No, Rep. Labrador Is Not the \"Key\"

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

I had archived this article at Politico, which speculated that Idaho freshman Congressman Paul Labrador could be the "key" to GOP efforts on immigration.

Unfortunately, every once in awhile, the headline writers at Politico get a bit carried away. (Remember the one about Abp Dolan boosting Cong. Paul Ryan's budget plan, a boost that did not actually occur.) In this instance, the article notes that Labrador is a Latino and a former immigration attorney, as well as a Tea Party darling. But, the article also notes that he does not support a pathway to citizenship for those fellow Americans - yes, I believe most of the so-called "illegals" are now fellow Americans - who lack proper paperwork to achieve a legal status here. Non-starter.

The fact that Rep. Labrador is Puerto Rican does not really help him either. When we Anglos note that someone is "Latino" we tend not to differentiate between highly diverse groups of people, blurring the distinctions, and throwing everyone from south of the border into a single designation that only makes sense when looked at from north of the border. Sometimes, the generalization is plausible: All Latino cultures have been profoundly shaped by the Catholic Church. But, on immigration, of course, Puerto Ricans are already citizens of the U.S. and so the issue is not personal to them as it is to a Mexican-American or a Guatemalan-American. Ditto for Cubans, who achieve legal status the second they touch American soil.

A less fulsome headline would have been warranted, not least because the article shows just how bad most Republicans are on the issue of immigration.

[2] https://www.ncronline.org/node/160616