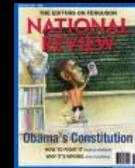




http://www.nationalreview.com/article/384952/dont-give-booker-pass-eliana-johnson

September 8 Issue



Look Inside!

- Subscribe Print
- Subscribe Digital
- Gift: NR Print
- Gift: NR / Digital

Follow @nro

Like 166k

NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE

- Home
- Corner
- Agenda
- Campaign Spot
- Home Front
- Right Field
- Bench Memos
- Media Blog
- Feed
- Planet Gore
- Unnaturally Political

- Audio, Video & Galleries
- Kudlow
- Pryce-Jones
- Phi Beta Cons
- Postmodern Conservative
- Human Exceptionalism
- Tweet Tracker



- John R. Bolton - Destroy the 'Islamic State'**
- Nat Brown - Is Russia Now Invading a New Region of Ukraine?**
- Jonathan Bronitsky - The British Connection**
- Andrew Johnson - Vermont Diner's Bacon Sign Taken Down for Offending Muslims**
- 12 Classic Movies That Got Panned**
- Why Clint Eastwood's "Jersey Boys" is Destined to Crash & ...**

Promoted Links by Taboola

AUGUST 8, 2014 8:11 AM

Don't Give Booker a Pass

Why are Republicans so soft on "Cory"?

By Eliana Johnson

- About Author
- Archive
- Latest
- RSS
- Send
- Follow



(Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

Share 308

Tweet 101

+1 2

Print Text

Sign up for free NRO e-mails today:

Your E-Mail Here

Sign Up

Cory Booker may be the most puzzling man in the Senate. We don't know where he lives. We don't know whom, if anyone, he lives with. And he's been caught in lie after lie about his heroics. Yet, this enigma of a man has emerged as the king of odd-couple bromance, using selfies and Instagram posts to burnish his stardom even as he appears surprisingly vulnerable in

Comments 188



his upcoming bid for reelection.

Eliana Johnson

Take, as an instance of his mysteriousness, his reported affinity for “mani-pedis.” While mayor of Newark, Booker told *Du Jour* magazine that he “found this 24-hour mani-pedi place” where he went “in the middle of the night.”

Advertisement

“It’s this guilty pleasure,” he confessed. “Look, manis are good, but pedis — there’s something . . . transformative.” After reading the interview, I made a trip to the public library in Newark, where I found the phone numbers of all of the nail establishments in the city, at least the ones listed in the phonebook. I called them to ask about their hours, and none of them claimed to be open

all night. In fact, there’s only one salon in all of New York City that’s open 24 hours a day. When I showed the employees there a picture of Booker and asked if he was a customer, they told me they’d never seen him. A spokesman for the senator declined to tell me where he got his nails done.

Many of Booker’s fiercest ideological opponents, however, are riding the Booker juggernaut rather than going in for the kill. Cory Booker can be beaten, at least the polls suggest so. So why are they so eager to cozy up to him, so hesitant to take him on?

Take Rand Paul, with whom Booker appeared last week on PBS, CNN, and MSNBC. They were touting their proposal for reforming the country’s criminal-justice system. Paul was one of the few Republican stars who campaigned energetically against Booker last year, but at a cocktail party hosted by *Politico*’s Mike Allen, they discussed the origins of their “bromance” and joked about co-starring in a reality show. This is the same Rand Paul who has knocked leaders of his own party for being insufficiently conservative, but there he was, arm-in-arm with a man who represents the blue-state liberalism he spends most of his time denouncing.

New Jersey’s junior senator is popular in Washington. His Republican opponent, former Reagan official Jeff Bell, even got a chilly reception from Ted Cruz, according to a source who attended the meeting the two had — the same Ted Cruz who precipitated the confrontation over the government shutdown last year. Cruz, according to the source, grilled the staunchly conservative Bell about why he hasn’t raised more money and asked him, pointedly, “How do you think you can win?” (Cruz’s office describes the conversation as a “fairly standard” one that it has with lots of candidates, and it is true that the latest Federal Election Commission filings show that Booker has nearly \$3.5 million cash on hand while Bell has \$0.) Cruz was spotted breaking bread with Booker in March, and Booker later gushed about their “great intellectual discussion.”

