



Clinton proposes more bureaucracy to fix immigration bureaucracy

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April 14, 2016 12:18 pm | *AEIdeas*

Former US Senator and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that if elected president, she “will create a new [national Office of Immigrant Affairs](http://www.politico.com/blogs/2016-dem-primary-live-updates-and-results/2016/04/hillary-clinton-immigrants-affairs-221873) (<http://www.politico.com/blogs/2016-dem-primary-live-updates-and-results/2016/04/hillary-clinton-immigrants-affairs-221873>) to proactively coordinate policies and programs with federal agencies, as well as state and local governments.”

Secretary Clinton is right to look at the mess that is the federal immigration bureaucracy. Her solution, however, doesn’t solve the problem she identifies. It only adds another fiefdom to the fray.

Presumably, Secretary Clinton won’t put the Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) in a cabinet department or agency, but will have it become part of the White House along side the National Security Council and the Council of Economic Advisers.



(http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/RTX29IU6_hillaryclinton-e1460650550430.jpg)

Hillary Clinton in Holbrook, New York April 11, 2016.
REUTERS/Lucas Jackson.

If OIA is to do its job properly, it will have to become a fairly large entity. After all, there are already [nineteen immigration-related entities](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/source_images/Source-Spotlight-Dec2005.pdf) (http://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/source_images/Source-Spotlight-Dec2005.pdf) in the federal government with tens of thousands of employees and hundreds of billions of dollars in appropriations.

In addition, [each state has immigration policies](http://www.ncsl.org/research/immigration/state-laws-related-to-immigration-and-immigrants.aspx) (<http://www.ncsl.org/research/immigration/state-laws-related-to-immigration-and-immigrants.aspx>) not preempted by the federal government, and [hundreds of cities and counties dabble in immigration issues](http://cis.org/Sanctuary-Cities-Map) (<http://cis.org/Sanctuary-Cities-Map>) (e.g., sanctuary cities).

Perhaps a better idea than creating yet another bureaucracy in Washington that tries to tame the existing bureaucracies across America, is to streamline the federal government's immigration leviathan into a more manageable group of entities.

Immigration is a complex challenge... Adding another office into the mix won't help the situation.

For example, [merge USCIS and US-VISIT into the Bureau of Consular Affairs at DoS and move CBP and ICE into DoJ](https://www.aei.org/publication/why-we-should-eliminate-the-department-of-homeland-security/) (<https://www.aei.org/publication/why-we-should-eliminate-the-department-of-homeland-security/>) where those entities' law enforcement operations are a better fit. Those two moves would get DHS out of the immigration business and provide opportunities for efficiency gains, as immigration enforcement is under the same roof as immigration legal activities.

Similarly, just because an entity is involved in health or education issues doesn't mean it needs to be at HHS or DoEd. All six of the immigration-related programs at HHS and DoEd could be moved into the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at DoS, as all seven entities deal with the same populations of immigrants. That move gets HHS and DoEd out of the immigration business, leaving just DoS and DoJ to oversee virtually all federal immigration activities (with DoL very tangentially involved due to labor laws). Part of this consolidation effort would involve looking at additional ways to eliminate duplication and waste.

Immigration is a complex challenge at both federal and local levels. Adding another office into the mix won't help the situation. The federal immigration bureaucracy needs to be streamlined to cope with a national challenge that, as this election cycle shows, is at the forefront of many Americans' minds.

Learn more: [America's federal immigration system fails but one state succeeds](http://www.aei.org/publication/americas-federal-immigration-system-fails-but-one-state-succeeds/) (<http://www.aei.org/publication/americas-federal-immigration-system-fails-but-one-state-succeeds/>) | [Our dangerous reality](http://www.aei.org/publication/our-dangerous-reality/) (<http://www.aei.org/publication/our-dangerous-reality/>) | [Federal immigration failures undermine our safety](http://www.aei.org/publication/federal-immigration-failures-undermine-our-safety/) (<http://www.aei.org/publication/federal-immigration-failures-undermine-our-safety/>)

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