

News Politics Independent

Polls still show favorable path for Booker in U.S. Senate special election race

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October 13, 2013

As the race begins the final stretch, the two candidates for U.S. Senate have had the chance to stand side by side to debate each other in two

forums. With those debates, voters have been able to see where the two candidates stand on the issues more so than at any point during the general election campaign. Whether it is the debates or voters more and more coalescing around a candidate, but the polls are continuing to show a tighter race in the final days between Newark Mayor **Cory Booker** and former Bogota **Steve Lonegan**. Despite the tighter polls, it still looks like Lonegan might not have enough time to close the gap between him and Booker much more to overtake him.

At the beginning of the race and up until the last two weeks, the race looked like a runaway for Booker. However, during the final couple weeks of the race the polls are showing a race between two candidates that once had them separated by 20 to 30 points to one separated by roughly a dozen points.

A recent Fairleigh Dickinson University PublicMind poll showed Booker up 45% to 29% over Lonegan. The poll also shows 47% are following the race either very closely or somewhat closely.

For Krista Jenkins, Director of PublicMind and professor of political science at FDU,

“ The historic nature of the oddly timed Senate election makes it difficult to identify who is likely to turn out among registered voters, but these numbers reinforce the uphill battle that Lonegan has in defeating Booker. The unresolved government shutdown and looming debt ceiling deadline could also impact the Senate race in unpredictable ways. Lonegan has clearly made some inroads since the last time we asked registered voters the same question. In August, 50 percent favored Booker with 22 favoring Lonegan, or a gap favoring Booker that’s been narrowed by twelve points.

One of the possibly troubling elements of the poll was voters struggling being able to name both candidates and state clearly where they stand on the issues especially those that the winner will quickly have to deal with in the U.S. Senate.

Jenkins would add,

“ Voters just don’t know much about these candidates. This is clear from their uncertainty over what they think each candidate believes about domestic surveillance and gun control, as well as the inability of many voters to identify who’s running next week. Party identification is clearly standing in as a proxy for voters rather than familiarity with a candidate’s issue stands.

Another poll from Quinnipiac University paints a similar picture with Booker up 53% to 41% to Lonegan.

As Maurice Carroll, Director of the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute, would describe;

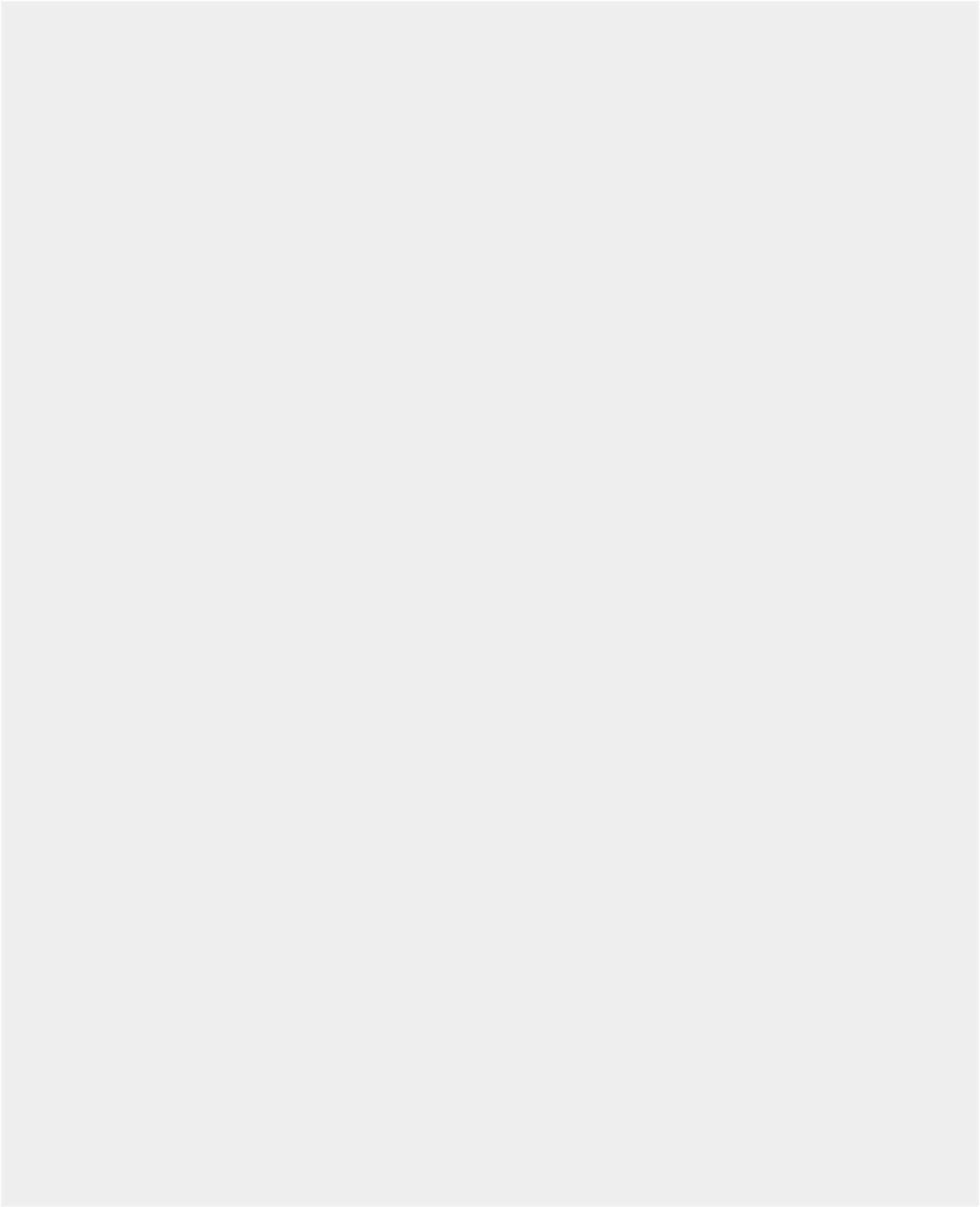
“ It’s still not the predicted blowout, but with a week to go, Newark Mayor Cory Booker hangs on to a nice, if not exactly comfortable, double-digit lead.

A big reason that Booker continues to maintain a firm double digit lead despite most polls showing the gap between the two closing is due to the support of women. This poll in particular shows Booker holding a 62 to 31 lead among women over Lonegan. While Lonegan only has a 51 to 44 edge with men over Booker. Independent voters have probably been one reason for the polls showing a closer race as Lonegan has a 50 to 44 lead over Booker with them.

This poll also looked at the ACA and where their support or opposition sat. 55% of respondents support it and 44% oppose it. Another matter is this poll, the government shutdown, also showed voters agreeing more with Booker’s stance. 77% of respondents believe the government shutdown is wrong. Lonegan has been a very vocal supporter of it. By a 57 to 31 margin, more voters feel that Booker would be good at getting things done in the U.S. Senate. That compares to 39% who think he will do the same as oppose to 42% who think he won’t.

A third poll from the Stockton Polling Institute would reflect much the same from the other two. This poll shows a 50 to 39 lead for Booker over Lonegan.

For Daniel J. Douglas, Director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy,



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