

Sample: 600 voters in New York State  
Interview dates: November 23-25, 2008

---

KC 28212

## TOPLINE RESULTS

### **A Survey of Attitudes Among Voters in New York State**

**November 2008**

---

AA. Did you vote in the national and state elections on November 4<sup>th</sup>, or were you unable to vote this year for any reason?

VOTED	CONTINUE
ALL OTHERS	TERMINATE

---

01. Next, do you feel that things in New York State are basically heading in the right direction, or do you feel things are pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

Right direction	29
Wrong track	53
(Not sure)	17

---

02. How would you rate the job that David Paterson has been doing as Governor – would you say Paterson has been doing an excellent, good, not-so-good or poor job as Governor?

<b>Total positive</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Total negative</b>	<b>19</b>
Excellent	10
Good	62
Not-so-good	14
Poor	5
(Not sure)	9

---

03. Next, would you say the economy in your part of the state is in very good shape, fairly good shape, not-so-good shape or poor shape?

<b>Total very/fairly good</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Total not-so-good/poor</b>	<b>79</b>
Very good shape	1
Fairly good shape	19
Not-so-good shape	43
Poor shape	36
(Not sure)	1

04. Looking ahead to the next year or so, do you feel that economic conditions in your part of the state will probably improve; will stay about the same; or will probably get worse?

Probably improve	23
Stay the same	33
Probably get worse	39
(Not sure)	6

05. Next, do you feel that the budget problems facing New York State this year are a real crisis, are very serious, but not a crisis, are somewhat serious, or are not very serious?

Real crisis	41
Very serious	45
Somewhat serious	13
Not very serious	1
(Not sure)	1

06. Governor Paterson recently said that, as a result of the financial crisis on Wall Street and the weakening economy, New York State faces a budget deficit of roughly \$14 billion over the next year and a half. Do you think the state should try to close this budget gap: (ROTATE) by making major cuts in state spending and not raising taxes OR by making some cuts in state spending and increasing some taxes?

Making major cuts in state spending	55
Making some cuts/increasing taxes	38
(Tax increases alone/no spending cuts)	1
(Not sure)	6

Next, Governor Paterson recently proposed a number of measures aimed at trying to close the state's budget gap. For each one I mention, please tell me whether you think the state should seriously consider taking that step in order to try to close the budget gap OR should definitely not take that step.

(RANDOMIZE)	Seriously consider	Definitely not	(Not sure)
07. Reducing state funding for Medicaid and other health care services by \$1.7 billion over the next year and a half.	29	65	6
08. Cutting state aid to public schools by roughly \$1.4 billion over the next year and a half.	22	75	3
09. Increasing tuition at state colleges and universities by \$900 a year.	48	50	2
10. Reducing state aid to New York City by \$41 million a year.	47	43	11
11. Closing half a dozen juvenile detention centers across the state.	28	60	12
12. Imposing a 5-cent deposit on bottled water, similar to the deposit currently imposed on beer and soda.	84	14	2
13. Requiring retired public employees to pay half the cost of their health insurance benefit, rather than the 10% they currently pay.	39	56	4
14. Requiring all state employees to give up the 3% pay raise they are scheduled to receive next year.	56	39	5
15. Increasing state taxes on health insurance providers.	38	54	9
16. Sharply reducing the amount the state would reimburse hospitals for services provided under the Medicaid program.	32	60	9
<hr/>			
17. Next, some state leaders have proposed increasing personal income tax rates on households making more than \$200,000 a year, as a way to help close the state's budget gap. Do you <u>strongly favor</u> , <u>somewhat favor</u> , <u>somewhat oppose</u> , or <u>strongly oppose</u> this proposal?			
	<b>Total favor</b>	<b>75</b>	
	<b>Total oppose</b>	<b>23</b>	
	Strongly favor	43	
	Somewhat favor	32	
	Somewhat oppose	10	
	Strongly oppose	13	
	(Not sure)	1	

18. What if state leaders passed legislation that would make the tax increase temporary, so it would expire after three years. Would that make you more inclined or less inclined to support the proposed tax increase on households making more than \$200,000 a year, or would it not change your opinion one way or the other?

More inclined	42
Less inclined	7
No change	50
(Not sure)	2

- 
19. What if the proposal were to increase personal income tax rates on households making more than \$250,000 a year – if that were the case, would you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this proposal?

<b>Total favor</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Total oppose</b>	<b>21</b>
Strongly favor	46
Somewhat favor	30
Somewhat oppose	10
Strongly oppose	12
(Not sure)	3

- 
20. And what if the proposal were to increase personal income tax rates on households making more than \$150,000 a year – if that were the case, would you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this proposal?

