

Editor [Deborah Bell](#) [deborah.bell@patch.com](mailto:deborah.bell@patch.com)



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# Ryan No Help for Romney in NJ

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll finds more than half of likely voters not influenced by choice

By [Patch Staff](#) | [Email the author](#) | 5:20 am



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Adding Wisconsin's [U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan](#) to his ticket has done little so far for [Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney](#) among likely New Jersey voters, according to a new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. While 21 percent say adding Ryan to the ticket makes them more likely to vote for Romney, another 2 percent say it makes them less likely to support the GOP candidate. A large majority, 58 percent, says it makes no difference in their vote decision.

While most New Jerseyans knew relatively little about Ryan before Romney tapped him, only 18 percent say they have no opinion about the vice presidential nominee. Ryan does better than Romney (who is at 49 percent unfavorable) but his favorability rating is also negative, 38 percent favorable to 44 percent unfavorable.

In comparison, Vice President Joe Biden is viewed positively by New Jersey likely voters, although he trails his boss, President Barack Obama. Fifty-four percent are favorable toward Obama and 47 percent have a favorable impression of Biden. Another 40 percent are unfavorable, and 18 percent have no opinion.

"The addition of Paul Ryan to the ticket certainly didn't hurt Romney in New Jersey, but it doesn't seem to have helped him much at this point," said Dav Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University. "As recently reported, Obama holds a 14-point lead even after the Ryan pick, and our question about Ryan confirms he has had little impact so far."

Results are from a poll of 916 registered voters conducted statewide among both landline and cell phone households from Aug 23-25. Within this sample 710 respondents are identified as likely voters and are the focus of this release. The likely voter sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points.

### Ryan favorability reflects GOP gender gap

Like Romney, Ryan, at this point, appears to suffer from the gender gap. Men are slightly more positive than negative, 45 percent to 42 percent, but women are significantly more negative, 32 percent favorable to 45 percent unfavorable. This gap is somewhat smaller than Romney's 19-point deficit among women, mostly because more women do not yet have an opinion about Ryan.

"The numbers show that the gender gap applies to both GOP candidates and reflects that women are much more likely to identify as Democrat than Republican," said Redlawsk.

The GOP ticket is the first in U.S. history without a Protestant; Ryan is a Catholic and Romney, a Mormon. Catholics are 10 points more positive than negative about Ryan, 45 percent favorable to 35 percent unfavorable, while Romney is only six points up, 45 percent to 39 percent. Protestant and evangelical Christian voters are much more mixed: 41 percent of each group is favorable about Ryan while 40 percent feel unfavorable. Both numbers are better than Romney's scores with the same groups.

Ryan may boost the GOP ticket with two age groups: likely voters aged 35 to 49 and those 65 and over. The former is very negative about Romney, 17 percentage points more unfavorable than favorable. But Ryan faces only a five-point deficit among these voters. Older voters are seven points more positive than negative about Ryan. These same voters are evenly split over Romney.

"Ryan's ratings are slightly better than Romney's across the board, and are even better in some key groups," said Redlawsk. "In particular, the GOP tea could benefit if the more positive views of Ryan rub off on the top of ticket. But it's too early to tell if it will make a long term difference."

### The Ryan non-effect

While Ryan's favorability is higher than Romney's, there seems to be limited effect on likely voters' support for the Republicans. Most say the addition of Ryan makes no difference and just as many say they are less likely to vote for Romney now as say they are more likely.

Picking Ryan certainly was not about getting Democratic votes, and few likely Democratic voters (5 percent) respond positively to the choice. However, the choice does help nail down the Republican base, as 41 percent of GOP backers say Ryan increases their support of the ticket. But independents, whom Romney must woo to have any chance in New Jersey, are not impressed. Nearly six-in-10 say Ryan's presence on the ticket has no effect on the vote. Only 21 percent say he makes them more likely to vote GOP and 22 percent say they are less likely.

Ryan's better favorability ratings among Catholics and voters in his own age group (35 to 49) may have some effect with these groups. Catholics, by seven points, and voters 35 to 49 years old, by 11 points, are more likely to vote Republican with Ryan on the ticket. Voters 65 and over are about even split – 19 percent are more likely but 18 percent are less likely to be influenced by Ryan's candidacy.

More than a quarter of likely voters with household incomes over \$100,000 say the Ryan choice increases GOP support; 16 percent say Ryan's selectic decreases their enthusiasm. Lower income voters feel the opposite: about a quarter say the choice makes them less likely to vote GOP.

"In the end, despite some better numbers in select demographic groups, we have to keep in mind that a majority of groups says the Ryan pick has no effect," noted Redlawsk. "Historically, few voters base their choices on the vice-presidential candidate, no matter how high profile."

### Ryan vs. Biden

While Ryan polls somewhat better among likely New Jersey voters than his running mate, Obama outpolls his vice president, 54 percent favorable to 4 percent. At the same time, voters view Biden more positively than Ryan, reflecting the state's Democratic tilt.

Independents are not really fans of either vice presidential candidate, with more negative than positive ratings. Ryan scores 37 percent favorable, 42 percent unfavorable, similar to his overall numbers. Biden, however, fares significantly worse with independents than his overall support: 40 percent favorable to 45 percent unfavorable. Within their respective parties, Biden does better than Ryan, 84 percent to 78 percent.

Biden does best among likely voters under 35, while Ryan is strongest among those 65 and over; 55 percent of young voters feel positively about the incumbent (32 percent feel negatively). Ryan does his best among senior citizens, 46 percent favorable, 39 percent unfavorable.

"At least in terms of favorability, Ryan does more for the GOP ticket than Biden does for the Democrats, despite Ryan's lower ratings," noted Redlawsk. "This is a reflection on how poorly Romney is viewed in the Garden State and how much better voters feel about Obama personally. Still, one of Ryan's jobs may be to sell the Republican plan for Medicare to seniors. If so, he seems to start on a good footing with them, at least here in New Jersey."

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