

Rutgers professor, students examine Cory Booker's potential vice presidential candidacy



Photo by [Daphne Alva](#) |

Cory Booker, the newly-re-elected New Jersey Senator, is stirring speculation that he may be the running mate for potential Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton for the 2016 election. DAPHNE ALVA / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER / OCTOBER 2014

Thousands have demonstrated their support for #ReadyForHillary and her potential nomination as the Democratic presidential candidate in 2016. But with the conversation circulating around Clinton, many are wondering whom she will pick as her running mate.

It is still too early to jump to any conclusions, said Elizabeth Matto, assistant research professor and director of Youth Political Participation Program at the Eagleton Institute of Politics of Rutgers.

Clinton has not secured the nomination, and the discussion will continue until the Democratic Convention, she said.

"Almost always, there is a good list of potential vice presidents that has been generated well before [the convention], but as far as official announcement, I'm sure it will not take place until it is quite certain that she is going to win the nomination," Matto said.

She said the list of potential candidates is a way to build hype for the convention when news about the vice presidential candidate starts to leak.

But it still does no harm to sit down and examine Booker, the potential candidate who holds great attractions on social media and who actively engages with Rutgers, Matto said.

Booker loves the spotlight, said Patrick Parlej, a School of Art and Sciences senior.

"He takes selfies with major political personnel in Washington," he said. "He has a ridiculously good social media presence. He gets this youthful charisma and brings young blood to Washington."

But David Redlawsk, professor in the Department of Political Science, noted the downside of having a strong social media presence.

Booker could possibly overshadow potential running mate Clinton, which would be detrimental.

“One of the interesting things about VP nominee is that the presidential candidates do not want to make mistakes,” he said.

He said the presidential candidate aims to find a vice president nominee they are comfortable working with, but who will not overshadow them in the media.

Matto stressed the growing impact of the political participation of the millennial generation.

The millennial generation is the most diverse generation in American history, she said, and their qualities may distinguish them as both politicians and voters.

“It is an interesting and intriguing possibility for someone interested in engaging young people in the political process,” she said. “Of course, every candidate now has a Facebook page and Twitter, but the fact that Booker uses it so naturally ... appeals to the millennial generation.”

Matto also emphasized that campaign strategies also determine whether or not Booker can garner support from the growing millennial generation. Currently, he does not have a dependable voting block, she said.

“What matters the most is whether candidates include [the millennial generation] in their campaign,” she said.

For instance, Matto said ethnic diversity is one of the factors that may contribute to Booker’s uniqueness.

“It will make natural sense for young people to have African American or Hispanic origin — something that reflects their generation,” she said.

Another quality of the millennial generation is the desire to get things done rather than be mired in partisanship, Matto said.

Matto said Booker’s former mayoral stint is a notable experience not commonly seen for people on the presidential ticket. His presence on a local level is likely to gain him more support.

“He doesn’t have much foreign policy experience, which Clinton certainly does as Secretary of State,” she said. “...But given there are some local issues that need to be addressed in the United States, such as infrastructure, he could be able to offer something she isn’t able to offer.”

Elijah Reiss, a School of Art and Science sophomore, gave examples of Booker’s local support gained in Newark.

A few years ago, Reiss said, Booker was evacuated from his housing project in Newark because it was being demolished.

“He was right with the lower class in his city,” he said. “He made himself available and was always on the scene.”

While Redlask agreed that Booker’s experience as mayor could be advantageous, he said Booker’s lack of experience on a national level and geographic proximity to New York are cons – and these concerns are crucial to Clinton’s decision, he said.

“What [Booker] wouldn’t bring is geographic diversity,” he said. “[Clinton] is unlikely to pick someone from the Northeast, a region already considered out-of-touch from the rest of the country.”

But others think more experience in the Senate is needed.

“I don’t necessarily think he will be vice presidential candidate for the 2016 election, since he needs to stay in the Senate and get that experience,” said Phil Kehoe, a School of Art and Sciences senior.

Evan Gottesman, a School of Art and Science sophomore, thinks Booker does not seem to be the best running mate for Clinton’s ticket.

He said Booker did a good job as mayor of Newark and would like to see Booker continue to represent New Jersey in the Senate instead of seeing him race to The White House.

“Personally, I think Elizabeth Warren as vice president should run with Clinton to avoid fighting it out at primaries,” Gottesman said. “In that way, they can preserve their campaign money and spend it all towards defeating their Republican candidates.”