

the U.S. Senate Debate at Rowan University in Glassboro Wednesday night brimming with confidence.

Republican candidate Steve Lonegan pointed to the progress heâ€™s making in the polls and what he described as himself â€œclobbering Democratic candidate Cory Booker in the debateâ€ as proof his message is resonating with the voters of New Jersey.

Booker, the Mayor of Newark, pointed to Loneganâ€™s controversial comments calling Newark a â€œblack holeâ€ and referring to bodies floating in the cityâ€™s waters as the former Mayor of Bogota is not in line with the stateâ€™s residents.

â€œOne thing Iâ€™ve learned in the last four years is that people are hungry for politicians who speak clearly and with integrity,â€ Lonegan said. â€œRather than having politicians who agree on everything and pander to each other, people want politicians who speak out with honesty and integrity.â€

Booker agreed Lonegan was speaking honestly.

â€œWeâ€™re happy with what weâ€™re seeing,â€ Booker said. â€œIn most polls, weâ€™ve never fallen under 50 percent, but I donâ€™t think polls vote. People do. I was very happy with how Lonegan presented himself because he told the truth to New Jerseyâ€™s voters.â€

In September, Booker held a 35-point lead over Lonegan in a Rutgers-Eagleton poll, a poll conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute showed Booker held a 26-point lead. Those leads have recently narrowed, down to 12 and 13 points in some polls.

On Wednesday, Lonegan was not only honest, but blunt in some of the imagery he produced during the debate, referring to bodies floating in Newarkâ€™s waters and referring to the city as a â€œblack hole.â€

â€œI couldnâ€™t believe the disrespect he showed when talking about the stateâ€™s biggest cities,â€ Booker said. â€œHeâ€™s talking about large sections of our state, but the truth is, weâ€™re not divided.â€

â€œI have no regrets about my comments,â€ Lonegan said. â€œI believe there were two bodies found in Newarkâ€™s waters in the last year. I was getting my point across.â€

He said he referred to the city as a black hole the same way politicians refer to black holes in budgets.

â€œI will say the crime and the drop out rates in Newark are abysmal though,â€ Lonegan said.

â€œOne-third of the economic growth in the state is in Newark,â€ Booker said during and after the debate. â€œHow much better could we be doing.â€

Booker added the city will announce on Thursday that Whole Foods will be opening a store in the city.

Loneganâ€™s final bit of imagery involved Bookerâ€™s support of abortion â€œup until the day of delivery.â€

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