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Boricuas in Florida

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

There is great diversity within diversity and Florida's Hispanic population illustrates that fact: While Anglos tend to lump all those who speak Spanish together as "Latinos" or "Hispanics," there is great diversity within the Latino community and some of that diversity has political consequences. In an article at Politico this morning, Molly Ball explains that much of the growth in the Latino population in the Sunshine state comes not from GOP-leaning Cubans in Miami but from Democratic-tending Puerto Ricans along the I-4 corridor that runs from Tampa to Daytona. She notes that Puerto Ricans are citizens, so the immigration debate does not directly impact them as it would Mexican immigrants or Salvadoranos, but the often racist language that some of the GOP electorate uses to address the issue of immigration speaks powerfully to Boricuas as well.

Florida went heavily for the GOP in 2010 when minority turnout was low, but it will remain a battleground in 2012. Obama took the state in 2008 by a margin of 51% to 48%, so it is hardly in the Democrat's pocket. But, the key swing demographic will be the Puerto Ricans around Orlando, and I am betting that unless the GOP tones down its anti-immigrant, we are going to see Florida in the Democratic column again in 2012.

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