



Marist College Institute for Public Opinion

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46% of New York Voters Endorse Gillibrand Appointment Paterson Loses Ground Against Potential 2010 Opponents

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This Marist Poll reports:

- **On the Money...Plurality of New York State Voters Approve of Gillibrand's Appointment to U.S. Senate...One In Three Voters Unsure:** When Senator-designate Kirsten Gillibrand takes the oath of office this afternoon, she will do so with the support of 46% of New Yorkers. That's the proportion of registered voters in the state who say Governor David Paterson made the right choice in appointing Gillibrand to New York's vacant U.S. Senate seat. 24% believe Governor Paterson made the wrong choice while 30% of the electorate says they just don't know what to make of Paterson's decision. There is a geographic divide. A majority of upstate voters -- 55% -- say Gillibrand belongs in the U.S. Senate. However, fewer voters in New York City and in the suburbs feel that way. 40% of city dwellers and 36% of suburban voters believe Gillibrand is a good pick to represent New York. Similar proportions of Democrats and Republicans believe Gillibrand belongs in the Senate. 45% of Gillibrand's fellow Democrats and 49% of New York Republicans agree with Paterson's action. 44% of voters who are not enrolled in a political party follow suit. However, uncertainty abounds across the board. 29% of Democrats, 27% of Republicans and 35% of non-enrolled voters say they are unsure about whether Governor Paterson's pick was the correct one.

Question Wording: Kirsten Gillibrand was chosen by Governor Paterson to replace Hillary Clinton in the U.S. Senate. From what you have read or heard do you think he made the right choice or he made the wrong choice?

Registered Voters	Right Choice	Wrong Choice	Unsure
January 2009	46%	24%	30%

Registered Voters	Right Choice	Wrong Choice	Unsure
By Party			
Democrats	45%	26%	29%
Republicans	49%	24%	27%
Non-enrolled	44%	21%	35%
By Region			
New York City	40%	28%	32%
Suburbs	36%	35%	29%
Upstate	55%	16%	29%

- Gillibrand’s Favorability Rises, But Jury Still Out for Nearly Half of Voters:** 41% of New Yorkers have a positive impression of Kirsten Gillibrand. However, more voters in the state -- 48% -- have either never heard of her or don’t have a strong opinion of her. That’s a marked improvement from Marist’s December survey which showed 83% of registered voters in New York State had either never heard of her or didn’t have an opinion of her. Just 13% viewed her favorably while 4% had an unfavorable impression of her at that time. Currently, a majority in Gillibrand’s own party -- 57% of Democrats -- say they don’t know enough about her to form an opinion. About one-third -- 33% -- view Gillibrand positively while just 10% have an unfavorable impression of her. More Republicans than Democrats have a positive opinion of Gillibrand. A slim majority of New York Republicans -- 51% -- think well of New York’s junior senator while 41% do not have a clear impression of her. Non-enrolled voters split the difference. 43% view Gillibrand positively while 41% need to know more about her. How does Gillibrand fare across the state? Nearly half of upstate voters -- 49% -- think well of Gillibrand compared with 40% of suburban voters and just 31% of those in New York City. More than six in ten voters in the five boroughs don’t have an opinion of New York’s next U.S. Senator. 38% of suburban voters feel the same.

Question Wording: Please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of Kirsten Gillibrand. If you don't know enough about her to have an opinion or have never heard of her, please say so.

Registered Voters	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure/Never Heard
January 2009	41%	11%	48%
By Party			
Democrats	33%	10%	57%
Republicans	51%	8%	41%
Non-enrolled	43%	16%	41%

Registered Voters	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure/Never Heard
By Region			
New York City	31%	7%	62%
Suburbs	40%	22%	38%
Upstate	49%	8%	43%
December 2008	13%	4%	83%

- Queen of the Hill? Gillibrand Bests Congressman King...Neck and Neck with Former Governor Pataki in Hypothetical 2010 Matchups:** Kirsten Gillibrand may just have arrived in the United States Senate, but if she wants to stay there, she'll have to beat her Republican competition in the 2010 election. Looking at hypothetical matchups, Gillibrand handily defeats Long Island Congressman Peter King, 49% to 24%. She faces more fierce competition, though, from former New York Governor George Pataki. Here, the two are in a statistical dead heat. Gillibrand garners 44% of voters' support compared with 42% for Pataki.

