



**REFINERY29**

## **Trump Cares More About Demonising Undocumented Immigrants Than Helping Women**

Lauren Holter

April 28, 2017

Trump centred his entire campaign on vilifying immigrants, and his administration undoubtedly proved it cares more about an anti-immigrant agenda than protecting women in its first 100 days.

Case in point: The Department of Homeland Security announced a new office formed under Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to help victims of violent crimes committed by undocumented immigrants. The Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement (VOICE) will "support victims of crimes committed by criminal aliens through access to information and resources," according to its website, and will operate a hotline to answer victims' questions (which was immediately spammed with calls about UFOs).

ICE already offered most of the services VOICE will provide in some capacity, though a service to help victims and victims' families track alleged criminals' movement through the justice system is new.

"All crime is terrible, but these victims are unique — and too often ignored," Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly said Wednesday while announcing the creation of VOICE. "They are casualties of crimes that should never have taken place, because the people who victimised them oftentimes should not have been in the country in the first place." One could argue that all crimes "should never have taken place," but we'll let that go for now.

It's a major problem that the Trump administration has devoted more time and resources to painting undocumented immigrants as dangerous villains than helping women — in America and abroad.

While the Department of Homeland Security was forming an office devoted solely to crimes committed by undocumented immigrants, the president's proposed budget would totally eliminate the Office of Global Women's Issues (GWI) by cutting 100% of its funding. The GWI works to "promote the rights and empowerment of women and girls through U.S.

foreign policy," as its website states, and was created by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The same budget proposal shows Trump also wants to cut USAID's funding by about a third, giving less money to developing countries for maternal and child health care, as well as other health services.

But wait, there's more — the State Department totally cut off U.S. grants to the United Nations Population Fund, which provides reproductive healthcare to women around the globe.

The president of the United States doesn't want to pay for women's health in other countries. Of course, this is framed as furthering his "America first" mindset, but he hasn't actually done anything to help American women, either.

To understand how unnecessary VOICE is (beyond the fact that most of its services were already offered), you only have to look at immigrant crime statistics. According to analysis by a pro-immigrants rights organisation called the American Immigration Council, 1.6% of adult immigrant men below the age of 40 are behind bars, compared to 3.3% of native-born men of the same age. Similarly a 2017 study by the CATO Institute, a libertarian free-market think tank, looked at the same age group of people and found 1.53% of U.S. natives are incarcerated, compared to 0.85% of undocumented immigrants and 0.47% of documented immigrants (the slightly lower numbers can mostly be attributed to the fact that women are incarcerated at much lower rates than men).

On the other hand, one in five U.S. women will be raped in their lifetime, and one in three women will experience some form of physical violence from a partner, according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

However, Trump has done nothing to help domestic abuse or rape survivors. Actually, he signed a law allowing states to withhold federal funds from clinics that offer abortions (which could make it more difficult for rape survivors to end unwanted pregnancies) and his healthcare plan would leave millions uninsured (making it harder for abuse survivors to get medical care).

It's clear the new immigrant crime office was intended to further Trump's narrative that undocumented immigrants are dangerous to society while ignoring the facts about immigrant crime. As much as the president complains about "fake news" from the liberal media, he has no problem touting misleading information about immigrants (or Obamacare, or jobs, or the Inauguration Day crowd).

The current administration would rather convince people immigrants are the root of America's problems than solve real issues women face every day.