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A Very Hot Potato

By Roll Call Staff
Posted November 7, 2007 at 6:35pm



The lobbying firm Cassidy & Associates announced late Wednesday that it has dropped the Embassy of Pakistan as a client, canceling a recently signed contract worth \$1.2 million a year. [IMGCAP(1)]

“Recent developments in Pakistan have made it difficult to effectively fulfill our mission on behalf of the Embassy of Pakistan,” said Cassidy spokesman Tom Alexander. “These dramatic changes have forced us to most respectfully withdraw our representation of the embassy effective today.”

The \$100,000-a-month contract had taken effect on Oct. 1, 2007, according to a copy of the contract on file with the Department of Justice. On Nov. 3, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf declared a state of emergency and suspended the country’s constitution.

A Delicate Vote. The House Natural Resources Committee approved a bill Wednesday that would give the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands a nonvoting Delegate to the House of Representatives.

If the bill, which also would impose U.S. immigration law on the Northern Marianas, is passed into law, it would give CNMI residents their first Delegate since the islands achieved territory status in the 1970s.

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The legislation was passed on what appeared to be a unanimous voice vote. It would turn the CNMI’s Resident Representative — who is elected but has no official status in Congress — into a nonvoting Delegate, joining Congress’ other territorial nonvoting Members from Washington, D.C., American Samoa, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

A Senate version of the bill, sponsored by Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii), is awaiting markup in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. His version does not include a Delegate clause, because the Senate does not have the authority to grant House representation.

Merging Authority. Efforts to merge the Capitol Police and Library of Congress police forces moved forward Wednesday after the House Administration Committee unanimously passed a bill outlining the entire process.

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House Administration Chairman Robert Brady (D-Pa.) introduced the bill, which ensures that all LOC officers will serve on the Capitol Police in some capacity.

The bill that passed Wednesday was much the same as an earlier bill that had been scheduled for a markup three weeks ago; the only change was a provision that prohibited LOC officers from having to undergo the one-year probation usually given to new recruits.

Under the bill, the transfer would have to be complete by Sept. 30, 2009.

— Kate Ackley, Daniel Jackson and Emily Yehle

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