2/11) | 36 (9/11, 5/11) | 9 (8/11, 6/11, 5/11) | 28 (1/11) |
| LOWEST EVER | 8 (3/11) | 34 (1/11) | 24 (1/11) | 4 (2/11, 1/11) | 1 (7/11) |

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Charles Schumer?

| DATE | FAVORABLE | UNFAVORABLE | DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| September 2011 | 59 | 30 | 11 |
| May 2011 | 62 | 30 | 8 |
| November 2010 | 67 | 24 | 9 |
| October 31, 2010* | 64 | 32 | 4 |
| October 20, 2010* | 66 | 29 | 5 |
| September 2010 | 58 | 32 | 10 |
| July 2010 | 60 | 28 | 12 |
| HIGHEST EVER | 70 (7/05) | 32 (10/31/10, 9/10, 6/10) | 17 (2/05) |
| LOWEST EVER | 54 (6/10) | 20 (2/05, 11/06) | 4 (10/31/10) |

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Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Kirsten Gillibrand?

| DATE | FAVORABLE | UNFAVORABLE | DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| September 2011 | 46 | 25 | 29 |
| August 2011 | 46 | 24 | 30 |
| July 2011 | 49 | 21 | 30 |
| May 2011 | 51 | 20 | 29 |
| February 2011 | 57 | 18 | 25 |
| November 2010 | 50 | 24 | 26 |
| October 31, 2010* | 52 | 34 | 14 |
| October 20, 2010* | 51 | 31 | 18 |
| September 2010 | 43 | 26 | 30 |
| August 2010 | 40 | 29 | 31 |
| July 2010 | 34 | 29 | 37 |
| HIGHEST EVER | 57 (2/11) | 34 (10/31/10) | 56 (1/09) |
| LOWEST EVER | 26 (3/09) | 14 (1/09) | 14 (10/31/10) |

I know it's a ways off, but if Kirsten Gillibrand runs for re-election as United State Senator in 2012, would you vote to re-elect her or would you prefer someone else?

| DATE | RE-ELECT | PREFER SOMEONE ELSE | DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| September 2011 | 45 | 34 | 22 |
| August 2011 | 49 | 34 | 18 |
| July 2011 | 50 | 29 | 21 |
| May 2011 | 50 | 30 | 20 |
| February 2011 | 52 | 29 | 19 |
| HIGHEST EVER | 52 (2/11) | 34 (9/11, 8/11) | 22 (9/11) |
| LOWEST EVER | 49 (8/11) | 29 (7/11, 2/11) | 18 (8/11) |

On another issue, there has been an ongoing debate about hydraulic fracturing – or hydrofracking – the proposed method to recover natural gas from the Marcellus Shale in the southern tier of New York State. How much attention have you paid to this debate about hydrofracking – a great deal of attention, some, not very much, or no attention at all?

| DATE | A GREAT DEAL | SOME | NOT VERY MUCH | NO ATTENTION | DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| September 2011 | 18 | 33 | 23 | 24 | 1 |
| July 2011 | 19 | 28 | 24 | 28 | 1 |
| HIGHEST EVER | 19 (7/11) | 33 (9/11) | 24 (7/11) | 28 (7/11) | 1 (9/11, 7/11) |
| LOWEST EVER | 18 (9/11) | 28 (7/11) | 23 (9/11) | 24 (9/11) | 1 (9/11, 7/11) |

Opponents of hydrofracking are concerned that this method of extracting natural gas has not yet been fully studied and may pose risks to drinking water and the environment. Supporters of hydrofracking believe it is safe and will create new jobs and supply needed energy for the state. Are you more inclined to trust the supporters or the opponents of hydrofracking? (Statements were rotated.)

| DATE | SUPPORTERS | OPPONENTS | DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| September 2011 | 33 | 51 | 17 |
| July 2011 | 33 | 54 | 13 |
| HIGHEST EVER | 33 (9/11, 7/11) | 54 (7/11) | 17 (9/11) |
| LOWEST EVER | 33 (9/11, 7/11) | 51 (9/11) | 13 (7/11) |

Recently, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation released a study recommending that New York allow hydrofracking on private lands outside of areas that provide drinking water under strict regulation by the Department. Are you in favor or opposed to the recommendation of the Department of Environmental Conservation to allow hydrofracking in a large portion of the Marcellus Shale?

| DATE | IN FAVOR | OPPOSED | DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| September 2011 | 44 | 40 | 16 |
| July 2011 | 45 | 43 | 13 |
| HIGHEST EVER | 45 (7/11) | 43 (7/11) | 16 (9/11) |
| LOWEST EVER | 44 (9/11) | 40 (9/11) | 13 (7/11) |

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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 |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| September 2011 | 1 | 11 | 36 | 50 | 1 |
| August 2011 | 1 | 11 | 39 | 48 | 1 |
| July 2011 | 1 | 8 | 40 | 51 | 1 |
| May 2011 | 0 | 9 | 33 | 57 | 1 |
| April 2011 | 1 | 8 | 32 | 58 | 0 |
| March 2011 | 1 | 7 | 30 | 62 | 1 |
| February 2011 | 0 | 7 | 26 | 66 | 1 |
| November 2010 | 0 | 7 | 27 | 65 | 1 |
| HIGHEST EVER | 1 (many) | 14 (9/08) | 43 (10/08) | 67 (3/22/10) | 4 (9/08) |
| LOWEST EVER | 0 (many) | 6 (3/22/10, etc.) | 25 (3/22/10) | 41 (9/08) | 0 (4/11, etc.) |

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 |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| September 2011 | 45 | 44 | 10 |
| August 2011 | 44 | 47 | 10 |
| July 2011 | 48 | 40 | 12 |
| June 2011 | 38 | 47 | 15 |
| May 2011 | 40 | 49 | 11 |
| April 2011 | 46 | 41 | 13 |
| March 2011 | 43 | 45 | 12 |
| February 2011 | 47 | 39 | 14 |
| January 2011 | 36 | 50 | 14 |
| December 2010 | 29 | 60 | 11 |
| November 2010 | 32 | 54 | 15 |
| October 31, 2010* | 14 | 76 | 10 |
| October 20, 2010* | 14 | 75 | 12 |
| October 5, 2010* | 16 | 72 | 11 |
| September 2010 | 21 | 68 | 11 |
| August 2010 | 21 | 67 | 12 |
| July 2010 | 20 | 71 | 9 |
| HIGHEST EVER | 52 (11/06) | 76 (10/31/10) | 30 (1/07) |
| LOWEST EVER | 14 (10/31 & 20/10) | 26 (1/07) | 9 (7/10) |

Poll Trend Notes: * All surveys are of registered voters except for the polls of October 2010, September and October 2008, and September and 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 July 2010.

“Highest Ever” and “Lowest Ever” is provided at the bottom of each question.

^ Inconsequential wording change.