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Poll: McCain finds some favor among New Yorkers

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ALBANY - Democrats Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama are poised to beat Republican presidential rival John McCain in New York State, a new poll shows - but not by much.

The Siena Research Institute survey put the candidates head to head, and found that Clinton would best McCain 49 to 42 percent, while Obama would win by 47 to 40 percent.

"New York, which has been solidly in the blue column for the last five presidential elections, is showing streaks of purple nine months before the election, with McCain only trailing by seven points against either," said poll spokesman Steven Greenberg. "And neither Democrat hits the magic 50 percent mark."

The pollsters also asked 633 registered voters who would do a "better job" on issues. Clinton and Obama got higher marks than McCain on the economy and health care, while he scored better with the wars in Iraq and on terror.

Then residents were asked about the candidates' character. Obama won in the "inspiration" category, McCain won for "decisiveness" and Clinton won in "intelligence." Greenberg said: "While Hillary has a small lead over Obama on issues, she can't compete with him on inspiration and honesty."

To round out the poll, voters were asked about race, gender and age. Fifty-two percent said Obama's race will be a factor for most Americans, compared with 43 percent who disagree. For Clinton's gender, the margin is much closer - 49 percent to 47 percent - and only 32 percent to 65 percent believe McCain's age will be a consideration.

The poll was conducted by telephone Feb. 11-14 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.9 percentage points.

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