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Gov. Paterson's Approval Rating Plunges Lowest Gubernatorial Rating in Marist Poll History

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This Marist Poll reports:

- **Freefall! Governor Paterson's Approval Rating Plummets 20 Percentage Points...Lands at 26%:** New Yorkers are sending a strong message to Governor David Paterson, "Shape Up!" Just 26% of registered voters report the governor is doing either an excellent or good job in office. That's a drop of 20 percentage points since the Marist Poll last asked this question at the end of January. In fact, Governor Paterson's approval rating is the lowest approval rating a New York State governor has received in the Marist Poll's nearly thirty year history of statewide surveys. Has the governor lost favor within his own party? Here's the party breakdown. Among registered Democrats in New York State, 30% think Paterson is doing an above average job while 65% disagree. Across the aisle, Republicans also overwhelmingly disapprove of Paterson's performance. Just 26% of members of New York's GOP approve of the job Paterson is doing as governor while 72% think he is doing a fair or poor job. Only 20% of non-enrolled voters agree that Paterson is doing well in the position. Opinions across the state are consistently low. 24% of upstate voters approve of the job Paterson is doing as governor. 26% of suburban voters say he is doing an above average job, and 30% of New York City voters share this position.

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
March 2009	26%	2%	24%	43%	28%	3%
By Party						
Democrats	30%	3%	27%	41%	24%	5%
Republicans	26%	2%	24%	39%	33%	2%
Non-enrolled	20%	1%	19%	51%	28%	1%
By Region						
New York City	30%	2%	28%	42%	24%	4%
Suburbs	26%	3%	23%	45%	28%	1%
Upstate	24%	2%	22%	42%	30%	4%
January 27, 2009	46%	4%	42%	35%	13%	6%
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%

Lowest Ratings						
Eliot Spitzer March 2008	30%	5%	25%	28%	36%	6%
George Pataki May 2006	30%	3%	27%	47%	20%	3%
Mario Cuomo Sept. 1994	32%	5%	27%	42%	26%	<1%

- Muddied Outlook for Paterson in 2010 Gubernatorial Race...Bested By Giuliani...Leads Lazio in Potential Matchups:** When pitted against hypothetical opponents in next year's bid for governor, David Paterson is far from the frontrunner. In fact, a majority of registered voters in New York State say they would rather vote for former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani if the election were held today. 53% would support the Republican compared with 38% who report they would back Paterson, the Democrat. Paterson continues to lose ground against Giuliani. The two were in a statistical dead heat when Marist last asked this question in January. In November, Paterson maintained a healthy edge against Giuliani -- 51% to 41%. The governor fares better when placed up against former U.S. Representative Rick Lazio. However, a notable proportion of New York voters are undecided when the two are head-to-head. While 47% says they would support the governor, 35% report they would vote for Lazio. An additional 18% are unsure about who would receive their vote.

How does the race shape up if Governor Paterson isn't the Democratic candidate? Here are a couple of scenarios. If Republican Rick Lazio were to campaign against Democratic New York

State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, Cuomo would defeat his Republican opponent hands down. 71% of the state's electorate report they would back Cuomo while just 20% would vote for Lazio. Cuomo doesn't do quite as well against Giuliani, yet he still receives majority support and has a wide lead against the former mayor. 56% of voters report Cuomo would be their candidate of choice in this hypothetical matchup. This compares with 39% who would cast their ballot for Giuliani.

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	David Paterson Democrat	Rudy Giuliani Republican	Undecided
March 2009	38%	53%	9%
January 27, 2009	46%	47%	7%
November 2008	51%	41%	8%
October 2008	51%	42%	7%
April 2008	48%	44%	8%

Registered Voters	David Paterson Democrat	Rick Lazio Republican	Undecided
March 2009	47%	35%	18%

Registered Voters	Andrew Cuomo Democrat	Rick Lazio Republican	Undecided
March 2009	71%	20%	9%

Registered Voters	Andrew Cuomo Democrat	Rudy Giuliani Republican	Undecided
March 2009	56%	39%	5%

- Party's Over for Paterson? Cuomo's Our Man, Say NYS Democrats...More Than Three-Quarters of Republicans Root for Rudy:** If next year's Democratic primary for governor were held today, Governor David Paterson would *not* be his party's nominee. In fact, Attorney General Andrew Cuomo receives more than double the support of New York State Democrats than does Paterson. 62% of Democrats in New York State say they would support Cuomo while just 26% would back Paterson. Across the aisle, there's little question about whom Republicans would want on the ballot. 78% of New York's GOP says Rudy Giuliani is the best man for the job. Just 17% of Republicans think Rick Lazio is the candidate to turn the state around.