Question Wording: If the 2010 election for U.S. Senate in New York State were held today, whom would you support if the candidates are:

Registered Voters	Gillibrand Democrat	King Republican	Undecided
January 2009	49%	24%	27%

Registered Voters	Gillibrand Democrat	Pataki Republican	Undecided
January 2009	44%	42%	14%

- Right, Left, or Dead On? More Than Four in Ten Consider Gillibrand's Views Just About Right:** When it comes to Kirsten Gillibrand's political ideology, 42% of registered voters think she is neither too liberal nor too conservative. However, 38% are unsure as to where Gillibrand falls on the political spectrum. 10% of New Yorkers feel Gillibrand is too liberal. The same proportion thinks she is too conservative. Similar sentiments blur party lines. However, more Republicans than Democrats view Gillibrand as having the appropriate political views. 45% of Republicans and 39% of Democrats share this opinion. Upstate voters make the difference here. Half of voters in that region say Gillibrand's ideology is just where it should be. Voters in New York City and in the suburbs aren't as sure. Far fewer -- 34% and 37%, respectively -- believe this is the case.

Question Wording: Compared to your views, do you think Kirsten Gillibrand is too liberal, too conservative, or about right?

Registered Voters	Too Liberal	Too Conservative	About Right	Unsure
January 2009	10%	10%	42%	38%
By Party				
Democrats	6%	15%	39%	40%
Republicans	18%	3%	45%	34%
Non-enrolled	11%	8%	46%	35%
By Region				
New York City	9%	13%	34%	44%
Suburbs	17%	12%	37%	34%
Upstate	8%	6%	50%	36%

- Fired Up Over Gun Rights? A Majority Says, “It Makes No Difference”:** Kirsten Gillibrand’s pro-gun rights position has received a great deal of attention, but a majority of registered voters -- 54% -- report her stance will make no difference when casting their vote in 2010 including 51% of Democrats. However, 35% of Democrats say it will make them *less likely* to vote for Gillibrand while 13% of Republicans share this view. 28% of Republicans report it will make them *more likely* to vote for her compared with only 11% of Democrats.

Question Wording: Kirsten Gillibrand has an "A" rating from the National Rifle Association. Does this make you more likely to vote for her for U.S. Senate in 2010, less likely, or does it not make a difference to your vote?

Registered Voters	More Likely	Less Likely	No Difference	Unsure
January 2009	18%	25%	54%	3%
By Party				
Democrats	11%	35%	51%	3%
Republicans	28%	13%	56%	3%
Non-enrolled	17%	20%	59%	4%
By Region				
New York City	12%	32%	52%	4%
Suburbs	20%	32%	45%	3%
Upstate	21%	16%	60%	3%

- Paterson’s Approval Rating Stagnates:** Governor David Paterson’s approval rating has changed little since a similar Marist Poll conducted just two weeks ago. 46% of registered voters in New York State think the governor is doing either an excellent or good job in office. That’s comparable to the 44% who felt that way earlier this month. However, his approval rating has slipped considerably since last month. At that time, 54% viewed Paterson as doing an above average job. Looking at the parties, more Democrats than Republicans -- 48% and 42%, respectively -- now see

Paterson's handling of the state as excellent or good. Half of non-enrolled voters agree. Paterson fares worse in the suburbs than in other parts of the state. 38% of voters in this region believe Paterson is doing an above average job. 45% of upstate voters share this position while a majority of New York City voters -- 53% -- approve of Paterson's performance.

