



Statement by Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano on the Retirement of Ralph Basham, Commissioner of Customs and Border Protection

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Release Date: February 27, 2009

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
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Ralph Basham will retire today after serving with distinction as Commissioner of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for the past two and a half years, and after agreeing to stay on to lend his expertise through the change of administration. I owe him a debt of gratitude for his dedication, and also for his partnership on border issues during my time as Governor of Arizona.

Ralph's understanding of the security issues facing the nation did not begin with his role at CBP. In his career with the U.S. Secret Service, he rose quickly through the ranks, leading the Vice Presidential Protection Division and ultimately serving as Director from 2003 until 2006. He was also the Director of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Georgia and chief of staff at the Transportation Security Administration. President George W. Bush acknowledged Ralph's exceptional leadership last year by presenting him with the 2008 Distinguished Executive Presidential Rank Award, the highest honor for a public servant.

Jayson Ahern, CBP's deputy commissioner, will draw on his decades of service at CBP and its legacy agency to serve as acting commissioner with Ralph's departure.

I thank Ralph for his exemplary service to the department and the nation, and personally for his partnership even before I joined the department. His assistance and counsel have been invaluable to me, and I wish him every success in his future endeavors.

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This page was last reviewed/modified on February 27, 2009.