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Good News Finally!

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

Politico is reporting a deal to avert Senator Majority Leader Harry Reid's threat to change the Senate rules, limiting the use of the filibuster in Senate consideration of executive branch nominees, known a bit histrionically as the "nuclear option." As a consequence of the deal, Republicans in the Senate will allow votes on key appointees, especially that of Richard Cordray to head the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Some Republicans opposed his nomination not because he is unqualified but because they do not like the idea of this new bureau in the first place. Alas for them, that is why we have elections.

The reason this is good news, though, is that the Senate this year has largely provided reasons for hope that gridlock not be terminal. It was the Senate that came together to avert the fiscal cliff. It was the Senate that passed comprehensive immigration reform. The upper chamber has proven itself capable of acting in the national interest but changing the filibuster rules would likely have caused any further such cooperation to come to a screaming halt.

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