Question Wording: If next year’s New York State Democratic/Republican primary for Governor were held today, whom would you support if the candidates are:

Registered Democrats	David Paterson Democrat	Andrew Cuomo Democrat	Undecided
March 2009	26%	62%	12%
Registered Republicans	Rudy Giuliani Republican	Rick Lazio Republican	Undecided
March 2009	78%	17%	5%

- Hard Working and In Touch, But Paterson Fails to Make the Grade As a Leader:** The good news for Governor Paterson: 77% of New Yorkers believe he is working hard as governor, and 62% say Paterson understands the problems of New Yorkers. In addition, half of the electorate thinks he cares about the average New Yorker. The bad news: 44% say Governor Paterson represents all regions of the state, and only 39% think the governor is a good leader. Even fewer voters -- 32% -- believe the governor is changing how things work in Albany for the better.

Question Wording: Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Governor Paterson, he:

Registered Voters	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
March 2009			
Is working hard as governor	77%	19%	4%
Understands the problems facing New York State	62%	35%	3%
Cares about people like you	50%	42%	8%
Represents all regions of the state	44%	49%	7%
Is a good leader for New York State	39%	53%	8%
Is changing the way things work in Albany for the better	32%	57%	11%

- Embattled Over Budget...Majority of Voters Disapprove of Paterson’s Handling of the State’s Budget and Economic Crisis:** Nearly six in ten registered voters in New York State -- 59% -- report they’re dissatisfied with how Governor Paterson is handling the state’s budget while just 30% approve of how the governor is managing the state’s financial affairs. In January, voters divided over Paterson’s budgetary actions. Looking at the state’s economic crisis overall, 56% of voters disapprove of the way Paterson is addressing the problem.

Question Wording: Do you approve or disapprove of how Governor David Paterson is handling the state's budget/economic crisis?

Registered Voters	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
Handling the state's budget			
March 2009	30%	59%	11%
January 27, 2009	42%	41%	17%
Handling the state's economic crisis	33%	56%	11%

- Wrong, Wrong, Wrong! Nearly Two-Thirds of Voters Say NY State is Heading in the Wrong Direction:** Simply put, 65% of the state's electorate is not happy with the trajectory of New York State. That's compared with 27% of voters who say the Empire State is moving along the right path. Large proportions of Republican and non-enrolled voters -- 79% and 70%, respectively -- believe the state needs to be turned around. Although fewer Democrats share this view, a majority -- 53% -- thinks New York is on the wrong track. More upstate New Yorkers -- 71% -- are unhappy with the state's course compared with other regions in New York. 64% of the suburban electorate and 56% of voters in New York City agree. Voters are less optimistic than they were less than five months ago when the Marist Poll last asked this question. In October, 57% of the overall electorate felt New York was moving in the wrong direction.

Question Wording: In general, thinking about the way things are going in New York State, do you feel things are going in the right direction or that things are going in the wrong direction?

Registered voters	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	Unsure
March 2009	27%	65%	8%
By Party			
Democrats	37%	53%	10%
Republicans	17%	79%	4%
Non-enrolled	22%	70%	8%
By Region			
New York City	34%	56%	10%
Suburbs	26%	64%	10%
Upstate	23%	71%	6%
October 2008	35%	57%	8%
April 2008	33%	59%	8%
March 2007	49%	43%	8%
October 2006	35%	56%	9%

- **Schumer Stands Steady...Majority of New Yorkers Approve of Job Performance:** 57% of voters report New York’s senior senator, Charles Schumer, is doing either an excellent or good job in office. Schumer has consistently achieved a favorable approval rating from at least half of the state’s electorate since December 2001.

Question Wording: Would you rate the job Senator Charles Schumer is doing in office as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

Registered Voters	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unsure/ DK
March 2009	57%	17%	40%	25%	13%	5%
October 2008	55%	20%	35%	20%	13%	12%
April 2008	57%	15%	42%	27%	10%	6%
March 2007	57%	20%	37%	23%	9%	11%
October 2006	55%	19%	36%	32%	8%	5%
July 2006	58%	13%	45%	27%	8%	7%
May 2006	56%	15%	41%	27%	8%	9%
January 2006	57%	15%	42%	23%	12%	8%
September 2005	55%	17%	38%	25%	11%	9%
April 2005	58%	15%	43%	24%	8%	10%
October 2004	61%	19%	42%	21%	8%	10%
September 2004	50%	13%	37%	29%	11%	10%
April 2004	54%	13%	41%	27%	8%	11%
January 2004	58%	14%	44%	23%	7%	12%
September 2003	52%	12%	40%	30%	10%	8%
April 2003	52%	10%	42%	27%	8%	13%
December 2002	53%	11%	42%	28%	8%	11%
April 2002	55%	11%	44%	26%	6%	13%
December 2001	54%	12%	42%	24%	7%	15%
April 2001	49%	12%	37%	26%	8%	17%
December 2000	51%	13%	38%	22%	9%	18%
March 2000	39%	9%	30%	27%	7%	27%
September 1999	44%	9%	35%	31%	8%	17%
March 1999	41%	7%	34%	23%	10%	26%

- **Don’t Know Much About Gillibrand:** New York’s newly appointed junior senator Kirsten Gillibrand has been in office for a little over a month, and New Yorkers just don’t know what to make of her. Half of the state’s electorate reports they are unsure about the job Senator Gillibrand is doing in office while 18% think Gillibrand is doing either an excellent or good job. 32% feels she is faring below average. The state’s uncertainty spans party lines and regional divides.

