

Pollster: Romney's Israel trip will have little effect on Jewish vote

by [Chris Lisee](#)

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c. 2012 Religion News Service WASHINGTON (RNS) Neither Mitt Romney's trip to Israel Saturday (July 28) nor President Obama's Middle East policies will have much effect on Jewish voters this fall, according to a new report that says Jewish voting patterns are predictable and unchanging.

The report, "Making Sense of the Jewish Vote," predicts Jewish Americans will follow historical precedent and largely vote Democrat this fall. Moreover, Jewish voters will have a negligible effect on the presidential election's outcome, even in swing states, said Jim Gerstein, a pollster with polling firm GBA Strategies who compiled the report.

Still, the Republican Jewish Coalition recently announced a multimillion-dollar advertising campaign targeting Jewish voters in swing states Pennsylvania, Florida and Ohio. "My Buyer's Remorse" features testimonials decrying Obama's posture toward Israel and economic policies.

RJC board member Ari Fleischer, former President George W. Bush's press secretary, also predicted stronger Jewish support can win the election for the GOP.

But Gerstein said Jews aren't likely to switch their political affiliations.

A poll by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life found 65 percent of Jews identify as Democrat, a statistic that has held steady for years. Obama received 74 percent of the Jewish vote in 2008, and is currently polling at around 70 percent.

"The only problem that Obama and Democrats have with Jewish voters is that there are not more of them," Gerstein said.

Still, Pew found that Jewish voters' identification with the GOP has risen from 20 percent in 2008 to 29 percent last year.

It would take even bigger shifts in the Jewish vote to make a difference in swing states, Gerstein said.

As with most Americans, the economy is Jewish voters' greatest concern, not Israel, according to Gerstein, who cited a 2010 poll that found only 7 percent considered Israel a top priority.