Question Wording: Would you rate the job Governor David Paterson is doing in office as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

Registered Voters	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unsure
January 2009	46%	4%	42%	35%	13%	6%
By Party						
Democrats	48%	5%	43%	32%	11%	9%
Republicans	42%	4%	38%	38%	16%	4%
Non-enrolled	50%	2%	48%	34%	14%	2%
By Region						
New York City	53%	2%	51%	25%	14%	8%
Suburbs	38%	2%	36%	42%	12%	8%
Upstate	45%	7%	38%	37%	14%	4%
January 15, 2009	44%	8%	36%	31%	17%	8%
December 2008	54%	9%	45%	29%	6%	11%
November 2008	51%	9%	42%	29%	8%	12%
October 2008	57%	10%	47%	28%	6%	9%
April 2008	35%	4%	31%	25%	8%	32%

- **Bungling the Budget? Voters Divide:** When it comes to how Governor David Paterson is handling New Yorkers' money, 42% of voters say they approve while 41% disapprove. 17% are unsure.

Question Wording: Do you approve or disapprove of Governor Paterson's handling of the New York state budget?

Registered Voters	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
January 2009	42%	41%	17%

- **Paterson Loses Edge Against Hypothetical Opponents in 2010 Gubernatorial Race:** If the 2010 election for governor were held today, Paterson would lose when matched against New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. 47% say they would rather vote for Bloomberg compared with 41% who say they would cast their ballot for the incumbent governor. Bloomberg has consistently been a formidable potential opponent. While Paterson edged out Bloomberg by four percentage points in Marist's November survey, Bloomberg outpaced Paterson by 11 percentage points in

October. Paterson has also lost ground when matched up against former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani. In Marist's previous polls, Paterson repeatedly distanced himself from the Republican. His hypothetical lead in November was 10 percentage points. Currently, Paterson and Giuliani are in a statistical dead heat. Paterson receives 46% of voters' support while Giuliani garners 47%.

Question Wording: If the 2010 election for Governor of New York State were held today, whom would you support if the candidates are:

Registered Voters	Paterson Democrat	Bloomberg Independent	Undecided
January 2009	41%	47%	12%
November 2008	44%	40%	16%
October 2008	39%	50%	11%
April 2008	42%	43%	15%

Registered Voters	Paterson Democrat	Giuliani Republican	Undecided
January 2009	46%	47%	7%
November 2008	51%	41%	8%
October 2008	51%	42%	7%
April 2008	48%	44%	8%

- “Well Done, Mr. President...” 60% of New Yorkers Give President Obama the Seal of Approval:** President Barack Obama assumed the Presidency just one week ago, and 60% of registered voters in New York State think he is doing either an excellent or good job so far. Just 6% believe he is performing poorly. There is a strong partisan divide on this issue. 75% of New York Democrats report President Obama is excelling in the office while just 36% of Republicans agree. Non-enrolled voters lean toward Democrats on this question. 63% of these voters think President Obama is doing an above average job. The President receives kudos from voters across the state. However, more voters in New York City praise Mr. Obama's performance. 70% of voters in the Big Apple say President Obama has done either an excellent or good job during his first week compared with 55% of suburban voters. The President also receives high marks from 55% of upstate voters.

Question Wording: Would you rate the job President Barack Obama is doing in office as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unsure
Registered Voters	60%	28%	32%	16%	6%	18%
By Party						
Democrats	75%	41%	34%	10%	1%	14%
Republicans	36%	13%	23%	27%	13%	24%
Non-enrolled	63%	23%	40%	13%	6%	18%
By Region						
New York City	70%	38%	32%	6%	4%	20%
Suburbs	55%	20%	35%	20%	6%	19%
Upstate	55%	24%	31%	20%	8%	17%

Nature of the Sample: 611 New York State Registered Voters

This survey of 611 registered voters in New York State was conducted on January 26th, 2009. Registered voters were interviewed by telephone in proportion to the voter registration in each county in New York and adjusted for turnout in statewide elections. Results are statistically significant at $\pm 4\%$. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.