Question Wording: Would you rate the job Senator Kirsten Gillibrand is doing in office as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

Registered Voters	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unsure
March 2009	18%	3%	15%	27%	5%	50%
By Party						
Democrats	15%	2%	13%	28%	4%	53%
Republicans	22%	3%	19%	22%	5%	51%
Non-enrolled	19%	4%	15%	33%	6%	42%
By Region						
New York City	14%	2%	12%	26%	6%	54%
Suburbs	12%	3%	9%	33%	4%	51%
Upstate	23%	3%	20%	25%	4%	48%

- Will Gillibrand Be Elected in Her Own Right? Hypothetical 2010 Matchups:** If the 2010 election for U.S. Senate were held today, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand would lead Long Island Congressman Peter King -- 49% to 28%. She faces more fierce competition, though, from former New York Governor George Pataki where the two are neck-in-neck. Gillibrand receives 45% of voters' support compared with 41% for Pataki. In both scenarios, none of the candidates have gained nor lost ground since Marist's previous survey in January.

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	Kirsten Gillibrand Democrat	Peter King Republican	Undecided
March 2009	49%	28%	23%
January 27, 2009	49%	24%	27%

Registered Voters	Kirsten Gillibrand Democrat	George Pataki Republican	Undecided
March 2009	45%	41%	14%
January 27, 2009	44%	42%	14%

- No Guarantees for Gillibrand in Democratic Primary...Pataki Fares Well Against King in Hypothetical Senate GOP Matchups:** If next year's Democratic primary for U.S. Senate in New York were held today, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand would find a tough adversary in U.S. Representative Carolyn McCarthy. The two are in a statistical dead heat with Gillibrand receiving 36% of New York Democrats' support and McCarthy garnering 33% of the vote. A large proportion of Democrats -- 31% -- are undecided. On the Republican side, members of the GOP

would support former New York Governor George Pataki over Long Island Congressman Peter King in the Republican primary. Pataki bests King 56% to 32%, respectively.

Question Wording: If next year’s Democratic/Republican primary for U.S. Senate in New York were held today, whom would you support if the candidates are:

Registered Democrats	Kirsten Gillibrand Democrat	Carolyn McCarthy Democrat	Undecided
March 2009	36%	33%	31%

Registered Republicans	Peter King Republican	George Pataki Republican	Undecided
March 2009	32%	56%	12%

- State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo’s Approval Rating Spikes to 71%:** New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo’s job approval rating has jumped 21 percentage points since the Marist Poll last asked this question in October. Cuomo’s approval rating had slipped at that time. However, now, 71% of registered voters in New York State say Cuomo is doing either an excellent or good job in office. Less than one-quarter of the state’s electorate -- 23% -- gives Cuomo below average marks.

Question Wording: Would you rate the job New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo is doing in office as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

Registered Voters	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unsure/ DK
March 2009	71%	22%	49%	19%	4%	6%
October 2008	50%	13%	37%	28%	6%	16%
April 2008	59%	13%	46%	25%	9%	7%
July 2007	52%	6%	46%	30%	7%	11%
March 2007	40%	7%	33%	26%	8%	26%

- New York Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli Makes Inroads with State Electorate:** 33% of registered voters in New York State say Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli is doing either an excellent or good job in office. In a Marist Poll conducted in October, 26% of voters approved of DiNapoli’s performance. 48% were unsure how to rate him at that time compared with 31% currently.

Question Wording: Would you rate the job New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli is doing in office as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

Registered Voters	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unsure/ DK
March 2009	33%	4%	29%	30%	6%	31%
October 2008	26%	5%	21%	21%	5%	48%
April 2008	32%	4%	28%	29%	6%	33%
March 2007	18%	2%	16%	20%	3%	59%

- **More Than Two-Thirds of New Yorkers Approve of President Obama’s Job Performance:**

New York voters are giving President Barack Obama high marks for his time on the job. With less than two months in office, 68% of the state’s electorate says President Obama is doing either an excellent or good job in office. That’s up from the 60% who felt that way in January. Currently, only 13% feel Obama is doing a poor job.

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

Registered Voters	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unsure
March 2009	68%	33%	35%	15%	13%	4%
January 27, 2009	60%	28%	32%	16%	6%	18%

Nature of the Sample: 1,045 New York State Registered Voters

This survey of 1,045 registered voters in New York State was conducted on February 25th and February 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 $\pm 3\%$. There are 480 Democrats and 314 Republicans. Results for these subsamples are statistically significant at $\pm 4.5\%$ and $\pm 5.5\%$, respectively. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.