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Contact:

Steven Greenberg at 518-469-9858

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Siena New York Poll:

## **Half of NYers Describe State Fiscal Condition as Poor**

### ***Special Session Priority: Voters Equally Divided Among Job Creation, Property Taxes and Budget Deficit***

**As Paterson's Rating with Voters Continues to Edge Up, Two-thirds Agree with Governor This Is Worst Fiscal Condition Since 1970's**

**Loudonville, NY.** With the Legislature returning to Albany tomorrow, 48 percent of New York voters describe the state's fiscal condition as poor and another 37 percent call it fair, while only 13 percent describe it as good, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll released today. Nearly two-thirds agree with Governor David Paterson that the state's fiscal condition is the worst it's been since the New York City fiscal crisis in the 1970's. Voters are divided over the single biggest issue they want the Governor and Legislature to address this week, with property taxes and job creation each receiving 26 percent support, while addressing the state's budget deficit gets 24 percent. Paterson's standing with voters is the best it's ever been.

"New Yorkers see a very bleak fiscal picture for the state, with 85 percent of voters describing the state's fiscal condition as poor or fair," said Steven Greenberg, spokesman for the Siena New York Poll. "And 65 percent of voters, including more than three-quarters of upstaters, agree with the Governor that this is the worst fiscal situation the state has faced in more than three decades.

"While 43 percent of voters say they are very or somewhat confident that the Governor and Legislature will improve the state's fiscal condition this year, 55 percent of voters tell Siena that they are not at all or not very confident that state leaders will effectively address the fiscal health of New York this year," Greenberg said.

When given four choices for the top priority in this week's special session, 26 percent said property taxes, 26 percent said job creation, 24 percent said the state budget deficit, and 11 percent said government reform, while another 11 percent volunteered another choice. Job creation is the top choice of Democrats, independent voters, young, African American and New York City voters. Property taxes was the top choice of Republicans, suburbanites and older voters.

“While voters are divided over what the Legislature and Governor should do this week, they are nearly unanimous in opposing tax increases to close the budget gap, with 80 percent wanting to see spending cut and only 10 percent saying raise taxes,” Greenberg said.

When asked which of the two largest expenditures in the state budget – education and health care – should be cut voters were divided with 26 percent saying health care and 24 percent education. Twenty-one percent volunteered that neither of those should be cut, 10 percent said something else, four percent said cut salaries and another four percent said cut both education and health care.

Similar to last month, voters overwhelmingly support a property tax cap 66-23 percent (69-20 percent in July) and a property tax circuit breaker 75-18 percent (75-17 percent last month). Voters continue to support the circuit breaker over the cap if only one action is taken 58-33 percent (up from 52-36 percent last month). And 60 percent of voters say they are not at all or not very confident that state leaders will address the property tax issue this year, while 36 percent say they are very or somewhat confident that it will be addressed.

Paterson’s favorable/unfavorable rating is 59-16 percent, (57-15 percent in July). He has a positive job performance rating of 52-35 percent, (48-39 percent in July). Thirty-five percent of voters say they would elect him governor in 2010, while 26 percent they would prefer someone else (34-27 percent in July). In hypothetical 2010 gubernatorial match-ups, Paterson loses to New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg 44-36 percent (45-37 percent in July) and beats former Mayor Rudy Giuliani 48-38 percent (47-40 percent in July).

“Despite the state’s fiscal picture – or maybe because of the way he’s talking to voters about it – David Paterson has the best favorable and job performance ratings with voters he’s ever had,” Greenberg said.

The race for President continues to tighten in New York, with Democrat Barack Obama leading Republican John McCain 47-39 percent, down from 50-37 percent in July and 51-33 percent in June. Obama has a 54-34 percent favorable rating and McCain has a 49-41 percent rating.

“While New York has not gone ‘red’ in a presidential race since 1984, Obama’s lead over McCain has fallen from 18 points in June to just eight points today,” Greenberg said. “Certainly the dynamic in the race will change with the two conventions and the selection by both candidates of vice presidential running mates.”

A plurality of New York voters continues to support seeing the State Senate switch control from Republicans to Democrats in November by a 47-42 percent margin, down slightly from 48-40 percent last month. Three-time gubernatorial candidate Tom Golisano, who says he will be financially supporting senate campaigns this year has a 22-20 percent favorable rating, although it is stronger upstate, 37-21 percent.

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## Siena New York Poll Trends – August, 2008

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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

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
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

I know it's a long way off, but 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
August 2008	35	26	40
July 2008	34	27	40
June 2008	30	30	40
May 2008	29	25	47

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
August 2008	36	44	19
July 2008	37	45	18
June 2008	34	45	21
May 2008	36	45	20
April 2008	34	48	18

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
August 2008	48	38	15
July 2008	47	40	13

# Siena New York Poll Trends – August, 2008

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
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

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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

Governor Paterson has asked the Legislature to enact a law, which has passed in the State Senate but not the Assembly, that for most areas of the state would cap property tax increases to no more than four percent per year. Do you support or oppose such a cap? (*June/July wording:* Governor Paterson has endorsed the findings of a special commission, and has asked the Legislature to pass a law that for most areas of the state would cap property tax increases to no more than four percent per year. Do you support or oppose such a cap?)

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
August 2008	66	23	11
July 2008	69	20	11
June 2008	74	15	11

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Some legislators are advocating a program, called a circuit breaker, which would ensure that property taxes do not exceed a certain percentage of a homeowner's income. The cost to the state for this program would be paid for by raising state income taxes on those making more than one million dollars per year. Do you support or oppose such a property tax circuit breaker?

DATE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
August 2008	75	18	7
July 2008	75	17	7

If the Governor and Legislature were to enact only ONE of these property tax proposals, which would be your top priority (CHOICES WERE ROTATED): a property tax cap or a property tax circuit breaker?

DATE	CAP	CIRCUIT BREAKER	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
August 2008	33	58	10
July 2008	36	52	12

Regardless of whether you favor a property tax cap or a circuit breaker, how confident are you that the governor and the legislature will enact legislation this year that addresses the property tax issue?

DATE	VERY	SOMEWHAT	NOT VERY	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
August 2008	4	32	36	24	4
July 2008	7	25	40	24	5

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
August 2008	42	47	11
July 2008	40	48	12
June 2008	41	48	12
May 2008	39	48	13
March 2008	47	45	9

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

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
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
November 15, 2006	63	32	5
April 2005	63	26	10
February 2005	61	28	11

# Siena New York Poll Trends – August, 2008

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

<b>DATE</b>	<b>FAVORABLE</b>	<b>UNFAVORABLE</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION</b>
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
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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Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Barack Obama?

<b>DATE</b>	<b>FAVORABLE</b>	<b>UNFAVORABLE</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION</b>
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

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

<b>DATE</b>	<b>FAVORABLE</b>	<b>UNFAVORABLE</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION</b>
August 2008	49	41	10
July 2008	45	42	13
June 2008	42	47	11
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

# Siena New York Poll Trends – August, 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
August 2008	47	39	14
July 2008	50	37	13
June 2008	51	33	17
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
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
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