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Siena New York Poll:

Voters Divided Over Who Gov _Should_ Pick for Senate
By 2-1 Margin, Voters Think Gov Will _Pick Kennedy over Cuomo_
Strong Support for Raising Personal Income Taxes on Wealthy; Strong Opposition to Health, Education Cuts **without** Tax Increase and Using SUNY/CUNY Tuition Increase for Budget Balancing

Loudonville, NY. While New York voters are nearly evenly divided about who Governor David Paterson should pick to replace Senator Hillary Clinton among Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, Caroline Kennedy and six other potential candidates combined, far more voters think Paterson will pick Kennedy over any other person, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll of registered voters released today. Voters also have very strong views – contrary to positions taken by the Governor in his Executive Budget – on several state budget issues, including taxes, budget cuts and use of public higher education tuition increases.

When asked who Governor Paterson _should_ pick to replace Clinton, 26 percent of voters – 30 percent of Democrats – said Cuomo, while 23 percent – 28 percent of Democrats – said Kennedy. Congresswoman Kirsten Gillibrand received seven percent support, Congressman Brian Higgins, six percent, and Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi, five percent. Nearly one in five voters had no opinion. Cuomo led in every region. Kennedy led among African American and Latino voters, and they tied with younger voters.

"Voters currently see Andrew Cuomo and Caroline Kennedy, the scions of two of the most prominent political families, as their top choices to be New York's next junior senator. Six other candidates combined for the support of 28 percent of voters," said Steven Greenberg, spokesman for the Siena New York Poll. "While Cuomo has a slim lead over Kennedy for who the Governor _should_ pick, 31 percent of voters think he _will_ pick Kennedy, while only 16 percent think he will choose Cuomo," Greenberg said.

Kennedy's 58-21 percent favorable rating is almost identical to Cuomo's 59-24 percent favorable rating.

On budget issues, voters overwhelmingly (78-17 percent) support a personal income tax increase on those making more than $1 million and strongly support (61-31 percent) an increase on those making more than $250,000. If broad-based taxes are not increased, voters strongly oppose cuts in education (22-68 percent) and health care (21-65 percent).

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"Unlike the Governor, voters strongly support taxing the 'rich.' Two-thirds of Democrats, and a slim Republican majority support increasing the income tax on those making more than $250,000, and more than two-thirds of Republicans support an income tax increase on million dollar earners," Greenberg said.

"Voters are very opposed to health care and education cuts if they are done while

Statements Concerning New State Budget		
Statement	Support (Strongly)	Oppose (Strongly)
Cut spending for education while not increasing broad-based taxes such as income tax or sales tax	22% (12%)	**68%** (54%)
Cut spending for health care while not increasing broad-based taxes such as income or sales tax	21% (10%)	**65%** (51%)
Mandate the consolidation of local school districts	**42%** (23%)	31% (22%)
Mandate the consolidation of local services like police, fire and public works	**49%** (30%)	30% (21%)
Raise income taxes on New Yorkers earning more than $250,000	**61%** (41%)	31% (23%)
Raise income taxes on New Yorkers earning more than $1,000,000	**78%** (65%)	17% (12%)
Use 90% of the proposed $600 SUNY & CUNY tuition hike to help balance the budget, rather than for use by the colleges	17% (9%)	**68%** (54%)

not increasing either the income or sales tax," Greenberg said. "Two-thirds of voters oppose – including more than half who strongly oppose – using an increase in SUNY and CUNY tuition to help balance the budget, rather than improve higher education. When it comes to consolidation, voters are not nearly as united. A plurality – not a majority – of voters supports consolidation of local school districts and local services."

President-Elect Barack Obama's favorability rating has hit a new high, 76-16 percent, including a majority of Republicans, 52-37 percent, having a favorable view of Obama. Senator Hillary Clinton also has her highest favorable rating ever, 66-30 percent. Rating her Senate job performance, 55 percent of voters give Clinton an excellent or good rating, compared to 43 percent rating it as fair or poor. When it comes to how voters think she will do as Secretary of State, 71 percent say excellent or good, while only 24 percent say fair or poor.

Paterson's favorability rating, 63-22 percent is down slightly from last month's 64-19 percent, while his job performance rating of 55 percent positive, 40 percent negative is virtually unchanged. If the election for Governor were tomorrow, 36 percent of voters (down from 42 percent in November) said they would vote for Paterson, with 31 percent preferring "someone else." In a potential Democratic primary matchup against Cuomo, Paterson wins 49-26 percent (down from 53-25 percent last month). In general election gubernatorial matchups, Paterson beats Giuliani 51-38 percent (up from 49-43 percent last month), while Cuomo beats Giuliani by a similar 50-37 percent margin (a reversal from last month when Giuliani led 46-44 percent).

