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NEWS RELEASE

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INS Announces First Major Structural Changes in Restructuring *Chains of Command Strengthened and Office of Juvenile Affairs Established*

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) announced today the establishment of stronger, more direct chains of command for the U.S. Border Patrol and agency-owned detention facilities, as well as the establishment of the Office of Juvenile Affairs that will report directly to the Commissioner. These changes, effective today, and other new initiatives are the first steps in an ongoing effort designed to fulfill President Bush's pledge to fundamentally reform the agency by creating a clear division between its service and enforcement missions.

INS is also launching a search for a Chief Financial Officer and a Chief Information Officer, and establishing a Field Advisory Board to act as a liaison between the Headquarters Office of Restructuring and field components.

"Recent events underscore the urgent need to restructure INS as quickly and efficiently as possible, and with the appropriate degree of administrative flexibility," said Attorney General John Ashcroft. "The new initiatives I am announcing today underscore the Administration's deep commitment to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of America's immigration system."

The current Border Patrol reporting structure is being replaced by one that gives the Chief of the Border Patrol, who is based at Headquarters, direct responsibility for all aspects of Border Patrol field operations, including line authority over the 21 Sector Chiefs.

"A direct chain of command for the Border Patrol will help enhance national security by enabling the Chief to rapidly deploy personnel and other resources in response to crises arising anywhere in the United States," INS Commissioner James W. Ziglar said, noting how the current structure had to be circumvented following September 11th in order to deploy 318 Border Patrol Agents to airports around the country within 36 hours of the attacks.

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“The Border Patrol is just the beginning. Restructuring will result in better defined chains of command for all agency programs, in both service and enforcement,” Commissioner Ziglar added. “By aligning expertise with the function being managed, we will be able to achieve greater efficiency and greater accountability.”

The chain of command in the Detention and Removals Program is being strengthened by shifting some responsibility for managing agency-operated detention facilities from the field to Headquarters, which will now oversee facility management, the care of detainees and implementation of INS’ detention standards at its service processing centers.

This transfer of control is the first step of a larger plan to shift control of all District detention functions to the Headquarters Detention and Removal Program to help ensure that detention policies and procedures are executed uniformly throughout the INS. Later this month, the El Paso District will serve as the first site covered by the new reporting structure. At that time, all detention and removal functions at El Paso District will begin reporting directly to Headquarters.

To ensure the proper care of juveniles in INS custody, the agency has created an Office of Juvenile Affairs that reports directly to the Commissioner. INS is appointing Steve Farquharson, District Director in Boston, as interim head of the Office of Juvenile Affairs. Steve Farquharson will bring over 25 years of INS experience to the effort of establishing the Office of Juvenile Affairs. The office will have direct line authority over officers in the field and will lead and direct national programs that meet the needs of unaccompanied minors in INS custody.

Additionally, INS is in the early stages of searching for persons to fill two key restructuring positions – a Chief Financial Officer, responsible for ensuring sound fiscal management, and a Chief Information Officer, charged with improving and integrating data systems used in enforcement and service, as well as interagency information sharing.

Finally, an 11-member Field Advisory Board has been established to provide leadership and subject-matter expertise to the Office of Restructuring. Comprised of senior district, sector, and regional managers, the board will also serve as a liaison between Headquarters and the field.

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