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Siena New York Poll:

Clinton & Obama Strengthen Leads Over McCain

NYers Seriously Impacted by Gas Prices; Want Gas Tax Relief

Voters Strongly Oppose Pay Raise for Governor; Oppose Pay Raise for Judges; Nearly Split on Pay Raise for Legislators

Loudonville, NY. Both Democratic candidates widened their lead over Senator John McCain, with Senator Hillary Clinton leading 51-39 percent and Senator Barack Obama leading 49-38 percent, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll of registered voters released today. The Siena New York poll shows that for the vast majority of New Yorkers gas prices are having a very or somewhat serious on their financial condition. Most voters support a temporary state reduction in gas prices, although fewer than one in five believes they would see a reduction in gas taxes fully reflected in the price they pay at the pump. Voters are overwhelmingly opposed to a pay raise for the Governor, strongly opposed to a judicial pay raise, and only a small plurality, opposed to a pay raise for state legislators.

“New York voters appear to be moving back in the blue column, providing Senators Clinton and Obama with double digit leads over Senator McCain,” said Steven Greenberg, spokesman for the Siena New York Poll.

“New York’s senator has a 51-39 percent lead and the man from Illinois leads 49-38 percent. While Obama is stronger than Clinton against McCain with African American voters, Clinton does better than Obama with Latino and women voters.

“New York Democrats see both as equally strong against McCain. And while most New York Democrats think Hillary should keep fighting for the nomination, although by a smaller margin than in several national polls, more than 40 percent of Democrats think she should drop out now.” Greenberg said.

Fifty-seven percent of voters say increases in gas prices are having a “very serious impact” on their financial condition, while another 29 percent say those increases are having a “somewhat serious impact.” Support for reducing the state gas tax by 32 cents per gallon for the summer is supported by 61 percent and opposed by 35 percent. Only 18 percent believe they would see a 32 cent drop in the price they pay, while 43 percent think they would see about half of that and one-third believing that consumers wouldn’t benefit at all.

“New Yorkers clearly feel that filling up the tank has become a pain in the gas. Upstate and downstate, City and suburbs, gas prices are a major financial concern for the vast majority of New Yorkers. Nearly half of voters lay the blame at the feet of the President and the oil companies but it is clear they are looking for help,” Greenberg said. “While three in five New York voters support the state reducing gas taxes, one-third of voters don’t think they’d see any relief at the pump and another 43 percent think they’d only see about half of it.”

Support/Opposition for Salary Increases for Various State Officials			
The salary associated with many top positions in state government have not been increased since 1999 and require legislation to enact an increase. For each of the following positions, please let me know if you support or oppose legislation that would provide a salary increase. (Order rotated)	Support	Oppose	DK/NO
The Governor who currently earns a base salary of \$179,000	31%	65%	4%
State supreme court judges who currently earn a base salary of \$136,700	39%	55%	6%
State legislators who currently earn a base salary of \$79,500	45%	49%	6%

“When it comes to elected officials, the more they earn, the more opposed voters are to giving them a raise,” Greenberg said. “Judges have been loudly arguing for a raise but voters don’t think they’ve made the case.”

After two months in office, 35 percent of voters still do not have an opinion about Governor David Paterson. His favorable/unfavorable rating is 48-17 percent (virtually unchanged from 48-18 percent last month). More voters, however, rate his job performance positively, 40-32 percent (up from 35-34 percent last month). He currently leads Attorney General Andrew Cuomo (56-25 percent favorable rating) 42 to 29 percent in a hypothetical 2010 gubernatorial primary. However, in a general election match-up, he trails New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg (65-19 percent favorable rating) 45 percent to 36 percent.

“Having not been through a campaign with millions of dollars of television exposure, the Governor is still in the process of introducing himself to voters. Many still do not know him, but those that do generally like him and a plurality think he’s doing a positive job,” Greenberg said.

Nearly half of voters, 48 percent, agree that if Democrats gain control of the Senate it will make state government more effective, while 39 percent agree that Republicans keeping control of the Senate provides checks and balances. In March the Republican argument topped the Democratic argument 47-45 percent.

“Democrats want to see the Democrats in charge and Republicans want to see Republicans keep control. Independent voters are evenly divided. Clearly, a handful of State Senate races are going to be the most hotly contested and closely watched elections in New York this year,” Greenberg said.

