

REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2013

DECEMBER 11, 2013.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State
of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. GOODLATTE, from the Committee on the Judiciary,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

DISSENTING VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 2542]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on the Judiciary, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 2542) to amend chapter 6 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Regulatory Flexibility Act), to ensure complete analysis of potential impacts on small entities of rules, and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

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The Amendment

The amendment (stated in terms of the page and line numbers of the introduced bill) is as follows:

Page 27, line 14, strike “(6)” and insert “(9)”.

Purpose and Summary

The Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013, H.R. 2542, provides needed reforms to the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 (RFA) and the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (SBREFA). The RFA and SBREFA attempted to require agencies to account better for the impacts of proposed regulations on small businesses and other small entities and to tailor final regulations to minimize adverse impacts on these entities, but have not commanded full agency compliance.¹ The RFA updates the RFA and SBREFA to close loopholes and more effectively reduce the disproportionate burden that over-regulation places on small entities, thereby enhancing job creation and hastening economic recovery.

Background and Need for the Legislation

I. GENESIS AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE RFA

During the 1970’s, Congress enacted numerous regulatory statutes that dramatically increased the regulatory burden on businesses—and especially on small businesses. Regulatory requirements stifled innovation, limited small business growth, and contributed to the general economic malaise that permeated the latter half of the decade. Between 1970 and 1980, the Federal Register more than quadrupled from a 20,000-page publication for the arcana of the Federal Government to a nearly 90,000-page blueprint for regulating many aspects of modern American life.²

In a series of hearings during the late 1970’s, Congress began to focus on the ever-growing burden Federal regulation imposed upon small businesses. Small businesses reiterated two major themes: (1) they were under-represented in Federal regulatory proceedings; and (2) Federal agency efforts to impose a “one-size-fits-all” body of regulation imposed disproportionate burdens on small businesses.³ These findings were supported and reinforced during the 1980 White House Conference on Small Business.

To address these concerns, Congress enacted the RFA as an additional component of a significantly broader mechanism to control agency decision-making: the Administrative Procedure Act of 1946 (APA). In general, the RFA requires Federal agencies to prepare a regulatory flexibility analysis when proposed and final rules are published in the Federal Register that describes the rule’s impact

¹See, e.g., U.S. General Accounting Office, *Regulatory Flexibility Act: Agencies’ Interpretations of Review Requirements Vary*, GAO/GGD-99-55 (Apr. 2, 1999); U.S. General Accounting Office, *Federal Rulemaking: Agencies Often Published Final Actions Without Proposed Rules*, GAO/GGD-98-126 (Aug. 31, 1998); U.S. General Accounting Office, *Regulatory Flexibility Act: Status of Agencies’ Compliance*, GAO/T-GGD-95-112 (Mar. 8, 1995).

²See Figure 2: Federal Register Pages: 1940-2010, in Susan E. Dudley, “Prospects for Regulatory Reform in 2011,” ENGAGE 11:1 (June 2011).

³The finding on disproportionate impact was substantiated by an Office of Advocacy study in 1984; this was re-affirmed by a 2010 study. See Nicole V. Crain & W. Mark Crain, “The Impact of Regulatory Costs on Small Firms,” (Sept. 2010), available at <http://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/rs371tot.pdf> (last accessed July 25, 2011).

on small entities, including on small businesses.⁴ These analytical requirements are not triggered, however, if the head of the agency issuing the rule certifies pursuant to section 605(b) of the Act that the rule would not have a “significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities,”⁵ an undefined term of art in the RFA. The lack of a uniform definition for this term is a shortcoming that the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) repeatedly has found contributes to inconsistent compliance across Federal agencies.⁶ Further, although the Congressional Research Service advises that the annual total number of certifications by all agencies is not known (or even knowable), the GAO has found that in the 3-year period after SBREFA was enacted the certification rate at four EPA offices increased from 78% to 96%.⁷ Thus, the EPA avoided complying with the RFA and SBREFA by certifying more of its rules pursuant to Section 605(b). Finally, agencies only need to assess a new regulation’s direct impact on small entities; courts have held that indirect impacts are irrelevant under the RFA.⁸

The RFA also requires each Federal agency to publish a “regulatory flexibility agenda” in the Federal Register twice a year,⁹ similar to the *Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions* required by Executive Order 12866. The Small Business Administration (SBA) Chief Counsel for Advocacy is required to monitor and report on agency compliance, and is authorized to appear as *amicus curiae* “in any action brought in a court of the United States to review a rule” and to present his or her views regarding the agency’s compliance with the RFA and the rule’s impact on small entities.¹⁰ The RFA also requires agencies to conduct decennial rule reviews to identify whether the impact of rules on small entities can be mitigated further.¹¹ The effectiveness of this requirement remains unclear, however, as indicated by inconsistent agency practice.¹²

From the time of enactment until 1996, agency compliance with the RFA was at best sporadic. Agencies faced little threat from non-compliance, since judicial review of regulatory flexibility analyses was very limited, and an agency’s certification decision could not be challenged in court.¹³ Without the possibility of court orders,

⁴ See 5 U.S.C. §§ 603, 604.

⁵ See *id.* § 605(b).

⁶ See, e.g., U.S. General Accounting Office, *Regulatory Flexibility Act: Key Terms Still Need to Be Clarified*, GAO-01-669T (Apr. 24, 2001), at 2 (“Over the past decade, we have recommended several times that Congress provide greater clarity with regard to these terms, but to date Congress has not acted on our recommendations.”).

⁷ U.S. General Accounting Office, *Regulatory Flexibility Act: Implementation in EPA Program Offices and Proposed Lead Rule*, GAO/GGD-00-193 (Sept. 2000), at 16.

⁸ See, e.g., *Mid-Tex Elec. Co-op., Inc. v. FERC*, 773 F.2d 327, 343 (D.C. Cir. 1985) (“the legislative history [of the RFA] . . . also gives rise to an inference that Congress did not intend to require that every agency consider every indirect effect that any regulation might have on small businesses in any stratum of the national economy.”).

⁹ See 5 U.S.C. § 602.

¹⁰ See *id.* § 612(a), (b).

¹¹ See *id.* § 610.

¹² For example, the EPA only reviews rules that it previously concluded had a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities when the final rules were promulgated. The Department of Transportation, on the other hand, interprets this section to require a review of all of its rules. See U.S. General Accounting Office, *Regulatory Flexibility Act: Agencies’ Interpretations of Review Requirements Vary*, GAO/GGD-99-55 (Apr. 2, 1999), at 24.

¹³ See, e.g., *Thompson v. Clark*, 741 F.2d 401, 405 (D.C. Cir. 1984); *Colo. State Banking Bd. v. Resolution Trust Corp.*, 926 F.2d 931, 948 (10th Cir. 1991); *Lehigh Valley Farmers v. Block*, 640 F. Supp. 1497, 1520 (E.D. Pa. 1986), *aff’d on other grounds*, 829 F.2d 409 (3d Cir. 1987).

agencies only had to comply when it would benefit their rulemakings or when they could be cajoled by the Chief Counsel for Advocacy or OIRA. Both the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Small Business held hearings at which witnesses confirmed the systemic failure by many agencies to comply with the RFA.¹⁴

II. ENACTMENT OF SBREFA AND SUBSEQUENT HISTORY

Congress enacted SBREFA in response to this collective disregard by Federal agencies, adding several important features to the RFA: compliance guides, advocacy review panels, and judicial review. Agencies must develop and publish compliance guides for all rules for which the agency is required to develop a final regulatory flexibility analysis. The compliance guide explains the steps a small entity must take to comply with new regulations.¹⁵ SBREFA authorized direct judicial review of agency compliance with the RFA, including challenges to agency certifications that a rule would not have a “significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.”¹⁶ SBREFA also subjected certain Internal Revenue Service interpretative regulations to the RFA.¹⁷

With regard to advocacy review panels, Congress recognized that, by the time a proposed rule is published for notice and comment, the agency has substantial intellectual capital invested in the proposed rule and is unlikely to change the core of its proposal during the notice and comment period.¹⁸ Thus, under SBREFA, Congress required the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)—two of the agencies that most impact small entities—to obtain input from small entities before publishing a proposed rule that would have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.¹⁹ The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act further required the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to convene advocacy review panels.²⁰ Before publishing an initial regulatory flexibility analysis, the agency is required to notify the SBA’s Chief Counsel for Advocacy and provide information on the draft rule’s potential impacts on small entities. The Chief Counsel for Advocacy then assembles a panel consisting of representatives from OIRA, the agency promulgating the rule and the SBA. The panel gathers input from small entities’ representatives

¹⁴ See, e.g., *Strengthening the Regulatory Flexibility Act: Hearing on H.R. 9 Before H. Comm. on Small Business*, 104th Cong., Serial No. 104–5, at 45–46 (Jan. 23, 1995) (statement of James P. Carty, Vice President, Small Manufacturers, National Association of Manufacturers) (identifying instances where the EPA and Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation failed to comply with the RFA); *Job Creation and Wage Enhancement Act of 1995: Hearing on H.R. 9 Before the Subcomm. on Comm. and Admin. Law of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 104th Cong., Serial No. 104–3, at 76 (Feb. 3 & 6, 1995) (statement of Benny L. Thayer, President, National Association for the Self-Employed) (noting that confusion under the RFA “has led to an apparent belief on the part of some agencies that compliance with the RFA is entirely voluntary”).

¹⁵ See “Contract with America Advancement Act,” 104 P.L. 141, § 212 (Mar. 29, 1996); see also 5 U.S.C. § 601 note.

¹⁶ 5 U.S.C. § 610(a).

¹⁷ The RFA only requires agency compliance if the regulation is required to be issued pursuant to notice and comment pursuant to Section 553 of the APA or some other statute. Interpretative regulations are exempt from the notice and comment requirements. 5 U.S.C. § 553(b)(A).

¹⁸ In fact some would argue that the notice and comment period was not a critical component of rational rulemaking but the keystone of rationale rulemaking in which the agency uses the public comment process to find further support for the foregone conclusion of its proposed regulation.

¹⁹ See 5 U.S.C. § 609.

²⁰ See P.L. 111–203, § 1100G(a) (July 21, 2010).

and issues a report within 60 days, which becomes part of the record.

Congressional intent notwithstanding, SBREFA's changes have had only a modest effect on agency compliance.²¹ According to the GAO, the most significant stumbling block to improved compliance is the lack of definitions in the RFA and SBREFA for the terms "significant economic impact" and "substantial number of small entities." GAO also noted that the threshold determination of whether a rule will have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities is critical to compliance with other RFA requirements, including periodic review of rules under Section 610 and the receipt of small-entity input under SBREFA prior to the publication of proposed rules by EPA and OSHA.

