



PRESS RELEASE

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Regulatory Accountability Act is Another Attempt to Weaken Vital Public Safeguards

Bill Would Tilt Regulatory Process to Give Big Business Greater Influence

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congressional proponents of Big Business continued their attack on public safeguards today with the introduction of the “Regulatory Accountability Act of 2011.” The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards (CSS) urges Congress to reject this latest attempt to favor corporate interests over public health and safety.

This bill, sponsored by Sens. Mark Pryor (D-Ark), Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Reps. Lamar Smith (R-Texas) and Collin Peterson (D-Minn), is a radical measure that would severely weaken laws that protect our health, safety and the environment. It not only would change procedural and evidentiary requirements, but also would add more delays and set an even higher bar than currently exists for issuing needed protections.

Ultimately, the bill would tie up agencies, sapping their limited resources in defending public health, safety and environmental regulations in court, breeding the very uncertainty the legislation claims to address. By adding to the already complex rulemaking process, and placing the cost of complying with regulations above their ability to protect the public, this legislation would tilt the rulemaking process to give corporations greater influence, making protecting the public secondary to the cost of regulations and impacts on Big Business.

“This proposal represents an effort to sink rules – even rules that business wants passed – into a quagmire, while gutting important health and safety standards that would implement established law,” said CSS Co-Chair and OMB Watch President and CEO

Katherine McFate. “This will reduce the incentive for American businesses to make upgrades that would create jobs, and it will undermine the quality of life in communities across the country. This is *not* a bill to help small business. A recent poll of more than 1,200 small business owners found that only 13 percent reported regulations were the biggest problem their business faced; 87 percent reported that improving innovation and energy efficiency are good ways to increase prosperity for small businesses.”

Robert Weissman, CSS co-chair and president of Public Citizen added, “This proposed legislation is couched as affecting process, but let no one be fooled: The bill aims to empower large corporations to sabotage the rules that protect regular Americans. The bill should properly be called ‘The Big Business Unaccountability Act.’”

The bill’s sponsors claim it is “issue neutral,” but the only supporters of the legislation have been major business and trade groups, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

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The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards is an alliance of consumer, labor, scientific, research, good government, faith, community, health, environmental, and public interest groups, as well as concerned individuals, joined in the belief that our country’s system of regulatory safeguards provides a stable framework that secures our quality of life and paves the way for a sound economy that benefits us all. For a list of member organizations and other information about the coalition, see http://www.sensiblesafeguards.org/about_us.