



PRESS STATEMENT

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House Judiciary Committee Examination Into System of Regulatory Protections Is Ill Conceived

Note: Today, the House Judiciary Committee will be conducting a hearing on H.R. 3010, the "Regulatory Accountability Act (RAA) of 2011" and is expected to vote on H.R. 10, the "Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny (REINS) Act of 2011." Both bills are an attempt to grind the rulemaking process to a halt, thereby placing corporate interests ahead of public safety.

Member organizations of the Coalition for Sensible Safeguards offer statements on this latest attack on public protections:

"Under either bill, the work of agency scientists would lose its power to push back against special interests who are more concerned about their bottom lines than our health and safety. Furthermore, when these special interests challenge rules in court, we will see judges with little or no scientific training forced to assess the value of one piece of research over another."

Frances Grifo, senior scientist and director, Scientific Integrity Program
Union of Concerned Scientists

"These bills are designed to throw sand in the gears of federal rulemaking, paralyzing the implementation of already existing laws passed to protect the lives, lungs and financial security of everyday Americans. This is a backdoor way of sabotaging existing protections that are too popular with the public to directly overturn."

Katherine McFate, president and CEO
OMB Watch

"The RAA is one of the more nefarious attempts to destroy the protections people expect from their government by using positive-sounding terms that courts have determined make laws unenforceable. Members can't support health and safety laws and then work to make sure

those laws are never implemented. The REINS Act is the epitome of partisan political overreach that would grind our government to a halt.”

Scott Slesinger, legislative director
Natural Resources Defense Council

“The House of Representatives is continuing to march forward with its radical agenda to weaken protections for workers and the public. Both the Regulatory Accountability Act and the REINS Act would make it virtually impossible for the government to take action to protect the public from harm and corporate abuses. Republicans are trying to cloak this attack as a jobs initiative, claiming that regulations are hampering investment and killing jobs. But these bills have nothing to do with jobs. They are simply a brazen ideological effort by Republicans and their corporate allies to limit the role of government and rollback 40 years of progress.”

Peg Seminario, safety and health director
AFL-CIO

“REINS would require congressional approval of every regulation with a major economic impact (defined as affecting more than \$100 million in economic activity a year) — an absurdly impractical requirement, given the dozens of major rules adopted by regulatory agencies every year. It would delay product safety rules affecting family products like toys and cribs, complicate the FDA’s regulation of food and prescription drugs, and slow delivery of Social Security and Medicare, putting seniors at risk. It would also endanger the lives of workers employed in mines, factories and other places where standards reduce on-the-job hazards.

The Regulatory Accountability Act is in a way a kinder, gentler version of REINS — and therefore a more serious threat. Its devastating potential impact is buried in technical-sounding provisions — and it has bipartisan support. Introduced by Senators Rob Portman and Mark Pryor, it would subject agencies to nearly boundless inquiries into the cost of new regulations and give corporations numerous opportunities to delay rulemaking indefinitely. Few major rules would ever see the light of day.”

Robert Weissman, president
Public Citizen

“U.S. PIRG views the Regulatory Accountability Act and the REINS ACT as direct assaults on the safety and well-being of American consumers, particularly our littlest consumers — children. The bills discard public health and safety considerations, tie regulators in knots and give manufacturers a free pass to continue to produce dangerous toys and other substandard products. The bills wrongly make the demands of powerful special interests more important than child safety.”

Nashima Hossain, public health advocate
US Public Interest Research Group

“The National Employment Law Project believes that at a moment when the greatest concern and gravest crises facing our nation are high unemployment coupled with low job growth, the misguided effort by some in Congress to tie the hands of regulatory agencies is bad policy that

will neither grow jobs nor help working families. Regulations provide the critical infrastructure needed to ensure that work delivers what it is supposed to — fair pay for the job done; economic security for the present and the future; a chance to advance without having to navigate unfair and arbitrary barriers; and the ability to leave work at the end of the day healthy and safe, and to return the next day without fearing sickness or death from the job.

The American people don't want to have their confidence in having clean water to drink or clean air to breathe undermined or their rights to organize and bargain collectively erased through attacks on the agencies enforcing them. What America wants is to get back to work in good jobs with a level playing field guaranteed by sensible federal safeguards."

Christine Owens, executive director
National Employment Law Project

"Irresponsible deregulation of the financial industry — and the conduct it made possible — was a root cause of the financial crisis that has cost millions of jobs and trillions of dollars in home equity and retirement savings. The Regulatory Accountability Act would further stack the deck towards Wall Street special interests, make it impossible to put in place the commonsense rules we need to demand transparency and accountability in financial markets, and prevent the financial industry from repeating the extraordinarily reckless practices for which most of us are paying so high a price.

This legislation would create numerous bureaucratic and procedural roadblocks that would prevent any action by the agencies in charge of Wall Street oversight. Among other problems, it would permit big Wall Street firms to submit — and require full evaluation of — multiple versions of their own alternatives to regulatory action, creating a de facto industry veto of any rules to protect the public interest.

Three years after the collapse of Lehman Brothers, bonuses are sky high again on Wall Street, but most Americans are struggling. Support for this legislation is support for locking in the status quo that got us here. According to recent polling data, 77 percent of Americans favor tougher rules and enforcement for big Wall Street banks and the financial services industry. A large majority also favors the recently passed Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. This legislation is a backdoor attack on the ability of regulators to implement this or any new oversight, and it must be rejected."

Lisa Donner, executive director
Americans for Financial Reform

"The Regulatory Accountability Act and the REINS Act aim to paralyze federal rulemaking, making it impossible for our government to protect the health and financial security of everyday Americans. Congress should reject both bills as unwarranted and damaging attempts to undermine the ability of agencies to protect the public from existing and foreseeable harms."

Brian J. Siebel, director of Justice Programs
Alliance for Justice

“How many more disasters in our food system, our financial sector or our energy industries will it take to convince the deregulators in Congress that good rules are good for America? It's time for our public officials to put the public first, and reject the lobbyist wish-list that is the REINS Act.”

Heather McGhee, director, Washington office
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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 more information about the coalition, see <http://www.sensible safeguards.org/about us>.