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Romney Gains Ground, But NJ Voters Still Prefer Obama

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Presidential candidate Mitt Romney (Photo credit: Gage Skidmore)

NEW BRUNSWICK – Republican Presidential candidate Mitt Romney gained four points in the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, but he's only viewed favorably by 32 percent of New Jersey voters. Forty-six percent still have an unfavorable view and 23 percent have not yet made up their mind.

Conversely, President Barack Obama's favorability rating has fallen five percent since its high mark in February, but he is still viewed favorably by 55 percent of New Jersey voters according to the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. One-third of voters hold unfavorable views of the president and 12 percent have no opinion.

Obama handily beats Romney in a 2012 election matchup, 56 percent to 33 percent, the margin virtually unchanged the past several months. Romney's single area of strength comes from voters who see strong leadership as a president's most important trait, where he ties Obama. On all other characteristics, Obama leads. The incumbent also leads across the most important issues identified by New Jersey voters – the economy and jobs, health care and education. Romney leads among the far fewer voters who call the federal deficit their most important issue.

"This poll again confirms the conventional wisdom that New Jersey is simply not competitive in the presidential campaign," said Poll Director David Redlawsk, a professor of political science at Rutgers. "While Obama's numbers have slipped slightly, mirroring some national trends, Romney is not yet getting enough traction here to catch up."

Results are from a poll of 1,191 adults with a subsample of 1,065 registered voters conducted statewide among both landline and cell phone households from May 31 to June 4. The registered voter subsample has a margin of error of +/- 2.9 percentage points.