

## **Immigration overreaction**

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### **Body**

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When Washington doesn't deal with the nation's problems, local officials tend to take things into their own hands. That's the case with **immigration**. With legislation stalled in Congress, a Philadelphia restaurant owner has posted threatening "English only" signs on his storefront to chase away immigrants. In Butler County, Ohio, the sheriff has made it his mission to scare off illegal immigrants with intimidating road signs. Now that sort of frustration has spread to Avon Park in Florida, where officials are considering an approach that is just as heavy-handed and short-sighted.

The Illegal **Immigration** Relief Act Ordinance, awaiting final approval by the City Council on July 10, would create a \$1,000 fine for anyone who rents property to illegal immigrants or knowingly hires them. It also would declare English as the city's official language, meaning city business would be solely conducted and written in English - no ifs, ands or peros. Oops, buts.

These aren't solutions. They are emotional reactions to Washington's failure to effectively deal with **immigration**. Avon Park's proposals already have begun inflaming emotions. If enacted into law they will encourage racial profiling and discrimination. They might move the problem, but they won't come close to solving it.

The frustrations of local politicians and business people about illegal **immigration** are understandable. But the approaches by Avon Park and many other local governments do more harm than good to their own communities. **Immigration** issues cannot be solved city by city. They require a thoughtful, national approach. If only Congress were up to the challenge.

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