



John Morton to Lead Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Secretary Napolitano Names Esther Olavarria as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy

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President Obama announced today his intention to nominate John Morton to be the Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano named Esther Olavarria as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy.

“John Morton and Esther Olavarria are tremendous additions to our Homeland Security team. Both have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to public service and both will be able and effective partners as we tackle the very complex issues surrounding immigration and securing of our borders,” Secretary Napolitano said.

John Morton is a career official at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) with lengthy experience in immigration enforcement and criminal prosecution. He began his career as a trial attorney in the honors program in 1994 and now serves as Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division.

From September 2007 until last month, he was Acting Chief of the Domestic Security Section and Senior Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, and prior to that, he was Deputy Chief of the Domestic Security Section. In these roles, he was responsible for the prosecution of criminal cases and the development of DOJ policy in the areas of immigration crime, particularly human smuggling and complex passport and visa frauds; human rights offenses, particularly torture, war crimes, genocide, and the use of child soldiers; and international violent crime, particularly violent crime under the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act.

From 1999 to 2006, he was as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Major Crimes and Terrorism Units of the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia. Prior to that, he served for two and a half years as Counsel to the Deputy Attorney General, focusing primarily on immigration matters.

Esther Olavarria brings nearly 20 years of experience on immigration policy to her new job at the Department of Homeland Security. Most recently, she was a Senior Fellow and Director of Immigration Policy at the Center for American Progress, where she was responsible for planning, developing and administering the organization's work on immigration issues, with a principal focus on policy and advocacy strategies on comprehensive immigration reform; planning and convening roundtables and other venues for discussion, and conducting research and write on immigration issues.

Prior to that, for nearly ten years, she was Counsel to Sen. Edward Kennedy and the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Refugees. In that capacity, she served as Senator Kennedy's chief counsel on immigration, border security, refugee and nationality matters, working on myriad immigration proposals, including comprehensive immigration reform.

She has also served as the Managing Attorney of the Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center, Directing Attorney of the American Immigration Lawyers Association Pro Bono Project, and staff attorney at the Haitian Refugee Center, all based in Miami, Florida.

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