President George W. Bush also recognized the problems with RFA and SBREFA compliance in a 2002 speech:

Every agency is required to analyze the impact of new regulations on small businesses before issuing them. That is an important law. The problem is it is often being ignored. The law is on the books; the regulators do not care that the law is on the books. From this day forward they will care that the law is on the books. . . . We want to enforce the law.²²

Subsequently, the President issued Executive Order 13272,²³ which required agencies to adopt standards for complying with the RFA, to make those standards known to the public and to give the Office of Advocacy the opportunity to comment on proposed rules prior to publication in the Federal Register. The Executive Order, however, did not address the RFA's loopholes or prevent agencies from adopting strained interpretations to avoid doing the required analysis.

Courts similarly have not been the antidotes that the authors of SBREFA contemplated. For example, courts have not given agency compliance with the RFA the same searching scrutiny that they have given to compliance with the National Environmental Policy

²¹See, e.g., Sarah E. Shive, *If You've Always Done It That Way, It's Probably Wrong: How the Regulatory Flexibility Act Has Failed To Change Agency Behavior, and How Congress Can Fix It*, 1 ENTREPREN. BUS. L.J. 153, 164 (2006) ("While one Department of Labor official noted that the judicial review permitted by the SBREFA would likely result in a 'significant impact,' judges have rarely ruled in favor of small businesses, granting substantial deference to agencies in all but the most egregious of cases."); Christopher M. Grengs, *Making the Unseen Seen: Issues and Options in Small Business Regulatory Reform*, 85 MINN. L. REV. 1957, 1973 (June 2001) ("Some observers expressed high optimism about SBREFA's prospects for holding Federal agencies more accountable for their treatment of small businesses. Although this optimism was perhaps not entirely deserved, SBREFA has spurred moderate progress in improving the regulatory treatment of small businesses. In particular, since SBREFA's enactment in 1996, judicial review of Federal agency action under SBREFA has proved to be a promising lynchpin for remedying irrational or glaringly mistaken agency action."); Jeffrey J. Polich, *Judicial Review and the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act: An Early Examination of When and Where Judges Are Using Their Newly Granted Power Over Federal Regulatory Agencies*, 41 WM. & MARY L. REV. 1425, 1426, 1461 (Apr. 2000) ("A review of existing case law demonstrates that small entities have prevailed using SBREFA in cases in which there was a gross violation of Federal rulemaking procedures by an agency, but failed when using SBREFA in cases in which the agency made some effort to comply with those requirements. . . . The SBREFA amendments succeed in refining the requirements of the RFA and, in particular, the judicial review provision grants small businesses a weapon to insure that Federal agencies comply with the RFA. Judicial deference to agency decisions, however, limits the power of judicial review. *In the end, true regulatory relief depends upon the agencies' own commitment to fairness and balance for the small businesses they regulate.*") (emphasis added).

²²"President Unveils Small Business Plan at Women's Entrepreneurship Summit," (Mar. 19, 2002), available at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/03/20020319-2.html> (last accessed July 25, 2011).

²³67 Fed. Reg. 53,462 (Aug. 16, 2002).

Act (NEPA),²⁴ even though it was expected that judicial review would have the same impact on agency decision-making that it had on agency compliance with NEPA.²⁵ Agencies still have broad latitude to interpret and implement the RFA.

Testimony at hearings held by the Committee on Small Business during the 106th, 107th and 108th Congresses supports additional reform,²⁶ revealing that considerable confusion still reigns among agencies and that agencies still find ways to avoid complying with the RFA, even after the enactment of SBREFA.²⁷ In the 109th Congress, H.R. 682 sought to achieve most of the reforms contained in H.R. 527 and H.R. 2542. This Committee's Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law and the Committee on Small Business both held hearings on H.R. 682.²⁸

III. THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION AND THE CONTINUING NEED FOR REFORM

On January 18, 2011, President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum to agency heads entitled "Regulatory Flexibility, Small Business, and Job Creation," stating that his "Administration is firmly committed to eliminating excessive and unjustified burdens on small businesses, and to ensuring that regulations are designed with careful consideration of their effects, including their cumulative effects, on small businesses."²⁹ The President also directed agency heads to publish explanations of their decisions not

²⁴*Compare Associated Fisheries v. Daley*, 127 F.3d 104, 112–18 (1st Cir. 1997) (holding SBREFA does not mandate courts to conduct a substantive judicial review of final decisions), and *U.S. Cellular Corp. v. FCC*, 254 F.3d 78, 88 (D.C. Cir. 2001) ("Regulatory Flexibility Act, which requires Federal agencies to assess the impact of their regulations on small businesses, is purely procedural in nature, requiring nothing more than filing of statement demonstrating good-faith effort to carry out its mandate.") with *Dubois v. U.S. Dep't of Agric.*, 102 F.3d 1273, 1285 (1st Cir. 1996) (reviewing an agency's compliance to NEPA requires a "thorough, probing, in-depth [sic] review' and a 'searching and careful' inquiry into the record").

²⁵*Regulatory Flexibility Amendments Act of 1995 on S. 350: Hearing Before S. Comm. on Small Business*, 104th Cong., Serial No. 104–103, at 24 (Mar. 8, 1995) (statement of Jere W. Glover, Chief Counsel for Advocacy, U.S. Small Business Administration) ("A more substantial and ongoing threat, potential judicial review of agency compliance with the RFA, would certainly lead to scrupulous compliance with the RFA, just as similar attentiveness is paid to the impact statement requirements of the [NEPA].").

²⁶*IRA Compliance with the Regulatory Flexibility Act: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Small Business*, 108th Cong., 108–10 (May 1, 2003); *Improving the Regulatory Flexibility Act: H.R. 2345: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Small Business*, 108th Cong., Serial No. 108–62 (May 5, 2004); *Can Improved Compliance with the Regulatory Flexibility Act Resuscitate Small Healthcare Providers?: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Small Business*, 107th Cong., Serial No. 107–53 (Apr. 10, 2002); *Regulatory Reform Initiatives and Their Impact on Small Business: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Small Business*, 106th Cong., Serial No. 106–60 (June 7, 2000).

²⁷See, e.g., *IRS Compliance with the Regulatory Flexibility Act: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Small Business*, 108th Cong., Serial No. 108–10, at 38 (May 1, 2003) (statement of Juanita Millender-McDonald, Member, House Comm. on Small Business) ("The IRS has generally avoided the requirements of SBREFA, even though the law was, in part, specifically written to address IRS compliance with the RFA."); *Can Improved Compliance with the Regulatory Flexibility Act Resuscitate Small Healthcare Providers?: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Small Business*, 107th Cong., Serial No. 107–53, at 15 (Apr. 10, 2002) (statement of Zachary Evans, President, National Association of Portable X-Ray Providers) ("CMS refuses to consider the impact upon our industry of their rulemaking, consult with us during the rulemaking process, or in any way evaluate industry costs prior to setting our reimbursement rates."); *Regulatory Reform Initiatives and Their Impact on Small Business: Hearing Before the Comm. on Small Business*, 106th Cong., Serial No. 106–60, at 40 (June 7, 2000) (statement of Duncan Thomas, President, National Association of Convenience Stores) (explaining that SBREFA "leads often to confusion, inadvertent noncompliance and considerable expense").

²⁸*The RFA at 25: Needed Improvements for Small Business Regulatory Relief: Hearing on H.R. 682 Before the H. Comm. on Small Business*, 109th Cong., Serial No. 109–5 (Mar. 16, 2005); *Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act: Hearing on H.R. 682 Before the H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 109th Cong., Serial No. 109–134 (July 30, 2006).

²⁹"Presidential Memoranda—Regulatory Flexibility, Small Business, and Job Creation," (Jan. 18, 2011), available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/01/18/presidential-memoranda-regulatory-flexibility-small-business-and-job-cre> (last accessed July 25, 2011).

to provide regulatory flexibility for small businesses, if those decisions were not based on legal limitations. The President's memorandum, however, added nothing meaningful to existing agency requirements, and it explicitly stated that the memorandum did not create any legal rights. Even if it had, any of its provisions could be revoked at any time, as it is merely an executive memorandum, not a law.

Meanwhile, the need for additional RFA reform has grown. In 2010, for example, Federal agencies promulgated 3,312 final rules, while Congress passed and the President signed into law only 385 statutes. Recently, the SBA reported that Federal rulemaking imposed a cumulative burden of \$1.75 trillion on our economy—a figure that equaled fourteen percent of national income.³⁰ That burden, moreover, falls disproportionately on small businesses:

While all citizens and businesses pay some portion of these costs, the distribution of the burden of regulations is quite uneven. The portion of regulatory costs that falls initially on businesses was \$8,086 per employee in 2008. Small businesses, defined as firms employing fewer than 20 employees, bear the largest burden of Federal regulations. As of 2008, small businesses face an annual regulatory cost of \$10,585 per employee, which is 36 percent higher than the regulatory cost facing large firms (defined as firms with 500 or more employees).³¹

Another recent study found that “[e]ach million-dollar increase in the regulatory budget costs the economy 420 private sector jobs.”³²

Recent regulatory expansions and the future threat of further excessive Federal regulation—such as under the waves of regulation occurring to implement the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act³³ and the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act³⁴—have created immense regulatory burdens and uncertainty for the economy, chilling job creation, investment and economic growth and suppressing America's economic freedom and standing among the world's economies.³⁵ These effects are particularly burdensome on small businesses—and since start-up firms are the source of net job creation in the U.S. economy, it is only

³⁰ Crain, *supra* note 3, at 6, 48.

³¹ *See id.* at iv.

³² T. Randolph Beard et al., *Regulatory Expenditures, Economic Growth and Jobs: An Empirical Study*, Phoenix Center Policy Bulletin No. 28 (Apr. 2011), at 5, available at <http://www.phoenix-center.org/PolicyBulletin/PCPB28Final.pdf> (last accessed July 25, 2011).

³³ 111 P.L. 148 (Mar. 23, 2010).

³⁴ 111 P.L. 203 (July 21, 2010).

