



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 21, 2013

Contact: Angela Bradbery, abradbery@citizen.org, (202) 588-7741; or Brian Gumm, bgumm@effectivegov.org, (202) 683-4812

Budget Amendments Would Threaten Public Protections; Coalition Urges Lawmakers to Oppose Attack on Regulations

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A tsunami of new amendments to be considered during the Budget Resolution of 2013 vote would threaten public protections and safeguards by altering the regulatory process to make it more difficult to pass regulations that protect Americans from harm, the Coalition for Sensible Safeguards (CSS) said today. The coalition called on lawmakers to vote “No” on such measures.

The amendments CSS members oppose include proposals to require new [cost-benefit analyses](#), seek a moratorium on regulations until unemployment falls below a certain point, bring independent agencies under review by the Office of Management and Budget, and change the regulatory process in a way that inappropriately injects political considerations in passing new rules that are supposed to be based on objective agency science and expertise.

The coalition maintains that the measures would undermine effective standards and safeguards that provide health, safety and financial security for American families and are key to a strong economy. The amendments represent a radical threat to the government’s ability to protect the public from harm and would delay or shut down the implementation of critical new public health and safety protections, thereby making industry even less accountable to the public. They would benefit only those corporations that wish to game the system and evade safety standards while doing nothing to protect the American public.

“Giant corporations are hoping to sneak provisions into the rushed Senate budget bill to undermine the core regulatory protections on which Americans rely to make our country stronger, better, safer, cleaner, healthier and more fair and just,” said Robert Weissman, president of Public Citizen and CSS co-chair. “Their congressional allies are proposing amendments to the budget bill that would block enforcement of existing rules and impede agencies from issuing new ones. The American people aren’t so easily tricked, and they demand Senators vote down these corporate-gift amendments.”

Amendment 145 calls for executive department and independent regulatory agencies, such as the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), to conduct cost-benefit analyses for significant rules.

“This type of proposal was made during the 112th Congress in S.3468, the Independent Agency Regulatory Analysis Act, which would have hamstrung the regulatory process by saddling independent agencies with additional cost-benefit requirements,” said CSS member Rachel Weintraub, legislative director and senior counsel at Consumer Federation of America . “Just like S. 3468, this amendment would severely undermine the ability of independent agencies to respond efficiently to crises as they occur. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is already required to conduct extensive cost benefit analysis and these existing requirements have prevented them from protecting consumers in the past,” stated Weintraub. “Consumers would lose if this amendment passed.”

Amendment 174 calls for federal agencies to consider the “full cost of regulations, including indirect job losses and the negative health impacts of indirect job losses, prior to enacting or amending any regulation or rule.” However, the present process already requires cost-benefit analysis, and virtually every rule has benefits that are significantly higher than the costs. According to the coalition, [cost-benefit analysis is a deeply flawed process](#) that overstates costs and tends to understate benefits, particularly if those benefits can’t easily be measured and counted.

“The Environmental Protection Agency is already required to do multiple cost benefit analyses for every rule,” said Scott Slesinger, legislative director for the Natural Resources Defense Council. “More redundant requirements is just a tool of polluters to slow down protections in a continuous loop of paralysis by analysis. The only winners would be polluters who put their costs ahead of the health of the public.”

Amendment 205 seeks to deprive citizens of the resources required to enforce federal law. Because the lawsuits targeted by Amendment 205 are essential in ensuring that citizens obtain the regulatory protections Congress has provided, senators should oppose the measure, the coalition said. The amendment attacks citizen suits that prompt federal agencies to move forward with crucial standards aimed at protecting human health, safety and the environment.

Amendment 215 requires agencies, when assessing the costs and benefits of regulations, to include the indirect jobs impact of a regulation on “manufacturing,” an impossible and unknowable task for agencies that would add to already lengthy delays in the review and implementation process of crucial public protections. The coalition asserts that this is an impossible requirement to meet because manufacturing is much too broad a category and there are no bounds to what constitutes an “indirect” jobs impact.

“The indiscriminate cuts under sequestration will already make it harder for agencies to enforce and improve critical standards and safeguards,” said Katherine McFate, president and CEO of the Center for Effective Government and CSS co-chair. “The last thing we need are damaging budget amendments that would throw up more roadblocks to protecting American families and communities.”

For more information, please visit <http://www.sensible safeguards.org/budgetamendments>.

###

The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards is an alliance of consumer, small business, 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 more information about the coalition, see [http://www.sensible safeguards.org/about us](http://www.sensible safeguards.org/about_us).