Va. Gov.-elect McDonnell names 3 more to Cabinet

LARRY O'DELL - Associated Press Writer - Associated Press

Gov.-elect Bob McDonnell announced three more Cabinet appointments Wednesday, including a former state legislator who will oversee Virginia's homeland security efforts.

Terrie Suit, who represented Virginia Beach in the House of Delegates for nine years, will serve as assistant to the governor for commonwealth preparedness, which McDonnell said he will retain as a Cabinet-level position.

McDonnell also named Jim Duffey, a former Electronic Data Systems Corp. executive, as secretary of technology. Doug Domenech, the former No. 2 official at the U.S. Department of Interior, will serve as secretary of natural resources.

Suit has worked as a mortgage loan officer and a lobbyist, but Kaine said she established extensive contacts with the military during nine years on the Virginia Military Advisory Council and as the wife of a former Navy SEAL.

"She has great working relationships with military leaders across the state and understands the multiple threats from terrorism and natural disasters that face Virginia," McDonnell said.

He said Suit also benefits from a broad understanding of the "target-rich environment" of her native Hampton Roads, which is home to several military installations, including the world's largest Navy base.

"The military is an area of passion for me and my husband," Suit said at a news conference.

As a delegate, Suit sponsored legislation to provide in-state tuition for military members and dependents.

As the state's technology chief, Duffey will oversee the administration's response to the turmoil surrounding Virginia's giant computer services agency and its private partner, Northrop Grumman Corp. A recent report by the legislature's watchdog agency cited numerous missed deadlines and neglected oversight in the company's 10-year, $2.4 billion contract with the Virginia Information Technology Agency.

"The situation there is unacceptable," McDonnell said, adding that fixing the problems would be "an absolute top priority" for Duffey.

The new secretary said he needed time to study the issue before saying exactly how he will approach it.

Duffey "managed billion dollar budgets and thousands of employees" during more than two decades with EDS, McDonnell said. He later worked for Dell Inc. and then opened his own consulting firm. Duffey also has served as vice chairman of the Northern Virginia Technology Council.

Domenech is senior vice president of a Washington-based lobbying firm and a principal in a green energy consulting company. He spent most of the last decade at the Department of the Interior, including five years as the secretary's deputy chief of staff. He previously worked for the Forest Resources Association and as executive director of both the National Center for Home Education and the Madison Project, a conservative Republican political action committee.

Domenech said he welcomes the opportunity to oversee Virginia's natural resources.

"It's a challenging area, but one that I love because I feel it is so important," he said.

The appointments leave just two Cabinet positions to be filled: the secretaries of education and health.

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