<b>Total favor</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Total oppose</b>	<b>50</b>
Strongly favor	19
Somewhat favor	29
Somewhat oppose	22
Strongly oppose	28
(Not sure)	2

- 
21. Another proposal that has been made is to tap into the state’s “Rainy Day Fund,” which is budget money that has been set aside for emergencies. Would you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose using money in the state’s Rainy Day Fund to help close the state’s budget gap?

<b>Total favor</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Total oppose</b>	<b>35</b>
Strongly favor	29
Somewhat favor	31
Somewhat oppose	19
Strongly oppose	17
(Not sure)	4

---

22. Next, let me mention two different viewpoints about dealing with the state's budget gap.

Governor Paterson says New York must make painful cuts in state spending in order to balance the budget, and cannot afford to raise taxes. The Governor says the state is facing its worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, and raising taxes now would just drive more businesses and jobs away, making a bad economic situation even worse. Governor Paterson says we have to solve this budget crisis with spending cuts alone.

Other state leaders say there is no realistic way to balance the budget with spending cuts alone, and that we have to consider combining spending cuts with some increases in state taxes. They say there needs to be shared sacrifices by all New Yorkers, and the state should consider increasing personal income tax rates on the wealthiest New Yorkers – those making over \$200,000 a year – in order to balance the budget without making devastating spending cuts.

Which of these two approaches are you more inclined to agree with – balancing the budget: (ROTATE) through spending cuts alone OR through a combination of spending cuts and an increase in taxes on wealthier New Yorkers?

Spending cuts alone	26
Combination of spending cuts/tax increase	71
(Not sure)	3

Next, the two biggest areas of the state budget that may face cutbacks are public education and health care. (ROTATE ORDER OF Q23-24)

23. If it came down to a choice between making major cutbacks in state aid to public schools, or increasing taxes on households making more than \$200,000 a year, which would you be more inclined to favor?

Making major cutbacks in school aid	18
Increasing taxes	78
(Not sure)	4

24. If it came down to a choice between making major cutbacks in state funding for hospitals, nursing homes and home health care services, or increasing taxes on households making more than \$200,000 a year, which would you be more inclined to favor?

Making major cutbacks in state funding	17
Increasing taxes	78
(Not sure)	5

Next, I'm going to mention some specific arguments that have been made in support of an income tax increase on households making more than \$200,000 a year. For each one, please tell me whether you feel that each statement is a very convincing, fairly convincing, only somewhat convincing, or not convincing at all reason to support an income tax increase on wealthier New Yorkers to help close the state's budget gap and avoid severe spending cuts.

	<b>Total <u>cnvng</u></b>	<b>Total not <u>cnvng</u></b>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Only smwt</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>(Not sure)</u>
(RANDOMIZE)							
25. This tax increase would affect less than 5% of all households in the state – only those who make more than \$200,000 a year. Everyone who makes less than that would see no increase in their income tax.	<b>66</b>	<b>32</b>	52	14	15	17	2
26. New Jersey passed a similar increase on its wealthiest taxpayers, and independent economic studies have shown that it did not have any negative effect on the state's economy.	<b>54</b>	<b>41</b>	40	14	21	19	5
27. New York State will have to make some spending cuts no matter what, but increasing taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers will prevent the state from having to make the most severe budget cuts that would have a truly devastating impact on many New Yorkers.	<b>59</b>	<b>39</b>	45	14	22	17	2
28. New York currently taxes people at the same rate whether they make \$20,000 or \$2 million. Setting a slightly higher tax rate for the highest income levels would make New York's tax system more fair and progressive.	<b>68</b>	<b>30</b>	55	13	15	16	2
29. The wealthiest New Yorkers have seen their income tax rates cut in half over the last 30 years; they can afford to pay slightly more now to help get the state out of the economic crisis we are in.	<b>65</b>	<b>33</b>	52	12	16	17	2
30. If it comes down to a choice between slashing extracurricular activities and increasing class sizes in our public schools OR passing an income tax increase on the wealthiest New Yorkers, it makes more sense to pass the income tax increase.	<b>61</b>	<b>36</b>	49	12	18	18	2
31. The state is facing an extraordinary financial crisis, and that means all New Yorkers have to share in the sacrifice. It's not too much to ask the wealthiest New Yorkers to pitch in by paying a slightly higher tax rate.	<b>66</b>	<b>32</b>	50	16	17	14	2