³⁵ *See, e.g.*, Editors, *The Uncertainty Principle*, WALL STREET JOURNAL (July 14, 2010), available at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704288204575363162664835780.html?KEYWORDS=rulemakings> (last accessed July 25, 2011); Chamber of Commerce, *Jobs for America: an Open Letter to the President of the United States, the United States Congress, and the American People* (July 14, 2010) (stating, *e.g.*, that, substantially due to regulatory uncertainty, American corporations are sitting on well over \$1 trillion that they could otherwise invest); Terry Miller & Kim R. Holmes, “Mostly Free”—*The Startling Decline of America's Economic Freedom and What to Do About It*, Heritage Foundation (July 14, 2010), available at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2010/07/Mostly-Free-The-Startling-Divide-of-Americas-Economic-Freedom-and-What-to-Do-About-It> (summary) (last accessed July 25, 2011); http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2010/pdf/sr0082.pdf (full report) (last accessed July 25, 2011); Terry Miller, *The U.S. Loses Ground on Economic Freedom*, WALL STREET JOURNAL (Jan. 13, 2011), available at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB1000142405274870377970457607419321499486.html?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Heritage%2BHotSheet (last accessed July 25, 2011); Heritage Foundation and Wall Street Journal, *2011 Index of Economic Freedom: Executive Highlights* (Jan. 2011) at 6 (placing America as ninth in economic freedom among countries surveyed and recording a further decline in U.S. economic freedom).

logical that the impact of these effects on small businesses contributes substantially to the economy's inability to create sufficient levels of new jobs.³⁶

Agencies continue to ignore their obligations under the RFA. For example, EPA has found carbon dioxide to be a threat to public health and welfare³⁷ and initiated an inexorable series of additional regulatory actions that, under existing environmental laws, will impose large adverse impacts on small businesses. EPA, however, refused to comply with the RFA—even when the Chief Counsel for Advocacy pointed out to the EPA Administrator (and, by copy, to OIRA) that EPA had failed to convene advocacy review panels before imposing its rules, failed to develop and evaluate regulatory alternatives to minimize its actions' impacts on small businesses, and inappropriately certified that its actions will not impact small businesses.³⁸ When former Judiciary Committee Chairman Lamar Smith and Small Business Committee Chairman Sam Graves brought to OIRA's attention their concerns over these violations, the potential for EPA's regulations to impose particularly heavy burdens on small businesses, and the need for OIRA to intervene and assure RFA compliance, OIRA's response was simply to refer the matter to EPA.³⁹

Similarly, on January 25, 2011, OSHA announced that it had temporarily withdrawn from OMB review a proposed rule on injury-related employer recordkeeping. The stated reason for the withdrawal was to “seek greater input from small businesses on the impact of the proposal.”⁴⁰ Yet rather than commit itself to full RFA/SBREFA compliance, OSHA promised to hold a meeting “to engage and listen to small businesses about the agency's proposal” and to “conduct a stakeholder meeting with other members of the public if requested.”⁴¹ This falls well short of convening the advocacy review panel that OSHA is required by law to hold.⁴²

IV. CUMULATIVE HEARING RECORD ON THE REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS ACT

On February 10, 2011, the Subcommittee on Courts, Commercial and Administrative Law held a legislative hearing on H.R. 527.⁴³ Testimony was received from Rich Gimmell, President of Atlas Machine & Supply, Inc.; Thomas M. Sullivan, Counsel for Nelson, Mullins, Riley, Scarborough LLP; J. Robert Shull, Program Officer of Worker's Rights for the Public Welfare Foundation; and, Karen

³⁶Tim Kane, *The Importance of Start-ups in Job Creation and Job Destruction*, Ewing Marion Kaufmann Foundation (July 2010) at 6, available at http://www.kauffman.org/uploadedFiles/firm_formation_importance_of_startups.pdf (last accessed July 25, 2011).

³⁷“Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases under Section 202(a) of the Clean Air Act,” EPA Docket No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2009-0171, RIN 2060-ZA14 (Dec. 7, 2009).

³⁸Letter from Susan Walthall, Acting Chief Counsel, Office of the Chief Counsel for Advocacy, Small Business Administration to the Honorable Lisa Jackson, EPA Administrator, (Dec. 23, 2009) (letter on file).

³⁹Letter from Reps. Lamar Smith and Sam Graves to Cass R. Sunstein, OIRA Administrator (Jan. 21, 2010); response letter from Administrator Sunstein to Reps. Smith and Graves (Apr. 29, 2010) (letters on file).

⁴⁰U.S. Dep't of Labor, Office of Public Affairs, *News Release: US Labor Department's OSHA temporarily withdraws proposed column for work-related musculoskeletal disorders, reaches out to small businesses* (Jan. 25, 2011).

⁴¹*Id.*

⁴²See 5 U.S.C. § 609.

⁴³See “Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2011”—*Unleashing Small Businesses to Create Jobs: Hearing on H.R. 527 Before the Subcomm. on Courts, Commercial and Administrative Law of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 112th Cong., Serial No. 112-16 (Feb. 10, 2011).

R. Harned, Executive Director of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB).

Mr. Gimmell, also representing the National Association of Manufacturers, noted that the current recession had to that point resulted in a loss of 2.2 million jobs in the manufacturing sector.⁴⁴ Mr. Gimmell called for “more detailed statements in the RFA process and requirements to identify redundant, overlapping, or conflicting regulations.”⁴⁵ Incorporating this sort of “lean thinking” into the regulatory process would change the current wasteful policy practices of most agencies and, in turn, improve the economy by allowing businesses to create jobs and expand.⁴⁶

Mr. Sullivan testified, “One size fits all Federal mandates do not work when applied to small business; second, small business face higher costs per employee to comply with Federal regulation than their larger competitors, and, third, small business is critically important to the American economy.”⁴⁷ According to Mr. Sullivan, H.R. 527 would enable the Office of Advocacy to ensure that agencies properly consider how their regulations impact small businesses, and would provide clarity to courts on judicial review.⁴⁸

According to Ms. Harned, “[o]verzealous regulation is a perennial cause for concern for small business owners and is particularly burdensome in times like these when the Nation’s economy remains sluggish.”⁴⁹ Including a \$1.75 trillion cost of regulations on the economy every year, Ms. Harned stated that “small businesses face an annual regulatory cost of \$10,585 per employee which is 36 percent more than the regulatory cost facing businesses with more than 500 employees.”⁵⁰ In opposition to H.R. 527, Mr. Shull alleged the bill would “paralyze the regulatory agencies we need to protect the public and keep them from getting things done to protect the public.”⁵¹

The Committee on Small Business also held a legislative hearing on H.R. 527.⁵² Testimony was received from Bill Squires, Senior Vice President and General Counsel for Blackfoot Telecommunications Group; David Frulla of Kelley Drye & Warren LLP; Craig Fabian, Vice President of Regulatory Affairs and Assistant General Counsel at the Aeronautical Repair Station Association; and, Rich D. Draper, CEO of the Ice Cream Club, Inc.

The Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act was reintroduced on June 27, 2013, as H.R. 2542, the “Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013.” On June 28, 2013, the Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law held a legislative hearing on H.R. 2542.⁵³ Testimony was received from NFIB Exec. Dir. Harned; Carl Harris, co-founder of Carl Harris Co., Inc., Kansas national area chairman for the National Association of

⁴⁴*Id.* at 56.

⁴⁵*Id.*

⁴⁶*Id.*

⁴⁷*Id.* at 65.

⁴⁸*Id.* at 66.

⁴⁹*Id.* at 85.

⁵⁰*Id.*

⁵¹*Id.* at 77.

⁵²See *Reducing Federal Agency Overreach: Modernizing the Regulatory Flexibility Act Before the H. Comm. on Small Business*, 112th Cong., Serial No. 112-007 (Mar. 30, 2011).

⁵³See “*Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2542, the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013*” Before the Subcomm. on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary, 113th Cong., Serial No. 113-_____ (June. 26, 2013) (hearing record available at http://judiciary.house.gov/hearings/113th/hear_06282013.html).

Home Builders, and president of the Kansas Building Industry Association; Rosario Palmieri, Vice President, Infrastructure, Legal and Regulatory Policy, National Association of Manufacturers; and, Amit Narang, Regulatory Policy Advocate, Public Citizen.

Ms. Harned testified that overzealous regulation remains a constant concern, and that, as of June 20, 2013, 23 percent of small businesses cited red tape as their most important concern, second only to taxes.⁵⁴ Ms. Harned emphasized that, according to analysis of recent figures released by OIRA, the costs imposed by new regulations under the Obama administration in 2012 alone exceeded the costs of new regulations promulgated by both the George W. Bush and Clinton administrations.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, Ms. Harned stressed, job creation in the U.S. has remained stagnant, and small businesses had reported a drop in willingness to hire since November 2012.⁵⁶ In Ms. Harned's view, regulatory reform like the RFIA would "go a long way" towards resolving the adverse impacts of regulation on small businesses, who are responsible for most job creation in the economy.⁵⁷

Mr. Harris testified that the costs of regulation at all levels account for 25 percent of the cost of new homes, and that it can be very difficult for a small business to comply with the myriad of regulations affecting its business.⁵⁸ Based on his experience with the RFA and SBREFA, including as a SBREFA small business review panelist, Mr. Harris testified that the concepts of the RFA and SBREFA were constructive, but that, under existing law, agencies too frequently reduced RFA and SBREFA compliance to a "check the box" exercise that produced insufficiently meaningful results.⁵⁹ Mr. Harris submitted that the RFIA's reforms to the RFA and SBREFA would substantially contribute to the realization of these statutes' promise.⁶⁰

Mr. Palmieri testified that nearly 95 percent of U.S. manufacturers have fewer than 100 employees, and that "to compete on a global stage, manufacturing in the United States needs policies that enable it to thrive and create jobs."⁶¹ Mr. Palmieri directed the Subcommittee's attention to a 2011 study by the Manufacturers Institute and the Manufacturers Alliance for Productivity and Innovation, which found that U.S. manufacturers "face a 20 percent structural cost burden compared to nine major trading partners because of government imposed policies, including regulations."⁶² Mr. Palmieri also cited recent evidence that 67 percent of manufacturers cited an unfavorable business climate due to regulations and

⁵⁴ *Statement of Karen Harned at "Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2542, the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013" Before the Subcomm. on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary, 113th Cong., Serial No. 113-_____ at 2 (June. 26, 2013) (available at http://judiciary.house.gov/hearings/113th/hear_06282013.html).*

⁵⁵ *Id.* at 2-3.

⁵⁶ *Id.* at 3.

⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁸ *Statement of Carl Harris at "Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2542, the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013" Before the Subcomm. on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary, 113th Cong., Serial No. 113-_____ at 2 (June. 26, 2011) (available at http://judiciary.house.gov/hearings/113th/hear_06282013.html).*

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ *Statement of Rosario Palmieri at "Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2542, the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013" Before the Subcomm. on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary, 113th Cong., Serial No. 113-_____ at 3 (June. 26, 2011) (available at http://judiciary.house.gov/hearings/113th/hear_06282013.html).*

⁶² *Id.* at 4.

taxes as a primary challenge that they faced.⁶³ Mr. Palmieri submitted that, when regulatory agencies did comply with the RFA and SBREFA, positive results could occur, but that agencies far too often were able to evade meaningful RFA compliance.⁶⁴ Like Ms. Harned and Mr. Harris, he testified that the RFIA would greatly help to solve this problem.⁶⁵

Mr. Narang, by contrast, submitted that, in his view, the RFIA would slow down the regulatory process unnecessarily.⁶⁶ In his view, a more productive path forward would be to provide more compliance guidance and assistance to small businesses, rather than additional analysis of regulations before they are imposed.⁶⁷

V. INCLUSION OF H.R. 585

In conjunction with the House's consideration of H.R. 527 during the 112th Congress, the House also considered a companion bill, H.R. 585, the "Small Business Size Standard Flexibility Act of 2011." H.R. 585 amended the Small Business Act by transferring certain size standard determination functions from the Administrator of the Small Business Administration (SBA) to the Office of the Chief Counsel for Advocacy.

The reasons for this amendment are straightforward. Currently, the SBA Administrator, pursuant to Sec. 3(a)(2) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(a)(2)), has the authority to determine what constitutes a small business for the purposes of the Small Business Act or any other Federal statute. If an agency proposes to draft a regulation that adopts a size standard different from one already adopted by the Administrator in regulations that implement the Small Business Act, the agency must obtain the Administrator's approval. To consider approval, however, the Administrator requires a full understanding of the regulatory regime that SBA's sister agency proposes to implement, encompassing knowledge outside of the SBA's ordinary expertise. The SBA's Office of the Chief Counsel for Advocacy, however—an independent office within the SBA—has such expertise, because it represents the interests of small businesses in other agencies' rulemaking proceedings as part of its responsibility to monitor agency compliance with the RFA. It is therefore logical to transfer the limited function of determining size standards of small businesses for purposes other than the Small Business Act and Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to the Office of the Chief Counsel for Advocacy.

The Judiciary Committee and the Small Business Committee share jurisdiction over the RFIA, meaning that both committees may hold hearings on and markup the legislation. For efficiency in the committees' and the House's consideration of related issues, H.R. 2542 incorporates into the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act the terms of the Small Business Size Standard Flexibility Act, as passed by the House during the 112th Congress.

⁶³ *Id.*

⁶⁴ *Id.* at 5–7.

⁶⁵ *Id.* at 6.

⁶⁶ *Statement of Amit Narang at "Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2542, the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013" Before the Subcomm. on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary, 113th Cong., Serial No. 113- at 9 (June 26, 2011) (available at http://judiciary.house.gov/hearings/113th/hear_06282013.html).*

⁶⁷ *Id.* at 10.

Hearings

The Committee's Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law held 1 day of hearings on H.R. 2542, on June 28, 2013. Testimony was received from Karen R. Harned, Executive Director, National Federation of Independent Business; Carl Harris, co-founder, Carl Harris Co., Inc., Kansas national area chairman for the National Association of Home Builders, and president of the Kansas Building Industry Association; Rosario Palmieri, Vice President, Infrastructure, Legal and Regulatory Policy, National Association of Manufacturers; and, Amit Narang, Regulatory Policy Advocate, Public Citizen, with additional material submitted by the Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc.

Committee Consideration

On July 10, 2013, the Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law met in open session and ordered the bill H.R. 2542 favorably reported, without amendment, by voice vote, a quorum being present. On July 31, 2013, the Committee met in open session and ordered the bill H.R. 2542 favorably reported without amendment, by a rollcall vote of 15 to 9, a quorum being present.

Committee Votes

In compliance with clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee advises that the following rollcall votes occurred during the Committee's consideration of H.R. 2542.

1. The amendment offered by Mr. Conyers strikes section 5 of H.R. 2542, which provides compliance-related rulemaking authority to the Small Business Administration's Chief Counsel for Advocacy and repeals waiver provisions of the RFA. The amendment was defeated by a rollcall vote of 11–17.

ROLLCALL NO. 1

	Ayes	Nays	Present
Mr. Goodlatte (VA), Chairman		X	
Mr. Sensenbrenner, Jr. (WI)		X	
Mr. Coble (NC)		X	
Mr. Smith (TX)		X	
Mr. Chabot (OH)			
Mr. Bachus (AL)		X	
Mr. Issa (CA)			
Mr. Forbes (VA)		X	
Mr. King (IA)		X	
Mr. Franks (AZ)		X	
Mr. Gohmert (TX)		X	
Mr. Jordan (OH)			
Mr. Poe (TX)			
Mr. Chaffetz (UT)		X	
Mr. Marino (PA)		X	
Mr. Gowdy (SC)		X	
Mr. Amodei (NV)			

ROLLCALL NO. 1—Continued

	Ayes	Nays	Present
Mr. Labrador (ID)		X	
Ms. Farenthold (TX)		X	
Mr. Holding (NC)		X	
Mr. Collins (GA)		X	
Mr. DeSantis (FL)			
Mr. Smith (MO)		X	
Mr. Conyers, Jr. (MI), Ranking Member	X		
Mr. Nadler (NY)	X		
Mr. Scott (VA)	X		
Mr. Watt (NC)	X		
Ms. Lofgren (CA)	X		
Ms. Jackson Lee (TX)			
Mr. Cohen (TN)			
Mr. Johnson (GA)	X		
Mr. Pierluisi (PR)	X		
Ms. Chu (CA)	X		
Mr. Deutch (FL)			
Mr. Gutierrez (IL)			
Ms. Bass (CA)	X		
Mr. Richmond (LA)			
Ms. DelBene (WA)	X		
Mr. Garcia (FL)	X		
Mr. Jeffries (NY)			
Total	11	17	

2. The amendment offered by Mr. Nadler adds requirements that agencies identify direct and indirect benefits of covered regulations. The amendment was defeated by a rollcall vote of 12–17.

ROLLCALL NO. 2

	Ayes	Nays	Present
Mr. Goodlatte (VA), Chairman		X	
Mr. Sensenbrenner, Jr. (WI)		X	
Mr. Coble (NC)			
Mr. Smith (TX)		X	
Mr. Chabot (OH)		X	
Mr. Bachus (AL)		X	
Mr. Issa (CA)			
Mr. Forbes (VA)		X	
Mr. King (IA)		X	
Mr. Franks (AZ)		X	
Mr. Gohmert (TX)		X	
Mr. Jordan (OH)			
Mr. Poe (TX)			
Mr. Chaffetz (UT)		X	
Mr. Marino (PA)		X	
Mr. Gowdy (SC)		X	
Mr. Amodei (NV)			

ROLLCALL NO. 2—Continued

	Ayes	Nays	Present
Mr. Labrador (ID)		X	
Ms. Farenthold (TX)		X	
Mr. Holding (NC)		X	
Mr. Collins (GA)		X	
Mr. DeSantis (FL)			
Mr. Smith (MO)		X	
Mr. Conyers, Jr. (MI), Ranking Member	X		
Mr. Nadler (NY)	X		
Mr. Scott (VA)	X		
Mr. Watt (NC)	X		
Ms. Lofgren (CA)	X		
Ms. Jackson Lee (TX)			
Mr. Cohen (TN)			
Mr. Johnson (GA)	X		
Mr. Pierluisi (PR)	X		
Ms. Chu (CA)	X		
Mr. Deutch (FL)	X		
Mr. Gutierrez (IL)			
Ms. Bass (CA)	X		
Mr. Richmond (LA)			
Ms. DelBene (WA)	X		
Mr. Garcia (FL)	X		
Mr. Jeffries (NY)			
Total	12	17	

3. The amendment offered by Mr. Johnson exempts regulations to implement the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act from the requirements of H.R. 2542. The amendment was defeated by a rollcall vote of 5–11.

ROLLCALL NO. 3

	Ayes	Nays	Present
Mr. Goodlatte (VA), Chairman		X	
Mr. Sensenbrenner, Jr. (WI)			
Mr. Coble (NC)		X	
Mr. Smith (TX)			
Mr. Chabot (OH)		X	
Mr. Bachus (AL)		X	
Mr. Issa (CA)			
Mr. Forbes (VA)			
Mr. King (IA)			
Mr. Franks (AZ)		X	
Mr. Gohmert (TX)		X	
Mr. Jordan (OH)			
Mr. Poe (TX)			
Mr. Chaffetz (UT)		X	
Mr. Marino (PA)			
Mr. Gowdy (SC)		X	

ROLLCALL NO. 3—Continued

	Ayes	Nays	Present
Mr. Amodei (NV)			
Mr. Labrador (ID)			
Ms. Farenthold (TX)		X	
Mr. Holding (NC)		X	
Mr. Collins (GA)			
Mr. DeSantis (FL)		X	
Mr. Smith (MO)			
Mr. Conyers, Jr. (MI), Ranking Member			
Mr. Nadler (NY)	X		
Mr. Scott (VA)	X		
Mr. Watt (NC)			
Ms. Lofgren (CA)			
Ms. Jackson Lee (TX)			
Mr. Cohen (TN)			
Mr. Johnson (GA)	X		
Mr. Pierluisi (PR)	X		
Ms. Chu (CA)			
Mr. Deutch (FL)			
Mr. Gutierrez (IL)			
Ms. Bass (CA)			
Mr. Richmond (LA)			
Ms. DelBene (WA)	X		
Mr. Garcia (FL)			
Mr. Jeffries (NY)			
Total	5	11	

4. The amendment offered by Ms. Jackson Lee exempts Food and Drug Administration regulations from the requirements of H.R. 2542. The amendment was defeated by a rollcall vote of 8–14.