Booker has spent much of his nine months in office charming his colleagues, partly by photographing himself with them. He’s in the midst of a campaign to take

[NRO Polls](#)
[LockerDome](#)
[NRO Polls](#)
1 of 6
1 of 6

3,696[Votespoll](#)[How Do You View The Amount of Golf Played By the President of the United States?](#)

Read more



16.566[Votespoll](#)[How Should The](#)

SUBSCRIBE TO NATIONAL REVIEW



Print Digital iOS Google Android

Newsmax

- [Hundreds of Americans Fighting for ISIS](#)
- [Ben Stein: CNN Has ‘Flipped Out’](#)
- [9-Year-Old Kills Shooting Instructor With Uzi](#)
- [Pew: 34% of Mexicans Would Come to US](#)
- [White House: Obama Impeachment Unfair](#)
- [How Older Men Are Increasing Testosterone](#)

[What's This?](#)

CONNECT WITH NRO



NRO LIVE BLOG FEED



selfifies with each of his fellow senators. In the pictures he's posted to his [Instagram account](#), he's praised Senate majority leader Harry Reid as a "profoundly kind, caring, compassionate, and decent man" and South Dakota Republican John Thune as a "valued colleague and friend who challenges me on issues in constructive ways." You get the idea.

But Booker is less popular in New Jersey than he is in Washington. He is polling below 50 percent in his matchup against Bell, a policy wonk and virtual unknown in the state who has received little support from the national party. Though he was expected to breeze to reelection, a [Quinnipiac poll](#) released on Wednesday has Booker ahead by just ten points, 47 to 37 percent.

It's Booker's second statewide race in a year, and it's the second time polls have shown him unexpectedly vulnerable. "It's been surprising both times," says John Weingart, associate director of Rutgers University's Eagleton Institute of Politics. Last year, Booker was expected to trounce long-shot candidate Steve Lonegan in October's special election, but after national media began for the first time to scrutinize his record, he [stumbled on the campaign trail](#).

The New Jersey Republican party didn't put up much of a fight. "The refusal to expose Cory Booker is frustrating," says a Republican operative who has worked on campaigns both nationally and in New Jersey. "In 2013 the state GOP appeared to be on lockdown, refusing to go after both Cory Booker and Bob Menendez." Even without that sort of institutional opposition, Booker saw a 30-point lead narrow to an 11-point win on Election Day.



From Around the Web

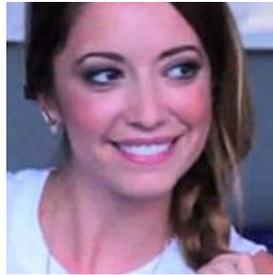
Sponsored Links by Taboola



Top 10 Great Movies that Failed
Movieiseum



There Are 7 Types of English Last Names — Which One Is Yours?
Ancestry.com



Things Girls Say to Test Men
Glamour



10 Trends Men Hate
Answers



15 True Facts That Sound Completely Made Up
Brainjet



Celebrities We Lost Respect For In 2013
MadameNoire



Join the Just-Launched National Review Wine Club Today and Save \$100 on 12 World-Class Wines!



Dutch Euthanasia for Nursing Home Living

Human Exceptionalism



Panel at American Political Science Association Meeting

Bench Memos



How Many Unaccompanied Minors Did HHS Release to Sponsors in Your County?

The Campaign Spot



Today's Policy Agenda, August 26: Study Says Globalization Is Harming U.S. Employment

The Agenda



Obamaton Warren Buffett Financing the Burger King-Tim Hortons Tax Inversion Deal

The Feed



Reveille Rainout

Right Field