

Poll: Christie maintains commanding lead

NEW BRUNSWICK –Democratic gubernatorial candidate Barbara Buono has not reduced the large deficit in her attempt to unseat Gov. Chris Christie, according to a new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released Friday.

Christie continues to lead the New Jersey state senator by a wide margin, 59 percent to 27 percent among registered voters, and more than eight in 10 voters expect Christie to win a second term.

Christie's favorability rating remained steady at 64 percent, but Buono continues to struggle: more than half of voters have no opinion of her, while only 22 percent view her favorably, up four points from an April Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. But negative views of Buono have doubled to 24 percent. Even Democrats are uncertain about her; only 33 percent express a favorable impression while most have no opinion on her at all.

Just 20 percent of voters say they are following the election "very closely." Buono does better with this group, facing a 25-point deficit (58 percent to 33 percent, with 9 percent choosing neither), while those following the election less closely favor Christie 59 percent to 26 percent, with 15 percent not supporting either candidate.

"Since cutting Christie's margin by 10 points in April, Buono has made absolutely no additional progress," said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University, in a release.

"While her name recognition has climbed to 46 percent of voters from only 30 percent in April, nearly all of that increase has come from voters who now have an unfavorable impression of her. The onslaught of attack ads by Governor Christie's campaign appears to be having its desired effect."

Despite the apparent effectiveness of Christie's ads in defining Buono negatively, only 13 percent say campaign ads have so far been very negative, although another 39 percent see them as somewhat negative.

Results are from a poll of 888 New Jersey adults conducted statewide among both landline and cell phone households from June 3-9 with a margin of error of +/- 3.3 percentage points. The subsample of 763 registered voters reported here has a margin of error of +/- 3.6 percentage points.