

Chief Executive Officer Proposal

The FY 2014 Budget includes a legislative proposal to establish a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for U.S. international broadcasting. Establishing a CEO is a key objective of the BBG and the Administration. The proposal will improve the management and efficiency of BBG operations.

The BBG's governing board has repeatedly voiced support for creation of a CEO, an element in their five-year strategic plan, and has previously submitted language to the Congress for such a position. The Department of State's Office of the Inspector General underscored the importance of such an action.

The BBG 2012-2016 strategic plan lists several needed structural reforms, including having a hands-on CEO, and notes that "today's economic realities argue for correcting our organizational inefficiencies."

The plan goes on to note that "the current structure complicates managing resources for highest impact as well as the integration and projection of core talents and capabilities. It obstructs efforts to transform the agency's assets into an integrated network that can take advantage of the wide-ranging, highly professional newsgathering activities done by each BBG entity."

In a January 2012 vote to move forward with a number of structural reforms, the BBG board set forth its views on the CEO concept this way: "The position of Chief Executive Officer of United States International Broadcasting (the "CEO"), reporting to the Board of Governors, shall be created. The CEO will be empowered to provide day-to-day executive leadership for United States international broadcasting and should have management authority over the federal and non-federal elements of United States international broadcasting, subject to Board oversight."

The Office of the Inspector General wrote in January 2013 that "the concept of a CEO with clearly delineated authorities and responsibilities, complemented by a part-time, Presidentially appointed board of directors focused on strategic issues, has worked well with entities like the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. A CEO would allow the Board to put the necessary focus on these strategic concerns and keep out of day-to-day management."

This Budget establishes the position of a CEO who will be chosen by and report to the Board. The CEO will be empowered to provide day-to-day executive leadership for U.S. international broadcasting and will have management authority over the federal and non-federal elements of U.S. international broadcasting. The Board will retain the critical role of setting the strategic direction of U.S. international broadcasting, as well as evaluating its journalistic quality and maintaining its journalistic integrity.

The CEO will implement the strategies developed by the Board. This move will allow the Agency to respond more nimbly to management challenges identified by the BBG, the OIG, the GAO, the White House, and the Department of State.

The proposed legislation:

- Changes the Board's quorum requirement from five (5) Governors to a majority of currently-serving Governors.
- Retains the Board's statutory role of setting strategic direction, evaluating the agency's journalistic quality, and maintaining the journalistic integrity of US international broadcasting.

- Assigns day-to-day operational authorities of US international broadcasting to the CEO, including carrying out strategic direction, managing grant agreements, and supervising and allocating funds appropriated for all broadcasting activities.
- Requires the Board to select a CEO within 180 days of enactment of the law. Stipulates that the CEO is to be appointed to a 5-year renewable term and can be removed by a 2/3 majority vote of the Board.
- Requires the CEO to submit proposed budgets to the Board.
- Abolishes the position of IBB Director and transfers the functions and authorities of the IBB Director to the CEO.
- Gives the CEO express authority over VOA and OCB and clarifies that both entities report to the Board through the CEO.
- Establishes that leadership of the grantees will communicate and report to the Board through the CEO.
- Gives the CEO, as a condition of any grant, the authority to “redirect funds within the scope of the grant as needed in order to maintain consistency with Board-approved agency priorities world-wide.

action taken by the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which may include suspension or termination of the grant until remedied.

(d) CONGRESSIONAL LOBBYING.-No grant funds provided by the Broadcasting Board of Governors may be used for any activity for the purpose of influencing the passage or defeat of legislation being considered by Congress.