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More on Immigration

by Michael Sean Winters

NCR Today

Our friend John Gehring, who is the Media Director at Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, is always worth reading and today he has an important post about immigration reform at the Washington Post's "On Faith." As he notes, the bishops intend to go all out on immigration this year.

If the bishops want immigration reform to pass, however, they will need to have the full weight of a strong administration behind the effort. Otherwise, it will turn out just like it did when Bush tried to move on the issue a few years back. Nothing will happen. And, unfortunately, the USCCB is trying to cut Obama off at the knees on health care reform unless the Stupak Amendment is part of the final bill.

I do not point this out to suggest that the bishops should relent in their support for Stupak. I support Stupak. But, I point this out to make the important point that legislating and politics are complicated and too often the bishops speak as if it is simple, as if being pro-life and figuring out what shape a pro-life political agenda should take are the same thing, and an easy thing. I would suggest that if they get something very close to Stupak, they should not go to the mat to prevent health care reform from passing. As I have argued before, the Senate language is preferable to Stupak in some regards and worse in others, but all interpretations of the two approaches require an assessment of what market forces will do. And assessing future market forces is not the stuff of doctrinal certainty.

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