

Tea party Republican Raul Labrador eyed for Interior secretary

By ARI NATTER | Bloomberg News

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WASHINGTON — A tea party congressman who campaigned for Donald Trump in the final weeks of the 2016 election is being considered to replace outgoing Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, according to two people familiar with the situation.

Idaho Republican Rep. Raul Labrador, who will be leaving the House after an unsuccessful gubernatorial run earlier this year, has been talking with senior White House officials about leading the agency since news of Zinke's departure was first reported on Saturday, according to one of the people, who asked for anonymity to discuss nonpublic deliberations.

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Zinke, a former House member from Montana, will leave the Trump administration at the end of the year amid mounting federal investigations into his travel, political activity and potential conflicts of interest. Trump said he would nominate a new chief this week for the agency, which has a budget of \$11 billion with about 70,000 workers and responsibility for overseeing drilling, grazing and other activities on public land. The National Park Service, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and Bureau of Land Management are units of the department.

Labrador, a native of Puerto Rico who co-founded the conservative House Freedom Caucus, has served on the House Natural Resources Committee since coming to Congress in 2011. His record of voting for rollbacks of environmental and public lands protection has drawn complaints from environmental groups, including the League of Conservation Voters, which gave him a 4 percent lifetime score on its National Environmental Scorecard.

Other candidates to be interior secretary include Republicans who could aid Trump in a re-election bid two years from now, such as outgoing Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and Nevada Sen. Dean Heller, who lost his re-election bid in November and has experience in navigating difficult western energy and water issues.

Rob Bishop, a Utah Republican who currently heads the House Natural Resources panel, is also being discussed as a contender for the job. Bishop, who plans to retire from Congress in 2020, “has an interest in the opportunity to pursue the Trump administration’s continued leadership on energy dominance, reorganization of BLM, and access to public lands,” spokeswoman Kristina Baum said by email.

Washington Republican Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, who was considered by Trump to lead the Interior Department in 2016, is not interested in the job, according to a person familiar with the situation.

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The following is an excerpt from Wikipedia. Read the entire article [here](#)

Raúl Labrador



Raúl Rafael Labrador (born December 8, 1967) is an American politician serving as the U.S. Representative for Idaho's 1st congressional district since 2011. He is a member of the Republican Party. Labrador previously represented District 14B in the Idaho House of Representatives from 2006 to 2010. Labrador opted not to seek another term in Congress to run for Governor of Idaho in the 2018 election; he lost the Republican primary to Idaho Lieutenant Governor Brad Little.

Political positions

Domestic Issues

Health care: On April 20, 2017 Labrador said he does not believe healthcare is a human right. Labrador supports the full repeal of the Patient Protection and Affordable

Care Act because he believes it will raise costs and kill jobs. Labrador supports requiring the undocumented to be responsible for their own health care costs.

Economic issues

Elections: Labrador has stated that he supports the repeal of the 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which provides for the direct election of members of the U.S. Senate by the voters in each state. Before the amendment was ratified in 1913 Senators were selected by the legislatures of their respective states. With regard to this position, Labrador has stated "I have a consistent philosophy about government and the importance of states' rights."

Tax reform: Labrador is in favor of tax reform, specifically reform that rids of loopholes, lowers "overall rates," and reduces government spending so the national debt does not increase.

International issues

Energy & oil: Labrador is seen by many in eastern Idaho, which is not in his congressional district, as an opponent of the Idaho National Laboratory (INL).

Immigration: On the July 6, 2014 episode of Meet the Press, Labrador stated that what the Obama administration needed to do was "immediately deport" young illegal immigrants. The comment came as part of a discussion about the estimated 52,000 unaccompanied minors from Central America who had tried to cross the border since October 2013.

Social issues

Abortion: Labrador opposes late termination of pregnancy and believes "life begins at conception" and that "The unborn child is still a child – made in the image of God, who will one day have the same hopes and dreams as the rest of us. The fact that life begins at conception might be an uncomfortable truth for some. But it's a truth, all the same."

Family Rights: Idaho is one of the states that has faith-healing exemption. In a debate, Labrador said he would not change it.

Cannabis: Labrador has a "B" rating from NORML for his voting history regarding cannabis-related causes. Labrador is in favor of veterans having access to medical marijuana if recommended by their Veterans Health Administration doctor and if it is legal for medicinal purposes in their state of residence. He also supports industrial hemp farming.