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Clinton offers more of what ails us

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We find it troubling that presidential candidate Hillary Clinton proposes new “SWAT teams” of government experts to address problems with schools, veterans care and businesses. The acronym derives from Special Weapons and Tactics units. According to the website of the Los Angeles Police Department, the teams first were formed “in the late 1960s as a result of several sniping incidents against civilians and police officers around the country,” including the 1965 Watts riots.

Unfortunately, SWAT teams have proliferated even to small police departments and commonly are used for arresting people on minor offenses, such as drug possession or gambling. Cato Institute scholar Radley Balko provided numerous disturbing incidents in his recent book, “Overkill: The Rise of Paramilitary Police Raids in America.”

Trying to get an edge on opponent Bernie Sanders in their debate last month in Detroit, Mrs. Clinton proposed, “I want to set up inside the Department of Education, for want of a better term, kind of an education SWAT team, if you will.” The team would swoop into underperforming schools and supposedly fix them.

The proposal doesn’t take into account that a major contributor to public education’s problems is the vast increase in federal meddling in education since the late 1950s, precluding local control. Moreover, as we are seeing in California with the increase in charter schools and use of the “parent trigger” law, which enables parents to replace the administration at their children’s school, the solution to underperforming schools is competition or new management under parents, not more bureaucrats from distant Washington, D.C.

Discussing last October the problems in the Veterans Administration, Mrs. Clinton noted, “I have said I would like to literally appoint a SWAT team to bring in people and just tackle the disability” of a veteran forced to wait for treatment. And, in December, she said companies that close should bring “a kind of SWAT team response, to be able to help communities invest in something new.”

In such instances, what’s needed is not new, heavy-handed government involvement, but private alternatives to the VA for veterans and lower taxes and regulations for businesses.