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Bloomy nearly tied with Green

Giuliani's support helps him slash double-digit deficit

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After grabbing Mayor Giuliani's coattails, Republican billionaire Michael Bloomberg has nearly pulled even with Democratic rival Mark Green in the race for City Hall, a poll released yesterday found.

The Marist College survey showed Green leading Bloomberg 46% to 42% among likely voters — a statistical tie considering the poll's margin of error. When undecided voters are pushed to choose, Green leads 48% to 45%.

Green had double-digit leads in previous polls, and was above the magic 50% mark. But that was before Giuliani backed Bloomberg last Saturday, and the billionaire made the mayor's blessing a cornerstone of his massive TV and radio ad campaign.

Bloomberg trounces Green 71% to 19% among white Catholics, a foundation of Giuliani's political base. And he's winning the Giuliani strongholds of Queens, 50% to 36%, and Staten Island, 60% to 21%, the poll found.

Among Jewish voters, Green still leads Bloomberg 49% to 40%, but his advantage has shrunk.

In his eight years as mayor, Giuliani's endorsement has never propelled a trailing candidate into the winner's circle.

But Giuliani's popularity is sky-high because of his handling of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, and Bloomberg has tried to use the endorsement to paint himself as the candidate most prepared to pick up where Giuliani leaves off.

"It's gotten very close in the final stages of the campaign, and clearly Bloomberg is benefiting from Giuliani Democrats crossing over to support him," said Marist College poll director Lee Miringoff.

"He's doing very well among white Catholic and Jewish voters. This is where the movement has been," Miringoff said.

The poll uncovered evidence that lingering resentment among Hispanics over Green's hard-fought victory over Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer in the primary runoff may be hurting the Democrat.

Silver lining for Green

Green leads among Hispanics, but only by 48% to 35%, a smaller advantage than what Democrats typically enjoy.

The poll has a silver lining for Green, the city's public advocate: The overwhelming majority of undecided voters are Democrats, the poll found, and if they stick to party loyalty on Tuesday, Green will have the advantage.

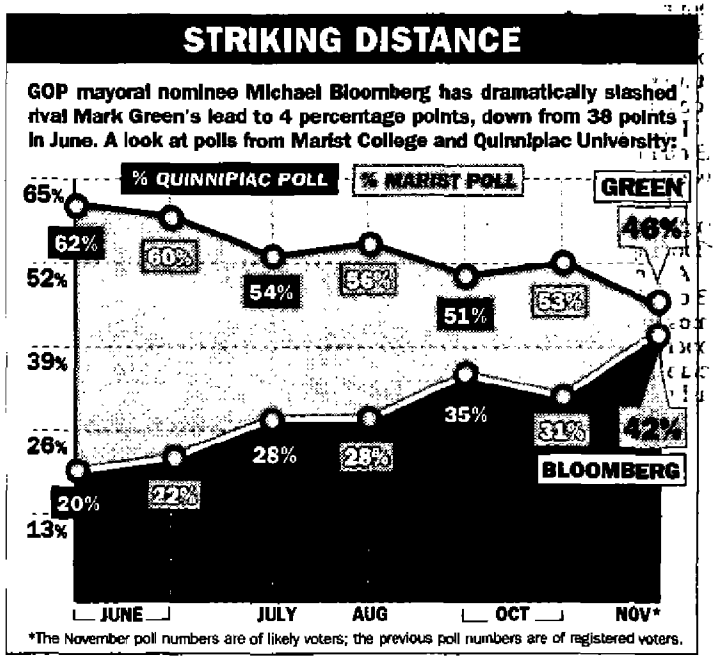
Democrats outnumber Republicans in the city 5 to 1.

Green is comfortably ahead among blacks, 74% to 17%. He leads in Manhattan (57% to 35%), the Bronx (48% to 35%) and Brooklyn (52% to 38%).

The support for Bloomberg is more firmly committed than Green's. The poll found that 75% of Bloomberg's voters strongly support him, while 62% of Green's voters are strongly in the Democrat's camp.

The survey of 435 likely voters was conducted Monday through Wednesday and has a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points.

A Marist poll a month ago found Green leading Bloomberg 53% to 31%.



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