



McNerney leads southern border checkup

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a sampling of political writer Josh Richman's blog, The Political Blotter. Read more and post comments at <http://www.ibabuzz.com/politics>.

Jan. 11

Rep. Jerry McNerney, D-Pleasanton, announced he'll lead a two-day congressional delegation trip to the California-Mexico border Sunday and today, seeking "a firsthand perspective from Border Patrol agents about what is working and what isn't in stemming the flow of illegal border crossings and drugs entering our country," the news release says.

McNerney and House colleagues Joe Sestak, D-Pa., and Paul Hodes, D-N.H., will be briefed on aspects of the border-control operation in the San Diego sector, covering 66 miles of the bound-ary with Mexico. Specifically, the three House freshmen will tour several ports of entry, meet with the San Diego sector chief, and eyeball some of the specialty teams and equipment used to monitor and patrol the border.

Says McNerney: "Illegal immigration and drug trafficking are significant problems. This trip to the border is important because you can only understand so much from reading the news-paper, watching television, or even reading briefings or hearing testimony from experts. Sometimes, it's

important to actually go and see it for yourself.

"In particular, I am looking forward to talking to Border Patrol agents and California National Guard troops who serve on the front lines. I'd like to hear what kind of trends they are sensing and if they have found any particularly effective strategies to combat illegal border crossings and drug running."

Out of the frying pan?

Matt David — the campaign strategist who ran Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's rapid-response "war room" in 2006, went to work for Sen. John McCain's presidential campaign at the end of that year and then quit during the great exodus of last July — has returned to the governor's office as deputy chief of staff and communications director.

David, 28, of Tulsa, Okla., spent the last four months of last year as communications director for the newly launched conservative nonprofit advocacy firm Freedom's Watch, decried by some as a "neo-conservative 'slush fund' supporting the views of Vice President Dick Cheney."

Before helping Schwarzenegger get re-elected, he had been the White House's rapid-response director for the U.S. Supreme Court confirmations of Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Anthony Alito Jr. in 2005; he also served as special assistant to the director for policy for the Bureau of Justice Assistance in the U.S. Department of Justice during that year.

Before that, he was deputy director of rapid response for Bush/Cheney 2004. He holds a law degree from the University of Tulsa College of Law and a bachelor's degree from the University of the Ozarks. The new gig pays \$147,900.

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And he arrives just as the governor has unveiled what's likely to be the most contentious state budget of his tenure. Perhaps David will be wishing he was back with the resurgent McCain.

Seriously, though, his return underscores that the governor knows he has a difficult P.R. battle ahead of him, and he's bringing in a proven performer.

Jan. 10: Victims' mom pleads against death penalty

Among those in Sacramento to testify at Thursday's hearing by the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice on the death penalty was Lorrain Taylor, who lost her 22-year-old twin sons, Albade and Obadiah, when they were shot to death while working on Obadiah's stalled car in East Oakland in February 2000.



Albade and Obadiah were opposed to the death penalty, so her stand against the death penalty is not only for herself, she says.

"My children knew that killing was wrong," she says. "I can't imagine what it must feel like to be a mother and have a child on death row.

"If the government really wanted to end the violence, it would take the millions of dollars it is wasting on the death penalty in California and use it for violence prevention for youth, rehabilitation and victim services."

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