

HONORING MR. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL ON THE OCCASION OF HIS APPOINTMENT AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FEDERAL WATER POLICY AT THE CALIFORNIA NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY

HON. RAUL RUIZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am honored to recognize Joaquin Esquivel on his appointment to serve as Assistant Secretary for Federal Water Policy at the California Natural Resources Agency.

Mr. Esquivel has served on U.S. Senator BARBARA BOXER'S staff for over 8 years, most recently serving as Legislative Assistant and Director of Information and Technology. During his time with Senator BOXER, Mr. Esquivel has developed policy expertise in a variety of issues critical to California including water policy, agriculture, tribal issues, and the Salton Sea. Among his many contributions to federal water policy, Mr. Esquivel has been instrumental in the creation of comprehensive drought resiliency legislation and helped write the Water in the 21st Century Act (W21).

A native to the Coachella Valley, Mr. Esquivel grew up in La Quinta. His parents both worked for Coachella Valley Unified School District and his grandparents were farmworkers. After graduating from La Quinta High School, Mr. Esquivel went on to earn a bachelor's degree in English at the University of California, Santa Barbara, fulfilling his passion for literature and its ability to reflect and catalyze social change. He then took a chance to pursue his dreams, stepping out of his comfort zone; in 2007 he moved to Washington, D.C., where he first started with Senator BOXER as an intern.

Mr. Esquivel's talent and success are an example of how our local youth can go on to make a difference for their communities. Furthermore, growing up in the Coachella Valley, he understands firsthand the unique struggles that our district faces with the decline of the Salton Sea. He has been a true champion of the Salton Sea, coordinating Senator BOXER'S efforts on this impending issue and shepherding authorizing language that would allow the Army Corps of Engineers to help with its restoration.

Mr. Esquivel's other legislative accomplishments include spearheading ideas and legislation to protect pollinators across California, which are essential to our state's almond production and other agricultural industries. Furthermore, as the Senator's lead staffer on tribal issues, Mr. Esquivel has worked to ensure the more than 100 federally recognized tribes in California have a voice in Congress.

I am proud to recognize Mr. Esquivel's contributions to our nation's water, tribal, and agricultural policies, and I look forward to seeing the vision and leadership he will bring to State of California.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "FEDERAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015"

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I am reintroducing legislation to reform the Federal Protective Service (FPS).

The "Federal Protective Service Improvement and Accountability Act of 2015" seeks to improve FPS' ability to carry out its mission to protect the 1.4 million Federal employees and visitors that access more than 9,500 Federal facilities across the nation.

After the 1995 domestic terrorist attacks on the Alfred P. Murrah Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, there was broad recognition that Federal buildings, which are symbols of our democracy, must be protected against terrorist attacks while remaining accessible to citizens.

In recent years, the increasing number of terrorist plots against diverse U.S. government facilities in Illinois, Washington State, and New York City as well as attacks on government buildings in other western democracies, such as Canada and Norway, has brought into focus the need to strengthen U.S. Federal building security.

Unfortunately, the primary agency responsible for providing such security—the Federal Protective Service—has a range of longstanding administrative challenges that, to my mind, raise questions about its ability to provide adequate Federal building security.

To ensure that FPS makes progress on its fundamental challenges, my legislation calls for immediate attention to address staffing, training, and contractor oversight challenges that the Government Accountability Office has identified as problematic.

It also directs FPS to not only put in place uniform minimum training and certification standards for all guards, regardless of whether they are contract guards or Federal employees, but develop and implement a strategy for using covert testing to improve performance of security screening at FPS-protected facilities.

Importantly, my legislation recognizes that though FPS is responsible for security, the Interagency Security Committee, comprised of Federal agencies that are tenants, has a major role to play in ensuring that risk-based security practices are in use.

Specifically, my bill requires DHS to assess the degree to which the consensus standard for risk management, which was developed by the Interagency Security Committee, has been adopted at non-military Federal facilities.

My legislation also is forward-looking.

It directs DHS to implement a one-year pilot program to research the advantages of converting guard positions at the highest risk FPS-protected facilities from contract guard positions to Federal positions.

Additionally, my legislation requires DHS to take a hard look at whether the fee-based system under which FPS currently operates provides adequate resources to cover the actual costs that FPS incurs.

Since October 2014, when terrorists attacked government sites in Canada, FPS' has been operating at an enhanced level, at the direction of DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson.

The resulting increased tempo FPS' security operations has necessitated the deployment of more law enforcement to higher-sensitivity facilities, increases in the frequency of visitor and vehicle screening, and enhancements to explosive canine detection and patrol operations.

Each time that FPS is directed to heighten security operations, new costs are incurred. FPS has no choice but to absorb those costs, often, I suspect, at the expense of addressing longstanding administrative challenges.

GAO, since 2009, has identified weaknesses in FPS' oversight of contract guards as an issue.

Now is the time, from a security and a taxpayer perspective, to have a long overdue discussion about whether FPS' fee model is designed to not only cover surges in protective activities but also to cover the costs of implementing core oversight and administration reforms that GAO has repeatedly recommended.

That discussion must include looking at whether some combination of appropriations and fees need to be part of the equation.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I urge Members to cosponsor the "Federal Protective Service Improvement and Accountability Act of 2015".

**HONORING THE COAST GUARD'S
225TH ANNIVERSARY**

HON. CANDICE S. MILLER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Coast Guard's storied history of service to our nation. Next week, on August 4th, the Coast Guard will celebrate its 225th anniversary.

On that day in 1790, President George Washington signed an act establishing ten cutters, known as the Revenue Marine Service. These cutters were to be strategically positioned near our ports and used for the collection of tariffs. They were essential to our young Nation's finances, maritime security and trade activities. Over the years, several other services such as the Cutter Service, the Lighthouse Service, and the Life-Saving Service joined together to ultimately become the U.S. Coast Guard.

While the service is vastly different than originally established, the Coast Guard has evolved with the changing threats to our nation. Following the events of September 11, 2001 the Coast Guard proved to be an even greater asset to our nation as their role in security operations significantly expanded through heightened vigilance in ports and increased presence along our coastline.

As one of the five armed forces of the United States and the only military organization within the Department of Homeland Security, the Coast Guard protects our Nation's maritime interests at home and abroad. Their presence along our rivers, in the ports, coastal regions and on the high seas is vital to our national security.

Right now there are Coast Guard men and women aboard buoy tenders and ice breakers keeping shipping lanes open ensuring a steady flow of commerce and transportation. National Security Cutters are conducting drug interdictions in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific keeping drugs off of our streets. Air stations and small boat stations are on call