"As he now enters a potentially brutal budget battle, Governor Paterson enjoys a great deal of public good will," Greenberg said. "He will clearly need all of that political capital as he attempts to close a huge budget gap by proposing massive budget cuts and new taxes. How much political capital he will still hold at the end of the budget process remains very much an open question that Siena will continue to monitor."

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Siena New York Poll Trends – December 2008

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about David Paterson?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2008	63	22	16
November 2008	64	19	17
October 27, 2008	62	19	18
September 2008	59	13	28
August 2008	59	16	26
July 2008	57	15	28
June 2008	57	17	25
May 2008	48	17	35
April 2008	48	18	34
March 24, 2008	58	10	31
January 2007	17	8	76
HIGHEST EVER	**64 (11/08)**	**22 (12/08)**	**76 (1/07)**

How would you rate the job that David Paterson is doing as Governor – excellent, good, fair, or poor?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2008	9	46	32	8	4
November 2008	9	46	34	7	4
October 27, 2008	7	48	35	5	5
September 2008	7	44	33	4	12
August 2008	7	45	30	5	12
July 2008	7	41	34	5	13
June 2008	6	38	31	6	19
May 2008	5	35	28	4	29
April 2008	4	30	30	4	32
HIGHEST EVER	**9 (12/08)**	**48 (10/08)**	**35 (10/08)**	**8 (12/08)**	**32 (4/08)**

If David Paterson runs for Governor in 2010, would you vote to elect him or would you prefer someone else?

DATE	ELECT	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2008	36	31	33
November 2008	42	32	26
October 27, 2008	40	29	31
September 2008	35	25	39
August 2008	35	26	40
July 2008	34	27	40
June 2008	30	30	40
May 2008	29	25	47
HIGHEST EVER	**42 (11/08)**	**32 (11/08)**	**47 (5/08)**

(DEMS ONLY): Looking ahead to 2010 and the next election for Governor. If the Democratic primary for governor were held today and the candidates were David Paterson or Andrew Cuomo, who would you vote for? (CANDIDATE CHOICES WERE ROTATED) (NOTE: In April 2008, Tom Suozzi was included as a choice)

DATE	PATERSON	CUOMO	SUOZZI	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2008	49	26	NA	25
November 2008	53	25	NA	22
July 2008	51	21	NA	28
June 2008	43	31	NA	26
May 2008	42	29	NA	29
April 2008	35	30	7	28
HIGHEST EVER	**53 (11/08)**	**30 (4/08)**	**7 (4/08)**	**29 (5/08)**

If the 2010 election for governor were held today and the candidates were David Paterson on the Democratic line and Rudy Giuliani on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (CANDIDATE CHOICES WERE ROTATED)

DATE	PATERSON	GIULIANI	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2008	51	38	11
November 2008	49	43	8
October 27, 2008	51	40	9
September 2008	50	40	10
August 2008	48	38	15
July 2008	47	40	13
HIGHEST EVER	**51 (10/08, 12/08)**	**43 (11/08)**	**15 (8/08)**

If the 2010 election for governor were held today and the candidates were Andrew Cuomo on the Democratic line and Rudy Giuliani on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (CANDIDATE CHOICES WERE ROTATED)

DATE	CUOMO	GIULIANI	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2008	50	37	13
November 2008	44	46	10
July 2008	47	42	11
HIGHEST EVER	**50 (12/08)**	**46 (11/08)**	**11 (7/08)**

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Rudy Giuliani?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2008	50	43	7
November 2008	57	39	4
August 2008	51	42	7
July 2008	51	39	10
January 2008	44	48	8
December 2007	48	46	6
November 2007	49	41	11
September 2007	53	39	9
July 2007	53	40	7
June 2007	50	42	8
May 2007	51	43	6
April 2007	56	38	6
March 2007	60	33	8
February 2007	59	34	7
January 2007	63	29	9
HIGHEST EVER	**63 (4/05, 10/06, 1/07)**	**48 (1/08)**	**11 (2/05, 11/07)**
LOWEST EVER	**44 (1/08)**	**26 (4/05)**	**4 (11/08)**

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Michael Bloomberg?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2008	58	26	15
November 2008	60	26	14
October 27, 2008	64	22	14
September 2008	63	16	21
August 2008	64	18	18
July 2008	64	20	16
June 2008	64	21	16
May 2008	65	19	16
April 2008	63	21	16
March 24, 2008	67	18	15
January 2008	59	24	17
October 2007	68	20	12
July 2007	65	19	17
June 2007	62	20	18
HIGHEST EVER	**67 (3/08)**	**26 (11/08, 12/08)**	**21 (9/08)**

