

New \$6.5 million GOP campaign targets Jewish voters

by [Steve Strunsky](#)

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c. 2012 Religion News Service EAST BRUNSWICK, N.J. (RNS) Michael Goldstein voted for Barack Obama in 2008 and supports gay marriage and an assault weapons ban. Before moving to New Jersey 11 years ago to raise a family, the Brooklyn native fit right in with other lifelong Democrats in Manhattan's Upper West Side.

But Goldstein now says he has buyer's remorse. And last week the 48-year-old East Brunswick man became the face and voice of a national campaign aimed at converting fellow Jews who voted for Obama four years ago into supporters of Republican Mitt Romney.

In a video on the Republican Jewish Coalition website, rjchq.org, Goldstein talks about his disappointment in Obama's handling of the economy and U.S. relations with Israel.

"I was a big Obama supporter. I really believed in him and believed in what he stood for," Goldstein says in the video. But, he continues, "when he gave the speech about the '67 borders, it was nothing that had come up in his campaign originally. That really changed my mind about him." The "Remorse" campaign is the latest effort by Republicans to win over Jewish voters, who traditionally lean Democratic and supported Obama 78 percent to 21 percent in 2008.

On Monday, the coalition launched what national director Matt Brooks called an unparalleled \$6.5 million ad campaign, titled "My Buyer's Remorse," targeting Jewish voters in battleground states who have changed their minds about Obama. The launch coincides with Romney's visit to Israel.

"It's in the context of the individual who feels that they made a choice and now they feel let down," Brooks said. "It doesn't have anything to do with buying someone's vote" or the presidency.

Democrats blasted the "My Buyer's Remorse" campaign as being orchestrated and paid for by a few influential GOP leaders, and ridiculed the notion that it represented widespread sentiment among Jews who voted for Obama.

"This is not a grass-roots campaign, this is AstroTurf," said Assemblyman John Wisniewski, chairman of the New Jersey state Democratic Party.

In response to the "Buyer's Remorse" campaign, the National Jewish Democratic Council offers a quiz on israelquiz.org. The quiz aims to show Obama's support for Israel compared with Romney and former Republican Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush.

In his video, Goldstein, a community college administrator (he declines to say where) and father of two, cites several reasons why he regrets voting for Obama. He mentions the scarcity of jobs, particularly for recent college graduates, and Obama's 2011 assertion that the 1967 Middle East boundaries should be the starting point for negotiations over a separate Palestinian state.

Goldstein said he was recruited to give his testimonial by a work colleague who is active in Republican Jewish circles. Since going public, Goldstein said the wall of his Facebook page has been smeared with negative comments. Supporters, he said, send him private messages rather than risk the stigma of a wall comment.

"It takes a lot for a liberal Jew to come out and say this," Goldstein said. "There's a lot of people who hate me. But there are lots of other people who say I'm saying what they feel but they can't say." Barbra Siperstein of Edison, N.J., a member of the Democratic National Committee, said she doubted the campaign would sway anyone.

"I think most Jews are a little too intelligent to buy that baloney," said Siperstein. "As far as I'm concerned, it's unkosher baloney."