

AFL-CIO * Air Line Pilots Association * American Association for Justice * Center for Biological Diversity * Center for Effective Government * Center for Justice & Democracy * Center for Responsible Lending * Center for Science in the Public Interest * Consumer Action * Consumer Federation of America * Consumers Union * Earthjustice * Economic Policy Institute * Food & Water Watch * Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy * International Brotherhood of Teamsters * League of Conservation Voters * National Consumers League * National Employment Law Project * Natural Resources Defense Council * Protect All Children's Environment * Public Citizen * Sierra Club * U.S. PIRG * Union of Concerned Scientists

July 28, 2015

Dear Representative:

RE: Floor vote on H.R. 427, the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act of 2015

We, the undersigned consumer, small business, labor, health, good government, financial protection, environmental, community, and public interest groups – **strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 427, the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act of 2015 (REINS Act).**

This bill represents a radical threat to our government's ability to protect the public from harm. The bill will delay or shut down the implementation of critical new public health and safety safeguards, financial reforms and worker protections, thereby making industry even less accountable to the public. It will only benefit those corporations that wish to game the system and evade safety standards and do nothing to improve protections for the American people.

REINS would require both houses of Congress to pass a joint resolution of approval for every major rule, with no alterations, within a 70-legislative day window. If both chambers are unable to approve a major rule, it would not take effect and would be tabled until the next congressional session. In other words, *by doing nothing*, Congress would prevent existing laws from being effectively implemented. It would stop all major rules from being finalized, including the large number of non-controversial rules agencies produce every year.

Currently, it takes years for a federal agency to produce the rules necessary to implement and enforce public safeguards and protections. For example, EPA standards on greenhouse gas emissions and fuel economy for light vehicles took years of development – despite being supported by public interest groups as well as the auto industry – before federal regulators adopted a final rule. REINS would allow congressional inaction to block such common-sense, non-controversial rules.

Congress already has the first and last word when it comes to agency rulemaking, making the REINS Act needless and redundant. Agencies can only exercise authority that Congress has written into law. Any agency attempt to overstep these bounds is likely to result in judicial scrutiny and reversal of the agency action. And under the Congressional Review Act, Congress already has the authority to review and nullify a rule by passing a resolution of disapproval. The REINS Act would force Congress to reengage in debates on previously covered issues, wasting time and money and paralyzing agencies and Congress itself.

The REINS Act would inappropriately – but deliberately – inject political considerations into a regulatory process that should be based on objective agency science and expertise. Federal agencies employ people with policy, scientific, and technical expertise to produce smart and sensible regulations. Allowing Congress to have the final say on regulations would provide lobbyists, special interest groups, and major campaign contributors even more opportunity to influence rules than they already have.

Simply put, the REINS Act would write dysfunction and obstructionism into law by giving each chamber of Congress the power to block new significant public health and safety protections, no matter how non-controversial or sensible they may be.

Congress should be searching for ways to ensure that federal agencies effectively enforce laws designed to protect our food supply, water, air quality, financial security and much more, not throwing up roadblocks to sensible safeguards that protect the American people.

Sincerely,

AFL-CIO

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