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Driving the Conversation:

How will President Obama's performance in office affect the gubernatorial races in Virginia and New Jersey this fall?

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David Boaz, Executive VP, Cato Institute:

Gubernatorial elections usually turn on state issues and local partisan leanings. But President Obama and his programs dominate political attitudes right now. Between the massive stimulus bill, the soaring deficit, and increasing concerns about the cost and effects of health care "reform," there is a growing reaction against the

administration's expensive big-government agenda. I think that's going to make the 2009 and probably 2010 elections a better environment for Republicans. In New Jersey, state corruption is likely to be the most important issue. But in Virginia, the Obama agenda is probably pushing people back to their natural conservative inclinations. Obama can raise a lot of money for Deeds, but he'd probably be in better shape if he had a Republican White House to criticize.

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