ROLLCALL NO. 4

	Ayes	Nays	Present
Mr. Goodlatte (VA), Chairman		X	
Mr. Sensenbrenner, Jr. (WI)		X	
Mr. Coble (NC)		X	
Mr. Smith (TX)		X	
Mr. Chabot (OH)		X	
Mr. Bachus (AL)		X	
Mr. Issa (CA)			
Mr. Forbes (VA)			
Mr. King (IA)		X	
Mr. Franks (AZ)			
Mr. Gohmert (TX)			
Mr. Jordan (OH)			
Mr. Poe (TX)			
Mr. Chaffetz (UT)			
Mr. Marino (PA)		X	
Mr. Gowdy (SC)		X	

ROLLCALL NO. 4—Continued

	Ayes	Nays	Present
Mr. Amodei (NV)			
Mr. Labrador (ID)		X	
Ms. Farenthold (TX)		X	
Mr. Holding (NC)		X	
Mr. Collins (GA)			
Mr. DeSantis (FL)		X	
Mr. Smith (MO)		X	
Mr. Conyers, Jr. (MI), Ranking Member	X		
Mr. Nadler (NY)	X		
Mr. Scott (VA)	X		
Mr. Watt (NC)			
Ms. Lofgren (CA)			
Ms. Jackson Lee (TX)	X		
Mr. Cohen (TN)			
Mr. Johnson (GA)			
Mr. Pierluisi (PR)	X		
Ms. Chu (CA)	X		
Mr. Deutch (FL)			
Mr. Gutierrez (IL)			
Ms. Bass (CA)			
Mr. Richmond (LA)			
Ms. DelBene (WA)	X		
Mr. Garcia (FL)			
Mr. Jeffries (NY)	X		
Total	8	14	

5. The bill was reported by a rollcall vote of 15–9.

ROLLCALL NO. 5

	Ayes	Nays	Present
Mr. Goodlatte (VA), Chairman	X		
Mr. Sensenbrenner, Jr. (WI)	X		
Mr. Coble (NC)	X		
Mr. Smith (TX)	X		
Mr. Chabot (OH)	X		
Mr. Bachus (AL)	X		
Mr. Issa (CA)			
Mr. Forbes (VA)			
Mr. King (IA)	X		
Mr. Franks (AZ)			
Mr. Gohmert (TX)	X		
Mr. Jordan (OH)			
Mr. Poe (TX)			
Mr. Chaffetz (UT)			
Mr. Marino (PA)	X		
Mr. Gowdy (SC)	X		
Mr. Amodei (NV)			
Mr. Labrador (ID)	X		

ROLLCALL NO. 5—Continued

	Ayes	Nays	Present
Ms. Farenthold (TX)	X		
Mr. Holding (NC)	X		
Mr. Collins (GA)			
Mr. DeSantis (FL)	X		
Mr. Smith (MO)	X		
Mr. Conyers, Jr. (MI), Ranking Member		X	
Mr. Nadler (NY)		X	
Mr. Scott (VA)		X	
Mr. Watt (NC)			
Ms. Lofgren (CA)			
Ms. Jackson Lee (TX)		X	
Mr. Cohen (TN)			
Mr. Johnson (GA)		X	
Mr. Pierluisi (PR)		X	
Ms. Chu (CA)		X	
Mr. Deutch (FL)			
Mr. Gutierrez (IL)			
Ms. Bass (CA)			
Mr. Richmond (LA)			
Ms. DelBene (WA)		X	
Mr. Garcia (FL)			
Mr. Jeffries (NY)		X	
Total	15	9	

Committee Oversight Findings

In compliance with clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee advises that the findings and recommendations of the Committee, based on oversight activities under clause 2(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, are incorporated in the descriptive portions of this report.

New Budget Authority and Tax Expenditures

Clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives is inapplicable because this legislation does not provide new budgetary authority or increased tax expenditures.

Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate

In compliance with clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee sets forth, with respect to the bill, H.R. 2542, the following estimate and comparison prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, September 5, 2013.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE, CHAIRMAN,
*Committee on the Judiciary,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 2542, the “Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013.”

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Matthew Pickford, who can be reached at 226–2860.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS W. ELMENDORF,
DIRECTOR.

Enclosure

cc: Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member

H.R. 2542—Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013.

As ordered reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary
on September 5, 2013.

SUMMARY

H.R. 2542 would amend the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) by expanding the number of rules covered by the RFA and requiring agencies to perform additional analysis of regulations that affect small businesses. The legislation also would provide new authorities to the Small Business Administration’s (SBA’s) Office of Advocacy to intervene and provide support for agency rulemaking.

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 2542 would cost \$45 million over the 2014–2018 period to expand the RFA, assuming appropriation of the necessary funds. Enacting the bill could affect direct spending by agencies not funded through annual appropriations; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. CBO estimates, however, that any net increase in spending by those agencies would not be significant. Enacting H.R. 2542 would not affect revenues.

H.R. 2542 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of H.R. 2542 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget functions 370 (commerce and housing credit), 800 (general government), and all budget functions that include agencies that issue regulations affecting small businesses.

By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2014– 2018
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Estimated Authorization Level	5	9	12	12	12	50
Estimated Outlays	4	7	10	12	12	45

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the legislation will be enacted near the start of fiscal year 2014, that the necessary amounts will be appropriated each year, and that spending will follow historical patterns for similar activities.

CBO is unaware of any comprehensive information on the current level of spending for regulatory activities governmentwide. However, according to the Congressional Research Service, Federal agencies issue 3,000 to 4,000 final rules each year. Most rules, regardless of size, are promulgated by the Departments of Transportation, Homeland Security, and Commerce, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Most major rules (those with an estimated economic impact on the economy of more than \$100 million per year) are issued by the Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture, and EPA.

H.R. 2542 would broaden the definition of a “rule” for rule-making purposes to include agency guidance documents and policy statements. The bill also would expand the scope of the regulatory analysis for proposed and final rules to include an examination of indirect economic effects on small businesses and a more detailed analysis of the possible economic consequences of the rule for small businesses. The legislation defines indirect economic effects as any impact that is reasonably foreseeable. The legislation also would require agencies to prepare reports on the cumulative economic impact on small businesses of new and existing regulations.

Implementing H.R. 2542 would increase the amount of regulatory analysis that agencies would need to prepare and it would expand the role of the SBA’s Office of Advocacy, and the Office of Management and Budget’s Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) in the rulemaking process. Finally, the legislation would require more Federal agencies to use panels of experts to evaluate regulations and to prepare reports on the economic impact of proposed regulations on small business.

Information from OIRA, SBA, and some Federal agencies indicates that the new requirements would increase the cost to issue a few hundred of the thousands of Federal regulations issued annually. Based on that information, CBO estimates that administrative costs in some regulatory agencies, the SBA’s Office of Advocacy, and OIRA would increase by a total of about \$12 million annually, subject to the availability of appropriated funds. We expect that it would take about three years to reach that level of effort.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS

The Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 establishes budget-reporting and enforcement procedures for legislation affecting direct spending or revenues. Enacting H.R. 2542 could affect direct spending by agencies not funded through annual appropriations; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. CBO estimates, however, that any net increase in spending by those agencies would not be significant.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

H.R. 2542 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

ESTIMATE PREPARED BY:

Federal Spending: Matthew Pickford and Susan Willie
Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Melissa Merrell
Impact on the Private Sector: Paige Piper/Bach

ESTIMATE APPROVED BY:

Theresa A. Gullo
Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis

Duplication of Federal Programs

No provision of H.R. 2542 establishes or reauthorizes a program of the Federal Government known to be duplicative of another Federal program, a program that was included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111-139, or a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

Disclosure of Directed Rule Makings

The Committee estimates that H.R. 2542 specifically directs the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration to conduct one rule making proceeding within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. 551.

Performance Goals and Objectives

The Committee states that pursuant to clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, H.R. 2542 is intended to promote job creation, economic growth by better protecting small entities from unnecessary Federal regulatory burdens.

Advisory on Earmarks

In accordance with clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, H.R. 2542 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(e), 9(f), or 9(g) of Rule XXI.

Section-by-Section Analysis

The following discussion describes the bill as reported by the Committee.

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Section 1 provides that the Act may be cited as the “Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013.”

Sec. 2. Clarification and Expansion of Rules Covered by the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

Subsection 2(a) expands the RFA and SBREFA to apply to all rules within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 551(4), except for certain rules of particular applicability. The RFA currently defines a “rule” as one that is issued pursuant to the notice and comment rule-making provisions of Section 553(b) of the APA. The Committee believes this definition is unjustifiably narrow; the definition of a “rule” under the RFA should be the same as under the APA.

Subsection 2(b) clarifies the term “economic impact.” The RFA requires agencies to prepare a regulatory flexibility analysis if the agency determines that the rule will have a “significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.” But this term is not defined in current law, and courts have held that agencies do not need to consider indirect economic impacts on small entities. The Committee doubts that Congress originally intended the regulatory flexibility analysis to be so limited. Indirect effects are no less burdensome on small entities than direct effects. Moreover, agencies already measure their regulations’ indirect effects under the National Environmental Policy Act, upon which the RFA is modeled, and when performing the cost-benefit analysis required by Executive Order 12,866. Section 2(b) thus clarifies that the term “economic impact” covers both direct and indirect effects that are reasonably foreseeable.

Subsection 2(c) clarifies that an agency must perform a regulatory flexibility analysis when a proposed rule’s effects are significant but beneficial. Agencies interpret the current law to require a regulatory flexibility analysis only when a proposed rule has significant costs to small entities. Requiring a regulatory flexibility analysis when a proposed rule has significant benefits will encourage agencies to pick the most beneficial alternative.

Subsection 2(d) adds tribal organizations to the list of “small entities” within the RFA’s purview. The same considerations that necessitate requiring agencies to perform regulatory flexibility analyses when small governmental bodies are concerned apply with equal force to tribal organizations.

Subsection 2(e) clarifies that the RFA applies to land management plans developed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. This is the GAO’s view, although the Forest Service and the BLM disagree. Since these agencies already collect economic data for NEPA reports, this clarification will not be burdensome.

Subsection 2(f)(1) clarifies that the IRS must comply fully with the RFA. The IRS has previously concluded that it is not required to follow the RFA when issuing an “interpretative” rule outside of the notice-and-comment process. Adopted in 1996, SBREFA required the IRS to comply with the RFA when an interpretative rule imposes a collection-of-information requirement on a small entity. The IRS misinterprets this statute to apply only when the taxpayer is required to complete a brand new, never-used form. Section 2(f)(1) makes clear that the IRS is required to comply with the RFA

whenever the IRS intends to codify a regulation in the Code of Federal Regulations and the regulation (or statute that the regulation is interpreting) imposes a collection-of-information requirement. Moreover, the ensuing regulatory flexibility analysis should not be limited to the cost associated with the “collection of information”; rather, the “collection of information” is a trigger for a full analysis of the rule’s economic effects. Section 2(f)(2)-(3) establishes that the terms “collection of information” and “recordkeeping requirement” have the same meaning under the RFA as under the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Subsection 2(g) adopts the definition of “small organization” under the RFA that the Equal Access to Justice Act uses, focusing on the resources available to the organization, i.e., its net worth and number of employees. The current definition of “small organization” is unwieldy. Like the RFA, one purpose of the EAJA is to protect small entities from overzealous regulatory enforcement. Thus, both statutes should define “small organization” in the same way. Section 2(g) extends the RFA’s protections to local labor organizations as well.

