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More N.J. voters still on the fence about Senate candidate than in elections past

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By Phil Gregory

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The number of undecided voters usually drops as election day gets closer, but that's not happening this year in the big races in New Jersey.

Polls show between 10 and 15 percent of New Jersey voters are undecided on a candidate in the U.S. Senate race, and that hasn't changed much in the past month.

Fairleigh Dickinson PublicMind Poll director Krista Jenkins says it's because of voter perceptions about Democratic incumbent Bob Menendez and Republican challenger Joe Kyrillos

"Given the low identification that they seem to have with Kyrillos and also some degree of unfavorability toward Menendez, it kind of puts voters in this state of some uncertainty not quite sure what to do," Jenkins.

Rutgers Eagleton poll director David Redlawsk says about 5 percent of New Jersey voters have been undecided about a presidential candidate since early in the race.

He says that percentage probably won't drop much lower before election day.

As far as the Senate race, Redlawsk says Kyrillos is somewhat of an unknown quantity.

"Partisanship is pretty powerful and in the voting booth most Republicans will vote for the Republican whether they know much about him or not, but when it comes to polling if people know nothing about an option but they're not committed to the one they do know, they're very likely to just tell us they're undecided," he said.

Monmouth University Polling Institute director Patrick Murray says it is unusual not to see more people deciding on a candidate by now, but he says it probably won't make much difference because the Democrats have commanding leads in New Jersey in the presidential and Senate races.

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