May 19, 2023

Dear Member of Congress:

The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards (CSS) is an alliance of over 160 labor, scientific, research, good government, faith, community, health, environmental, and public interest groups — representing millions of Americans. We are joined in the belief that our country’s system of regulatory safeguards should secure our quality of life, pave the way for a sound economy, and benefit us all. While many of our member organizations are strongly opposed to the Limit Save Grow Act, or the “Default on America Act,” today we and the undersigned allied organizations are writing specifically to urge you to reject the inclusion of the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act of 2023 (REINS Act), H.R. 277, in any debt ceiling package.

We oppose the inclusion of the REINS Act because it represents a serious threat to our government’s ability to protect the public from harm. The REINS Act will halt the implementation of critical new public health and safety safeguards, financial reforms, and worker protections — making industry even less accountable to the public. The bill will not improve protections for the American public, but rather, would benefit only those corporations that wish to game the system and evade safety standards.

Under the REINS Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and our other protection agencies could not enforce a “major” rule — a rule with a large economic impact — unless both houses of Congress affirmatively approved it, with no alterations, within a 70-day window. It would stop the most important and life-saving rules, including the large number of non-controversial rules agencies produce every year, from being finalized.

Large teams of scientific, technical, and policy experts at agencies must work diligently to gather and process complex information and solicit and incorporate input from a broad range of interested stakeholders when designing smart and sensible regulations. A failure to follow this process means that a rule can be struck down by the courts during judicial review. In contrast, the REINS Act would allow congressional inaction to supersede subject matter expertise. The REINS Act would give special interests even more influence over the regulatory process by creating a new opportunity for politics to trump science and ignore the public’s needs. The most commonsense, non-controversial rules could be blocked for any reason or no reason at all.

Congress already has the first and last word when it comes to agency rulemaking, making the REINS Act unnecessary. Agencies can only exercise authority that has been delegated by Congress in authorizing legislation. Any agency attempt to overstep these bounds is likely to result in judicial scrutiny and reversal of the agency’s action. And Congress always retains the authority to enact new legislation to block any rule it opposes.

Inhibiting the functioning of our regulatory system and the vital safeguards it delivers to the American people every day should not be part of this debate.
For these reasons, we strongly urge you to oppose the REINS Act, including in any debt ceiling package.

Sincerely,

Coalition for Sensible Safeguards
AFL-CIO
American Association for Justice
American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE)
American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers
American Sustainable Business Network
Americans for Financial Reform
Appliance Standards Awareness Project
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Economic Justice
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Progressive Reform
Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)
Clean Water Action
Climate Hawks Vote
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Consumer Action
Consumer Federation of America
Consumer Federation of California
Delaware Community Reinvestment Action Council
Earthjustice
Economic Policy Institute
EDF Action
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Working Group
Freedom BLOC
Friends of the Earth
ICWUC
Impact Fund
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)
Jobs to Move America
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Kids In Danger
League of Conservation Voters
League of Women Voters of the United States
Manufactured Home Owners Association of New Jersey Inc.
Moms Clean Air Force
National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients)
National Consumers League
National Council of Jewish Women
National Employment Law Project
National Federation of Federal Employees
National Health Law Program
National Partnership for Women & Families
Natural Resources Defense Council
National Partnership for Women & Families
New Jersey Association on Correction
OPCMIA
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Public Citizen
Public Justice Center
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Texas Appleseed
The Wilderness Society
UFCW International Union
Union of Concerned Scientists
UNITE HERE
United Steelworkers (USW)
USPIRG
UWUA
Waterkeeper Alliance