Sec. 3. Expansion of Report of Regulatory Agenda.

Section 3 expands the terms of 5 U.S.C. sec. 602, which requires agencies to publish regulatory agendas every April and October, including regulations that may have significant impacts on substantial numbers of small entities. Section 3 requires the agendas to describe the North American Industrial Classification System sectors primarily affected by the rules. It also requires agencies and the SBA to publish plain language summaries of the information in the agendas on their websites.

Sec. 4. Requirements for Providing More Detailed Analyses.

The NEPA, which was the model when Congress adopted the RFA in 1980, requires agencies to develop a “detailed statement” regarding the environmental impact of a proposed rule. Courts have interpreted the NEPA to require agencies to take a “hard look” at environmental impacts. The RFA, however, only requires agencies to develop a “statement” regarding the impact of a new regulation on small entities.

After finding that agencies were not fulfilling their responsibilities under the RFA, Congress amended it in 1996 to allow for judicial review, to create the same compliance incentives that exist under the NEPA. Unfortunately, courts reviewing agency compliance with SBREFA and RFA have not applied the same level of searching scrutiny as they have given to compliance with the NEPA. Consequently, agencies are performing the bare minimum of analysis to satisfy judicial review, without focusing on the most important issue: how to minimize the negative economic impact of regulations on small entities.

Section 4 is intended to increase agency scrutiny directly, by amending the statute, rather than indirectly, as was attempted in SBREFA by adding a judicial review component. Thus, Section 4(a) amends Section 603 by requiring the initial regulatory flexibility analysis (“IFRA”) to contain a “detailed statement” rather than merely a “statement”; by striking the term “succinct” from Section 603(b)(2); by striking the term “where feasible” from Section

603(b)(3); and, by striking the phrase “to the extent practicable” from Section 603(b)(5). Agencies exploit these terms to avoid following the law’s clear intent. Subsection 4(a) also adds a new paragraph (6) to Section 603(b), requiring agencies to consider the cumulative economic impact of the proposed rule in light of existing rules. Finally, recognizing that a rule could affect some small entities more than others, Section 4(a)(7) requires agencies to describe any disproportionate economic impact on a specific class of small entities.

Regarding the final regulatory flexibility analysis (“FRFA”), Subsection 4(b)(1) amends Section 604 to require the “description” and “explanation” required by Section 604(b)(4), (5) and (6) to be “detailed.” This comports with the “detailed statement” required of agencies by NEPA. The bill also requires agencies to describe in the FRFA any disproportionate economic impact on a class of small entities. Subsection 4(b)(2) closes an oversight in the RFA to require an agency, when preparing an FRFA, to summarize all comments received throughout the process, not just comments received in response to an IFRA. Subsection 4(b)(3) updates the RFA technologically by requiring agencies to post FRFAs online.

Subsection 4(c) allows agencies to satisfy the RFA by making reference to already-completed analyses (for example, under NEPA) that satisfy the RFA’s criteria. If the necessary analysis already has been completed, then there is no reason to force an agency to go through the rote exercise of performing it again. Nevertheless, agencies must cite to the pre-existing analysis with specificity; vague or casual references will not suffice. Thus, Section 4(c) requires the agency to identify the “specific portion of another agenda or analysis.” In the same vein, when an agency certifies that a proposed rule will not have a “significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities,” Section 4(d) requires the agency to give a “detailed statement” and to identify the supporting “factual and legal” basis for the certification.

Finally, Subsection 4(e) makes quantifiable data (of the caliber required under the Information Quality Act) the standard for measuring the economic impact of a proposed rule on small entities. This will make agencies’ IRFAs and FRFAs more transparent, including for courts at the judicial review stage. If quantifiable data is unavailable then the agency must provide a “detailed statement explaining why quantification is not practicable or reliable” as well as “a more general descriptive statement” of the rule’s effects. The Chief Counsel for Advocacy will have the authority to promulgate regulations fleshing out these data quality standards.

Sec. 5. Repeal of Waiver Authority and Additional Powers of Chief Counsel.

Section 5 empowers the Chief Counsel for Advocacy to make rules governing agency compliance with the RFA. The status quo of agency compliance with the RFA is best described as inconsistent and recalcitrant. To address this problem, the Chief Counsel will promulgate rules regarding agency compliance within 270 days of enactment. This parallels the authority of the Council on Environmental Quality to issue regulations governing agency compliance with the NEPA. The Chief Counsel’s regulations will be promulgated according to notice-and-comment rulemaking and con-

sequently will receive *Chevron* deference. Agencies can issue supplementary compliance protocols, but no agency can overturn the Chief Counsel’s compliance rules.

Section 5 clarifies that the Chief Counsel may intervene in agency adjudications, like an *amicus curiae*, to advise the agency of how its decision will affect small entities. The Chief Counsel is not authorized to appeal any decision or otherwise to act as counsel for the small entity concerned. Section 5 also allows the Chief Counsel to file comments on any notice of proposed rulemaking, which will strengthen the Chief Counsel’s role as the main advocate for small entities in all Federal agency decision-making (not just when the RFA is concerned).

Section 5 repeals agencies’ authority to waive IRFAs and delay FRFAs by 180 days in emergency situations. The waiver provision of Section 608 of the RFA is redundant with Section 553 of the APA. The entire RFA process for determining the impact of a rule on small entities—advocacy review panels, IRFAs and FRFAs—is triggered by notice and comment rulemaking. The RFA’s current waiver provision is unnecessary in light of 5 U.S.C. § 553(b)(B), which allows an agency to bypass notice and comment rulemaking “for good cause,” which would apply in an emergency.

Sec. 6. Procedures for Gathering Comments.

Section 6 clarifies, improves and expands the advocacy review panel process. Currently, as amended by SBREFA, Section 609 requires OSHA and the EPA to hold advocacy review panels before publishing an IRFA, to receive input directly from small entities. The new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau also is required to conduct advocacy review panels.

Building on these reforms, Section 6 expands the use of advocacy review panels to all Federal agencies, including independent regulatory agencies, for any major rule (as defined by the Congressional Review Act) or for any rule that will have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. Section 6 clarifies the type of information the agency must provide to the Office of Advocacy (with an appropriate accommodation made for IRS rules) and describes the content and focus of the report itself, which is to be drafted by the Chief Counsel for Advocacy in consultation with other panel members. Rather than simply listing concerns raised by small entities in the panel process, the report should discuss in detail the regulation’s economic impact and analyze alternatives that will minimize costs or maximize benefits. Section 6 slightly reforms the panel’s composition and clarifies that the Office of Advocacy is solely responsible for selecting small entity representatives to advise the panel. Finally, Section 6 empowers the Chief Counsel for Advocacy to waive the panel process when it is “impractical, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest.”

Sec. 7. Periodic Review of Rules.

Section 7 reforms Section 610 to clarify how agencies must perform the periodic regulatory review. The law as currently written contains a number of ambiguities and shortcomings that warrant clarification and revision. Section 7 requires agencies to develop new periodic review plans within 180 days and to publish these plans online. Section 7 clarifies that the agency must review *all*

rules that have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities—regardless of whether the agency originally prepared an FRFA for the rule. The trigger is whether the rule *currently* has a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

Pursuant to this periodic review, the agency should amend the rule as necessary to maximize its benefits or minimize its costs to small entities, considering the factors given in the new Section 610(d). Finally, the agency must report the results of the review and publish in the Federal Register a list of rules to be reviewed and request comments.

Sec. 8. Judicial Review of Compliance with the RFA.

Under Section 8, judicial review is available when the agency publishes the final rule; the current law requires small entities to wait until the “final agency action” is complete before bringing suit alleging a violation of the RFA. Taken together, Sections 8(a) and (b) ensure that small entities will have prompt access to judicial review without procedural delays from agency-imposed exhaustion requirements. Section 8(c) makes appropriate conforming and technical corrections to Section 611. Lastly, Section 8(d) clarifies the Chief Counsel for Advocacy’s authority to file an amicus brief regarding agency compliance with the RFA.

Sec. 9. Jurisdiction of Court of Appeals for Challenges to Rules Implementing RFA.

Section 9(a) grants jurisdiction to the U.S. Court of Appeals to review challenges by small entities to rules promulgated by the Chief Counsel for Advocacy to implement the RFA. Section 9(b) makes technical conforming amendments. Section 9(c) clarifies the Chief Counsel’s authority to file an amicus brief in a lawsuit challenging an agency’s compliance with the Chief Counsel’s rules implementing the RFA.

Sec. 10. Establishment and Approval of Small Business Concern Size Standards by Chief Counsel for Advocacy.

Section 10 transfers from the SBA Administrator to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy the function of determining size standards of small businesses for purposes other than the Small Business Act and Small Business Investment Act of 1958.

Sec. 11. Clerical Amendments.

Section 11 contains necessary clerical amendments to make the U.S. Code consistent with the foregoing changes.

Changes in Existing Law Made by the Bill, as Reported

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE

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PART I—THE AGENCIES GENERALLY

* * * * *

CHAPTER 6—THE ANALYSIS OF REGULATORY FUNCTIONS

Sec.

601. Definitions.

* * * * *

[605. Avoidance of duplicative or unnecessary analyses.]

605. Incorporations by reference and certifications.

* * * * *

[607. Preparation of analyses.]

[608. Procedure for waiver or delay of completion.]

607. Quantification requirements.

608. Additional powers of Chief Counsel for Advocacy.

§ 601. Definitions

For purposes of this chapter—

[(1) the term]

(1) *AGENCY.*—*The term “agency” means an agency as defined in section 551(1) of this title[;].*

[(2) the term “rule” means any rule for which the agency publishes a general notice of proposed rulemaking pursuant to section 553(b) of this title, or any other law, including any rule of general applicability governing Federal grants to State and local governments for which the agency provides an opportunity for notice and public comment, except that the term “rule” does not include a rule of particular applicability relating to rates, wages, corporate or financial structures or reorganizations thereof, prices, facilities, appliances, services, or allowances therefor or to valuations, costs or accounting, or practices relating to such rates, wages, structures, prices, appliances, services, or allowances;]

(2) *RULE.*—*The term “rule” has the meaning given such term in section 551(4) of this title, except that such term does not include a rule of particular (and not general) applicability relating to rates, wages, corporate or financial structures or reorganizations thereof, prices, facilities, appliances, services, or allowances therefor or to valuations, costs or accounting, or practices relating to such rates, wages, structures, prices, appliances, services, or allowances.*

[(3) the term]

(3) *SMALL BUSINESS.*—*The term “small business” has the same meaning as the term “small business concern” under section 3 of the Small Business Act, unless an agency, after consultation with the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration and after opportunity for public comment, establishes one or more definitions of such term which are appropriate to the activities of the agency and publishes such definition(s) in the Federal Register[;].*

[(4) the term “small organization” means any not-for-profit enterprise which is independently owned and operated and is not dominant in its field, unless an agency establishes, after opportunity for public comment, one or more definitions of such term which are appropriate to the activities of the agency and publishes such definition(s) in the Federal Register;]

(4) *SMALL ORGANIZATION.*—

(A) *IN GENERAL.*—*The term “small organization” means any not-for-profit enterprise which, as of the issuance of the notice of proposed rulemaking—*

(i) in the case of an enterprise which is described by a classification code of the North American Industrial Classification System, does not exceed the size standard established by the Administrator of the Small Business Administration pursuant to section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632) for small business concerns described by such classification code; and

(ii) in the case of any other enterprise, has a net worth that does not exceed \$7,000,000 and has not more than 500 employees.

(B) *LOCAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.*—*In the case of any local labor organization, subparagraph (A) shall be applied without regard to any national or international organization of which such local labor organization is a part.*

(C) *AGENCY DEFINITIONS.*—*Subparagraphs (A) and (B) shall not apply to the extent that an agency, after consultation with the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration and after opportunity for public comment, establishes one or more definitions for such term which are appropriate to the activities of the agency and publishes such definitions in the Federal Register.*

[(5) the term]

(5) *SMALL GOVERNMENTAL JURISDICTION.*—*The term “small governmental jurisdiction” means governments of cities, counties, towns, townships, villages, school districts, or special districts, and tribal organizations (as defined in section 4(l) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b(l))), with a population of less than fifty thousand, unless an agency establishes, after opportunity for public comment, one or more definitions of such term which are appropriate to the activities of the agency and which are based on such factors as location in rural or sparsely populated areas or limited revenues due to the population of such jurisdiction, and publishes such definition(s) in the Federal Register[;].*

[(6) the term]

(6) *SMALL ENTITY.*—*The term “small entity” shall have the same meaning as the terms “small business”, “small organization” and “small governmental jurisdiction” defined in paragraphs (3), (4) and (5) of this section[; and].*

[(7) the term “collection of information”—

[(A) means the obtaining, causing to be obtained, soliciting, or requiring the disclosure to third parties or the public, of facts or opinions by or for an agency, regardless of form or format, calling for either—

【(i) answers to identical questions posed to, or identical reporting or recordkeeping requirements imposed on, 10 or more persons, other than agencies, instrumentalities, or employees of the United States; or

【(ii) answers to questions posed to agencies, instrumentalities, or employees of the United States which are to be used for general statistical purposes; and

【(B) shall not include a collection of information described under section 3518(c)(1) of title 44, United States Code.

【(8) RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENT.—The term “recordkeeping requirement” means a requirement imposed by an agency on persons to maintain specified records.】

(7) *COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.*—The term “collection of information” has the meaning given such term in section 3502(3) of title 44.

(8) *RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENT.*—The term “recordkeeping requirement” has the meaning given such term in section 3502(13) of title 44.

(9) *ECONOMIC IMPACT.*—The term “economic impact” means, with respect to a proposed or final rule—

(A) any direct economic effect on small entities of such rule; and

(B) any indirect economic effect on small entities which is reasonably foreseeable and results from such rule (without regard to whether small entities will be directly regulated by the rule).

(10) *LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN.*—

(A) *IN GENERAL.*—The term “land management plan” means—

(i) any plan developed by the Secretary of Agriculture under section 6 of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604); and

(ii) any plan developed by the Secretary of the Interior under section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712).

(B) *REVISION.*—The term “revision” means any change to a land management plan which—

(i) in the case of a plan described in subparagraph (A)(i), is made under section 6(f)(5) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(5)); or

(ii) in the case of a plan described in subparagraph (A)(ii), is made under section 1610.5–6 of title 43, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation).

(C) *AMENDMENT.*—The term “amendment” means any change to a land management plan which—

(i) in the case of a plan described in subparagraph (A)(i), is made under section 6(f)(4) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(4)) and with respect to which the Secretary of Agriculture prepares a statement described

in section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)); or
(ii) in the case of a plan described in subparagraph (A)(ii), is made under section 1610.5-5 of title 43, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation) and with respect to which the Secretary of the Interior prepares a statement described in section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)).

§ 602. Regulatory agenda

(a) During the months of October and April of each year, each agency shall publish in the Federal Register a regulatory flexibility agenda which shall contain—

(1) * * *

(2) a summary of the nature of any such rule under consideration for each subject area listed in the agenda pursuant to paragraph (1), the objectives and legal basis for the issuance of the rule, and an approximate schedule for completing action on any rule for which the agency has issued a general notice of proposed rulemaking [, and];

(3) *a brief description of the sector of the North American Industrial Classification System that is primarily affected by any rule which the agency expects to propose or promulgate which is likely to have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities; and*

[(3)] (4) the name and telephone number of an agency official knowledgeable concerning the items listed in paragraph (1).

* * * * *

[(c) Each agency shall endeavor to provide notice of each regulatory flexibility agenda to small entities or their representatives through direct notification or publication of the agenda in publications likely to be obtained by such small entities and shall invite comments upon each subject area on the agenda.]

(c) *Each agency shall prominently display a plain language summary of the information contained in the regulatory flexibility agenda published under subsection (a) on its website within 3 days of its publication in the Federal Register. The Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration shall compile and prominently display a plain language summary of the regulatory agendas referenced in subsection (a) for each agency on its website within 3 days of their publication in the Federal Register.*

* * * * *

§ 603. Initial regulatory flexibility analysis

(a) Whenever an agency is required by section 553 of this title, or any other law, to publish general notice of proposed rulemaking for any proposed rule, [or] publishes a notice of proposed rulemaking for an interpretative rule involving the internal revenue laws of the United States, or publishes a revision or amendment to a land management plan, the agency shall prepare and make available for public comment an initial regulatory flexibility analysis. Such analysis shall describe the impact of the proposed rule on

small entities. The initial regulatory flexibility analysis or a summary shall be published in the Federal Register at the time of the publication of general notice of proposed rulemaking for the rule. The agency shall transmit a copy of the initial regulatory flexibility analysis to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration. In the case of an interpretative rule involving the internal revenue laws of the United States, this chapter applies to interpretative rules published in the Federal Register for codification in the Code of Federal Regulations, but only to the extent that such interpretative rules impose on small entities a collection of information requirement~~...~~ or a recordkeeping requirement, and without regard to whether such requirement is imposed by statute or regulation.

[(b) Each initial regulatory flexibility analysis required under this section shall contain—

[(1) a description of the reasons why action by the agency is being considered;

[(2) a succinct statement of the objectives of, and legal basis for, the proposed rule;

[(3) a description of and, where feasible, an estimate of the number of small entities to which the proposed rule will apply;

[(4) a description of the projected reporting, recordkeeping and other compliance requirements of the proposed rule, including an estimate of the classes of small entities which will be subject to the requirement and the type of professional skills necessary for preparation of the report or record;

[(5) an identification, to the extent practicable, of all relevant Federal rules which may duplicate, overlap or conflict with the proposed rule.]

(b) Each initial regulatory flexibility analysis required under this section shall contain a detailed statement—

(1) describing the reasons why action by the agency is being considered;

(2) describing the objectives of, and legal basis for, the proposed rule;

(3) estimating the number and type of small entities to which the proposed rule will apply;

(4) describing the projected reporting, recordkeeping, and other compliance requirements of the proposed rule, including an estimate of the classes of small entities which will be subject to the requirement and the type of professional skills necessary for preparation of the report and record;

(5) describing all relevant Federal rules which may duplicate, overlap, or conflict with the proposed rule, or the reasons why such a description could not be provided;

(6) estimating the additional cumulative economic impact of the proposed rule on small entities beyond that already imposed on the class of small entities by the agency or why such an estimate is not available; and

(7) describing any disproportionate economic impact on small entities or a specific class of small entities.

(c) **Each initial regulatory flexibility analysis shall also contain a description of any significant alternatives to the proposed rule which accomplish the stated objectives of applicable statutes and which minimize any significant economic impact of the pro-**

posed rule on small entities.] *Each initial regulatory flexibility analysis shall also contain a detailed description of alternatives to the proposed rule which minimize any adverse significant economic impact or maximize any beneficial significant economic impact on small entities.* Consistent with the stated objectives of applicable statutes, the analysis shall discuss significant alternatives such as—

(1) * * *

* * * * *

[(d)(1) For a covered agency, as defined in section 609(d)(2), each initial regulatory flexibility analysis shall include a description of—

[(A) any projected increase in the cost of credit for small entities;

[(B) any significant alternatives to the proposed rule which accomplish the stated objectives of applicable statutes and which minimize any increase in the cost of credit for small entities; and

[(C) advice and recommendations of representatives of small entities relating to issues described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) and subsection (b).

[(2) A covered agency, as defined in section 609(d)(2), shall, for purposes of complying with paragraph (1)(C)—

[(A) identify representatives of small entities in consultation with the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration; and

[(B) collect advice and recommendations from the representatives identified under subparagraph (A) relating to issues described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) and subsection (b).]