(cont'd)

(RANDOMIZE)	<b>Total cnvng</b>	<b>Total not cnvng</b>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Only smwt</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	(Not sure)
32. At least 15 other states, including California and New Jersey, have a higher tax rate for their wealthiest taxpayers than does New York. This increase would just bring New York more in line with these other states.	<b>62</b>	<b>35</b>	47	15	17	19	2
33. If it comes down to a choice between laying off hospital workers, increasing the wait time in emergency rooms and reducing the number of assistants in nursing homes OR passing an income tax increase on the wealthiest New Yorkers, it makes more sense to pass the income tax increase.	<b>70</b>	<b>28</b>	58	12	15	12	2
34. Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel Prize-winning economist, has determined that spending cuts are more harmful to the economy during a recession than raising the personal income tax on wealthy residents, because spending cuts take money <u>out</u> of the economy, which is the worst thing to do in a recession.	<b>56</b>	<b>41</b>	42	14	21	20	3
35. This increase is modeled on the same proposal that President-elect Obama has made at the national level. It will generate badly-needed revenue and restore fairness to our tax code, but will leave tax rates unchanged for 95% of all New Yorkers.	<b>61</b>	<b>36</b>	43	17	20	16	4
36. Now that you've heard some more information, let me ask you again – if it came down to a choice between <u>making major cutbacks in state funding for hospitals, nursing homes and home health care services</u> , or <u>increasing taxes on households making more than \$200,000 a year</u> , which would you be more inclined to favor?							
			Making major cutbacks in state funding	14			
			Increasing taxes	80			
			(Not sure)	5			
37. Next, which do you think is the more important reason to consider raising the personal income tax on households making more than \$200,000 a year: (ROTATE) <u>because the state needs a major increase in revenue to get through the current budget crisis</u> OR <u>because the income tax system has been too tilted toward the wealthy, and this would make it more fair and progressive?</u>							
			State needs major increase in revenue	32			
			Tax system too tilted toward wealthy/make it more fair	50			
			(Both)	7			
			(Neither/oppose any increase)	6			
			(Not sure)	5			

201. These last few questions are only for tabulation purposes and are strictly confidential. First, in which category does your age fall? (READ LIST OF CATEGORIES)

Under 25	8
25 to 29	4
30 to 34	6
35 to 39	7
40 to 44	10
45 to 49	13
50 to 54	9
55 to 59	9
60 to 64	9
65 and over	24

202. What was the last grade of school you completed?

Grade school or less (1-8)	1
Some high school (9-11)	2
High school grad	22
Vocational/Technical	2
Some college/2-yr college	27
Four-year college grad	28
Post graduate work	19
(Refused)	*

203. Are you married, single, separated, divorced, or widowed?

Married	64
Single	24
Separated	1
Divorced	4
Widowed	6
(Refused)	1

204. Are there any children under the age of 18 living in your household? (IF YES:) Do any of your children currently attend public school?

<b>Total have children</b>	<b>29</b>
Yes, have children/in public school	23
Yes, have children/not in public school	6
No, do not have children	71
(Refused)	*

205. Are you or is anyone in your household a member of a labor union or an employee association?

<b>Total union hh</b>	<b>33</b>
Yes, self	19
Yes, household member	8
Yes, both	7
No	65
(Not sure)	2

206. Next, are you from a Latino or Spanish-speaking background? (IF NO, ASK:) Are you white, black/African-American, Asian, or something else?

Latino	8
White	73
Black/African-American	15
Asian	1
Something else	*
(Refused)	3

207. Next, is your religious background Protestant, Catholic, other Christian, Jewish, or something else?

Protestant	21
Catholic	42
Other Christian	14
Jewish	9
Something else	2
None	5
(Refused)	6

208. And in terms of how you are actually registered to vote in New York, are you currently enrolled as a Democrat, a Republican, a Conservative, an Independent or unenrolled voter, or something else?

Democrat	46
Republican	29
Conservative	2
Independent/unenrolled	20
Something else	1
(Not sure)	2

209. And for tabulation purposes only, can you tell me whether your total household income is less than \$35,000; between \$35,000 and \$75,000; between \$75,000 and \$150,000; between \$150,000 and \$200,000; or is above \$200,000?

Below \$35,000	17
\$35,000-\$75,000	32
\$75,000-\$150,000	27
\$150,000-\$200,000	9
Above \$200,000	3
(Refused)	11

210. GENDER, BY OBSERVATION

Male	47
Female	53

“THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION”