

Immigration Services has Work to do in Changing "Get to Yes" Culture

Written by Grassley Press

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Monday, January 9, 2012

Senator Chuck Grassley today said that a report he requested from the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General's office confirmed the accounts he heard from whistleblowers about the undue pressure placed on Immigration Service Officers to approve immigration benefits. The report was released today, and a copy of the report can be [found here](#).

Today's statement below is followed by a comment Grassley released on Friday in response to a draft copy of the report. Grassley's request to the Inspector General, as well as letters to Citizenship and Immigration Services Director Alejandro Mayorkas and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano can be [found here](#).

"The report clearly shows that the immigration service has a lot of work to do to get rid of the 'Get to yes' culture that has pervaded the agency in recent years. The fact that a quarter of the immigration service officers felt pressure to approve questionable applications, and 90 percent of respondents felt they didn't have sufficient time to complete interviews of those who seek benefits, certainly warrants significant changes be made immediately.

"What's most disappointing in this final report is the agency's decision to turn a blind eye to several very good recommendations from the Inspector General. For example, it only makes

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sense that policies be established to make sure there is a legitimate and fair process when a manager intervenes in a benefits case. Director Mayorkas should reconsider the department's initial response to some of the recommendations and create an environment that ensures a thorough and complete analysis of all applications."

Here's Grassley's statement from Friday.

"Whistleblowers have been complaining for several years that leadership in Washington, D.C. and immediate supervisors were placing inappropriate pressure on immigration adjudicators to simply find a way to approve benefits. This 'Get to yes' attitude doesn't serve the American people who expect a thorough and complete analysis. When a quarter of the immigration service officers felt pressure to approve questionable applications, and 90 percent of respondents felt they didn't have sufficient time to complete interviews of those who seek benefits, there are serious and widespread problems that need to be addressed by the department. This comes down to the safety and security of the American people, which should not be compromised by any means.

"The Inspector General took to heart the concerns he heard from Immigration Service Officers, and he made some serious and thoughtful recommendations. I'm particularly interested in the implementation of recommendations by the Inspector General to develop standards to permit more time for an adjudicator's review of case files, develop a policy to establish limitations for managers and attorneys when they intervene in the adjudication of specific cases, and issue policy that ends any informal appeals process and the special review of denied cases. These get at the heart of the whistleblowers' allegations, and would go a long way to changing the 'Get to yes' culture that prevails at the agency."