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2008	59	24	17
November 2008	61	19	20
October 27, 2008	59	25	16
September 2008	54	24	22
August 2008	54	25	21
July 2008	57	23	21
June 2008	57	22	21
May 2008	56	25	20
April 2008	55	24	21
March 24, 2008	53	25	22
January 2008	51	29	20
December 2007	52	29	19
November 2007	56	27	17
October 2007	54	29	17
September 2007	51	26	24
July 2007	55	26	19
June 2007	49	31	20
May 2007	51	32	18
April 2007	52	31	18
March 2007	50	32	19
February 2007	45	35	20
January 2007	48	29	23
HIGHEST EVER	**61 (11/08)**	**42 (10/06)**	**24 (1/06, 2/06, 9/07)**
LOWEST EVER	**44 (8/06, 10/06)**	**19 (11/08)**	**15 (9/06, 10/06, 11/06)**

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2008	61	28	11
November 2008	60	27	13
May 2008	61	24	15
January 2008	60	26	14
October 2007	65	24	11
June 2007	64	23	13
February 2007	66	24	11
HIGHEST EVER	**70 (7/05)**	**28 (12/08)**	**17 (2/05)**
LOWEST EVER	**60 (1/08, 11/08)**	**20 (2/05, 11/06)**	**9 (7/05)**

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
December 2008	41	48	11
November 2008	44	44	13
October 27, 2008	19	69	12
September 2008	28	56	17
September 2007	23	64	13
HIGHEST EVER	**44 (11/08)**	**69 (10/08)**	**17 (9/08)**

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2008	76	16	7
November 2008	70	23	8
October 27, 2008	67	28	5
October 2, 2008	64	29	7
September 2008	56	32	12
August 2008	54	34	12
July 2008	57	32	12
June 2008	58	30	13
May 2008	55	34	11
April 2008	54	34	12
March 24, 2008	56	32	13
March 3, 2008	56	31	13
February 2008	60	30	10
January 2008	57	28	15
December 2007	55	30	15
September 2007	56	24	20
June 2007	53	24	23
May 2007	58	22	20
April 2007	55	23	22
March 2007	52	20	28
February 2007	52	21	28
January 2007	50	17	34
November 15, 2006	48	12	40
HIGHEST EVER	**76 (12/08)**	**34 (4/08, 5/08, 8/08)**	**40 (11/06)**
LOWEST EVER	**48 (11/06)**	**12 (11/06)**	**5 (10/27/08)**

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
December 2008	66	30	4
November 2008	61	35	4
October 27, 2008	65	33	2
September 2008	56	39	5
August 2008	51	43	6
July 2008	55	38	7
June 2008	56	38	6
May 2008	52	43	5
April 2008	48	46	6
March 24, 2008	52	43	5
March 3, 2008	54	39	7
February 2008	53	43	4
January 2008	60	35	5
December 2007	51	44	5
November 2007	55	39	6
October 2007	53	41	6
September 2007	57	37	7
July 2007	59	35	6
June 2007	54	39	7
May 2007	56	39	5
April 2007	50	42	7
March 2007	56	37	8
February 2007	56	40	5
January 2007	60	33	7
HIGHEST EVER	**66 (12/08)**	**46 (4/08)**	**8 (3/05, 6/06, 3/07)**
LOWEST EVER	**48 (4/08)**	**29 (11/06)**	**3 (1/06)**

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
December 2008	1	7	33	59	1
November 2008	0	7	31	62	1
October 27, 2008	0	12	43	43	2
September 2008	1	14	41	41	4
August 2008	0	13	37	48	1
HIGHEST EVER	**1 (12/08)**	**14 (9/08)**	**43 (10/08)**	**62 (11/08)**	**4 (9/08)**

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
December 2008	37	44	19
November 2008	39	43	18
October 27, 2008	39	41	19
October 2, 2008	35	40	25
September 2008	35	37	28
August 2008	34	44	22
July 2008	36	39	25
June 2008	30	46	23
May 2008	32	43	26
April 2008	33	48	20
March 24, 2008	34	41	26
February 2008	33	43	24
January 2008	39	38	23
December 2007	35	45	21
November 2007	32	45	23
October 2007	42	36	22
September 2007	44	30	26
July 2007	37	38	25
June 2007	45	28	27
May 2007	46	29	25
April 2007	47	29	24
March 2007	37	37	26
February 2007	49	26	25
January 2007	45	26	30
HIGHEST EVER	**52 (11/15/06)**	**52 (5/06)**	**30 (1/07)**
LOWEST EVER	**26 (3/05)**	**26 (1/07)**	**18 (11/15/06, 11/08)**

Poll Trend Notes: Trends reflect questions asked at least twice since the first Siena New York poll in February 2005. Results listed here include all times questions have been asked since January 2007

"Highest Ever" is provided at the bottom of each question. "Lowest Ever" is presented at the bottom of each question that was asked prior to 2007.

All surveys are of registered voters except for the polls of September 2008, October 2008, September 2006, and October 2006, which are polls of likely registered voters.