

Statement of
Senator Susan M. Collins

**Nomination of W. Craig Fugate to be
Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management
Agency and John Morton to be Assistant Secretary
for Immigration and Customs Enforcement**

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
April 22, 2009

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**I join the chairman in welcoming two nominees:
Craig Fugate to head the Federal Emergency Management
Agency and John Morton to lead Immigration and
Customs Enforcement.**

**This Committee's comprehensive investigation into
the flawed response to Hurricane Katrina revealed
fundamental problems with our nation's preparedness
for catastrophic disasters. As a result of our Committee's
work, Congress passed the Post-Katrina Emergency
Management Reform Act in 2006. Our nation's ability to**

prepare for and respond to all disasters has improved dramatically due to this legislation.

Perhaps the most significant of our reforms, however, was the requirement that the FEMA Administrator have substantial emergency management experience. Mr. Fugate brings eight years of experience as the Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management to the office. During those eight years, Mr. Fugate oversaw the response to 11 Presidentially Declared Disasters.

The logical combination of all-hazards prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery underscores the need to keep FEMA within DHS. Detaching FEMA in the vain hope of recapturing mythical halcyon days would weaken its effectiveness, reduce the ability of DHS to carry out its all-hazards planning mandate, cause

needless duplication of effort, and foment confusion among state and local first responders during a disaster.

It is my expectation that Mr. Fugate will see the clear benefit of keeping FEMA within DHS, particularly given the strong views of our nation's first responders in favor of this structure.

Turning to our other nominee, John Morton has been nominated to head Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which is tasked with enforcing our nation's immigration and customs laws. ICE faces huge challenges, not the least of which is the fact that the United States has an estimated 12 million illegal immigrants within its borders. ICE plays a vital role in coordinating interior enforcement to detain and remove those who have violated our immigration laws.

ICE also conducts complex investigations of human, drug, weapons, and cash smuggling networks. This role has recently received significant attention because of the impact of increasingly violent Mexican drug cartels on our southwest border. The agency also combats the use of fraudulent documents and practices to obtain visas and other immigration benefits.

To accomplish its mission, ICE must forge effective partnerships with state and local law enforcement. ICE stands on the front line against numerous threats to our nation. It helps ensure that we continue to let our friends in while keeping our enemies out.

To enhance the nation's border security, Secretary Napolitano recently announced the appointment of a border czar that will focus on the cross-border flow of humans, drugs, weapons, and cash. I will be interested in

hearing from Mr. Morton about how he would anticipate working with the new border czar and what authorities that czar will have over ICE policies and operations.

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