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Siena New York Poll Trends – May, 2008

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2008	48	17	35
April 2008	48	18	34
March 24, 2008	58	10	31
January 2007	17	8	76

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
May 2008	5	35	28	4	29
April 2008	4	30	30	4	32

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

DATE	PATERSON	BLOOMBERG	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2008	36	45	20
April 2008	34	48	18

(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 Souzzi was included as a choice)?

DATE	PATERSON	CUOMO	SOUZZI	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2008	42	29	NA	29
April 2008	35	30	7	28

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
November 15, 2006	68	20	11
July 2005	70	22	9
February 2005	63	20	17

Siena New York Poll Trends – May, 2008

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
November 15, 2006	50	36	15
November 3, 2006	49	36	15
October 2006	44	42	15
September 2006	50	35	15
August 2006	44	35	21
June 2006	47	29	24
January 2006	45	31	24

How would you rate the job that Andrew Cuomo is doing as Attorney General – excellent, good, fair, or poor?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2008	7	44	29	6	13
April 2008	10	42	30	8	11
January 2008	8	39	32	6	14
October 2007	7	42	35	6	12
September 2007	8	41	28	7	17
July 2007	11	41	27	6	14
June 2007	7	39	27	9	18
May 2007	9	41	26	9	16
April 2007	8	39	29	9	15
March 2007	5	35	29	8	23
January 2007	11	37	15	4	33

Currently, Democrats have an overwhelming majority in the State Assembly. Republicans have a small 32-30 majority in the State Senate. The Governor is a Democrat. Which statement comes closest to your opinion (CHOICES WERE ROTATED): I agree with those who claim it is important for Republicans to keep control of the Senate, providing checks and balances so one party does not control all of state government, or I agree with those who claim that if Democrats gain control of the Senate, it would end the gridlock and make state government more effective.

DATE	REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATIC	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2008	39	48	13
March 2008	47	45	9

Siena New York Poll Trends – May, 2008

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Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about George Bush?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2008	23	73	4
April 2007	29	65	6
January 2007	26	67	8
November 15, 2006	28	65	7
September 2006	36	61	3

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
November 15, 2006	65	29	6
November 3, 2006	61	33	6
October 2006	56	38	6
September 2006	60	37	4
August 2006	54	38	7
June 2006	54	38	8
May 2006	58	36	6
March 2006	55	39	6
January 2006	60	37	3
November 2005	60	34	6
October 2005	59	35	6
August 2005	59	37	4
July 2005	60	34	6
June 2005	60	33	7
May 2005	58	35	7
April 2005	60	33	6
March 2005	58	34	8
February 2005	61	33	6

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Siena New York Poll Trends – May, 2008

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about John McCain?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2008	49	39	12
April 2008	54	35	11
March 24, 2008	54	34	12
March 3, 2008	48	41	11
February 2008	55	34	11
January 2008	56	27	17
December 2007	53	29	18
June 2007	43	39	19
May 2007	42	44	14
April 2007	45	39	15
March 2007	45	34	21
February 2007	47	33	19
January 2007	51	29	21
November 15, 2006	56	24	20

If the 2008 presidential election were held today and the candidates were Hillary Clinton on the Democratic line and John McCain on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (CANDIDATE CHOICES WERE ROTATED)

DATE	CLINTON	MCCAIN	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2008	51	39	10
April 2008	46	42	12
February 2008	49	42	8
January 2008	53	39	8
June 2007	55	37	9
May 2007	54	36	10
April 2007	51	39	10
March 2007	54	35	11
November 15, 2006	55	36	9
August 2006	42	46	12

Siena New York Poll Trends – May, 2008

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If the 2008 presidential election were held today and the candidates were Barack Obama on the Democratic line and John McCain on the Republican line, who would you vote for? (CANDIDATE CHOICES WERE ROTATED)

DATE	OBAMA	MCCAIN	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
May 2008	49	38	14
April 2008	45	40	15
February 2008	47	40	13
January 2008	44	42	15
June 2007	49	35	16
May 2007	50	33	18
April 2007	50	37	13
March 2007	47	39	14
November 15, 2006	39	40	21

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
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
November 15, 2006	52	30	18
November 3, 2006	36	43	21
October 2006	29	47	23
September 2006	33	39	28
August 2006	29	47	25
June 2006	29	45	26
May 2006	27	52	21
March 2006	35	39	26
January 2006	34	43	24
November 2005	38	41	22
October 2005	34	42	24
August 2005	36	44	20
July 2005	33	41	26
June 2005	30	44	26
May 2005	29	46	25
April 2005	29	44	27
March 2005	26	47	27
February 2005	32	44	24