§ 604. Final regulatory flexibility analysis

(a) When an agency promulgates a final rule under section 553 of this title, after being required by that section or any other law to publish a general notice of proposed rulemaking, [or] promulgates a final interpretative rule involving the internal revenue laws of the United States as described in section 603(a), *or adopts a revision or amendment to a land management plan*, the agency shall prepare a final regulatory flexibility analysis. Each final regulatory flexibility analysis shall contain—

(1) * * *

(2) a statement of the significant issues raised by the public comments in response to the initial regulatory flexibility analysis (*or certification of the proposed rule under section 605(b)*), a statement of the assessment of the agency of such issues, and a statement of any changes made in the proposed rule as a result of such comments;

* * * * *

(4) a *detailed* description of and an estimate of the number of small entities to which the rule will apply or [an explanation] *a detailed explanation* of why no such estimate is available;

(5) a *detailed* description of the projected reporting, record-keeping and other compliance requirements of the rule, includ-

ing an estimate of the classes of small entities which will be subject to the requirement and the type of professional skills necessary for preparation of the report or record;

(6) a *detailed* description of the steps the agency has taken to **[minimize the significant economic impact]** *minimize the adverse significant economic impact or maximize the beneficial significant economic impact* on small entities consistent with the stated objectives of applicable statutes, including a statement of the factual, policy, and legal reasons for selecting the alternative adopted in the final rule and why each one of the other significant alternatives to the rule considered by the agency which affect the impact on small entities was rejected; and

[(6) for a covered agency, as defined in section 609(d)(2), a description of the steps the agency has taken to minimize any additional cost of credit for small entities.]

(7) describing any disproportionate economic impact on small entities or a specific class of small entities.

[(b) The agency shall make copies of the final regulatory flexibility analysis available to members of the public and shall publish in the Federal Register such analysis or a summary thereof.]

(b) The agency shall make copies of the final regulatory flexibility analysis available to the public, including placement of the entire analysis on the agency's website, and shall publish in the Federal Register the final regulatory flexibility analysis, or a summary thereof which includes the telephone number, mailing address, and link to the website where the complete analysis may be obtained.

**§ 605. [Avoidance of duplicative or unnecessary analyses]
Incorporations by reference and certifications**

[(a) Any Federal agency may perform the analyses required by sections 602, 603, and 604 of this title in conjunction with or as a part of any other agenda or analysis required by any other law if such other analysis satisfies the provisions of such sections.]

(a) A Federal agency shall be treated as satisfying any requirement regarding the content of an agenda or regulatory flexibility analysis under section 602, 603, or 604, if such agency provides in such agenda or analysis a cross-reference to the specific portion of another agenda or analysis which is required by any other law and which satisfies such requirement.

(b) Sections 603 and 604 of this title shall not apply to any proposed or final rule if the head of the agency certifies that the rule will not, if promulgated, have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. If the head of the agency makes a certification under the preceding sentence, the agency shall publish such certification in the Federal Register at the time of publication of general notice of proposed rulemaking for the rule or at the time of publication of the final rule, along with a *detailed* statement providing the factual *and legal* basis for such certification. The agency shall provide such certification and statement to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration.

* * * * *

§ 607. Preparation of analyses

【In complying with the provisions of sections 603 and 604 of this title, an agency may provide either a quantifiable or numerical description of the effects of a proposed rule or alternatives to the proposed rule, or more general descriptive statements if quantification is not practicable or reliable.

§ 608. Procedure for waiver or delay of completion

【(a) An agency head may waive or delay the completion of some or all of the requirements of section 603 of this title by publishing in the Federal Register, not later than the date of publication of the final rule, a written finding, with reasons therefor, that the final rule is being promulgated in response to an emergency that makes compliance or timely compliance with the provisions of section 603 of this title impracticable.

【(b) Except as provided in section 605(b), an agency head may not waive the requirements of section 604 of this title. An agency head may delay the completion of the requirements of section 604 of this title for a period of not more than one hundred and eighty days after the date of publication in the Federal Register of a final rule by publishing in the Federal Register, not later than such date of publication, a written finding, with reasons therefor, that the final rule is being promulgated in response to an emergency that makes timely compliance with the provisions of section 604 of this title impracticable. If the agency has not prepared a final regulatory analysis pursuant to section 604 of this title within one hundred and eighty days from the date of publication of the final rule, such rule shall lapse and have no effect. Such rule shall not be repromulgated until a final regulatory flexibility analysis has been completed by the agency.】

§ 607. Quantification requirements

In complying with sections 603 and 604, an agency shall provide—

(1) a quantifiable or numerical description of the effects of the proposed or final rule and alternatives to the proposed or final rule; or

(2) a more general descriptive statement and a detailed statement explaining why quantification is not practicable or reliable.

§ 608. Additional powers of Chief Counsel for Advocacy

(a)(1) Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration shall, after opportunity for notice and comment under section 553, issue rules governing agency compliance with this chapter. The Chief Counsel may modify or amend such rules after notice and comment under section 553. This chapter (other than this subsection) shall not apply with respect to the issuance, modification, and amendment of rules under this paragraph.

(2) An agency shall not issue rules which supplement the rules issued under subsection (a) unless such agency has first consulted with the Chief Counsel for Advocacy to ensure that such supple-

mental rules comply with this chapter and the rules issued under paragraph (1).

(b) Notwithstanding any other law, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration may intervene in any agency adjudication (unless such agency is authorized to impose a fine or penalty under such adjudication), and may inform the agency of the impact that any decision on the record may have on small entities. The Chief Counsel shall not initiate an appeal with respect to any adjudication in which the Chief Counsel intervenes under this subsection.

(c) The Chief Counsel for Advocacy may file comments in response to any agency notice requesting comment, regardless of whether the agency is required to file a general notice of proposed rulemaking under section 553.

§ 609. Procedures for gathering comments

(a) * * *

[(b) Prior to publication of an initial regulatory flexibility analysis which a covered agency is required to conduct by this chapter—

[(1) a covered agency shall notify the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration and provide the Chief Counsel with information on the potential impacts of the proposed rule on small entities and the type of small entities that might be affected;

[(2) not later than 15 days after the date of receipt of the materials described in paragraph (1), the Chief Counsel shall identify individuals representative of affected small entities for the purpose of obtaining advice and recommendations from those individuals about the potential impacts of the proposed rule;

[(3) the agency shall convene a review panel for such rule consisting wholly of full time Federal employees of the office within the agency responsible for carrying out the proposed rule, the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs within the Office of Management and Budget, and the Chief Counsel;

[(4) the panel shall review any material the agency has prepared in connection with this chapter, including any draft proposed rule, collect advice and recommendations of each individual small entity representative identified by the agency after consultation with the Chief Counsel, on issues related to subsections 603(b), paragraphs (3), (4) and (5) and 603(c);

[(5) not later than 60 days after the date a covered agency convenes a review panel pursuant to paragraph (3), the review panel shall report on the comments of the small entity representatives and its findings as to issues related to subsections 603(b), paragraphs (3), (4) and (5) and 603(c), provided that such report shall be made public as part of the rulemaking record; and

[(6) where appropriate, the agency shall modify the proposed rule, the initial regulatory flexibility analysis or the decision on whether an initial regulatory flexibility analysis is required.

[(c) An agency may in its discretion apply subsection (b) to rules that the agency intends to certify under subsection 605(b),

but the agency believes may have a greater than de minimis impact on a substantial number of small entities.

[(d) For purposes of this section, the term “covered agency” means—

- [(1) the Environmental Protection Agency;
- [(2) the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau of the Federal Reserve System; and
- [(3) the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the Department of Labor.

[(e) The Chief Counsel for Advocacy, in consultation with the individuals identified in subsection (b)(2), and with the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs within the Office of Management and Budget, may waive the requirements of subsections (b)(3), (b)(4), and (b)(5) by including in the rulemaking record a written finding, with reasons therefor, that those requirements would not advance the effective participation of small entities in the rulemaking process. For purposes of this subsection, the factors to be considered in making such a finding are as follows:

[(1) In developing a proposed rule, the extent to which the covered agency consulted with individuals representative of affected small entities with respect to the potential impacts of the rule and took such concerns into consideration.

[(2) Special circumstances requiring prompt issuance of the rule.

[(3) Whether the requirements of subsection (b) would provide the individuals identified in subsection (b)(2) with a competitive advantage relative to other small entities.]

(b)(1) Prior to publication of any proposed rule described in subsection (e), an agency making such rule shall notify the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration and provide the Chief Counsel with—

(A) all materials prepared or utilized by the agency in making the proposed rule, including the draft of the proposed rule; and

(B) information on the potential adverse and beneficial economic impacts of the proposed rule on small entities and the type of small entities that might be affected.

(2) An agency shall not be required under paragraph (1) to provide the exact language of any draft if the rule—

(A) relates to the internal revenue laws of the United States; or

(B) is proposed by an independent regulatory agency (as defined in section 3502(5) of title 44).

(c) Not later than 15 days after the receipt of such materials and information under subsection (b), the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration shall—

(1) identify small entities or representatives of small entities or a combination of both for the purpose of obtaining advice, input, and recommendations from those persons about the potential economic impacts of the proposed rule and the compliance of the agency with section 603; and

(2) convene a review panel consisting of an employee from the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, an employee from the agency making the rule, and in the case

of an agency other than an independent regulatory agency (as defined in section 3502(5) of title 44), an employee from the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of the Office of Management and Budget to review the materials and information provided to the Chief Counsel under subsection (b).

(d)(1) Not later than 60 days after the review panel described in subsection (c)(2) is convened, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration shall, after consultation with the members of such panel, submit a report to the agency and, in the case of an agency other than an independent regulatory agency (as defined in section 3502(5) of title 44), the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of the Office of Management and Budget.

(2) Such report shall include an assessment of the economic impact of the proposed rule on small entities, including an assessment of the proposed rule's impact on the cost that small entities pay for energy, and a discussion of any alternatives that will minimize adverse significant economic impacts or maximize beneficial significant economic impacts on small entities.

(3) Such report shall become part of the rulemaking record. In the publication of the proposed rule, the agency shall explain what actions, if any, the agency took in response to such report.

(e) A proposed rule is described by this subsection if the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of the Office of Management and Budget, the head of the agency (or the delegatee of the head of the agency), or an independent regulatory agency determines that the proposed rule is likely to result in—

(1) an annual effect on the economy of \$100,000,000 or more;

(2) a major increase in costs or prices for consumers, individual industries, Federal, State, or local governments, tribal organizations, or geographic regions;

(3) significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or on the ability of United States-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises in domestic and export markets; or

(4) a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

(f) Upon application by the agency, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration may waive the requirements of subsections (b) through (e) if the Chief Counsel determines that compliance with the requirements of such subsections are impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest.

* * * * *

¶610. Periodic review of rules

[(a)] Within one hundred and eighty days after the effective date of this chapter, each agency shall publish in the Federal Register a plan for the periodic review of the rules issued by the agency which have or will have a significant economic impact upon a substantial number of small entities. Such plan may be amended by the agency at any time by publishing the revision in the Federal Register. The purpose of the review shall be to determine whether such rules should be continued without change, or should be amended or rescinded, consistent with the stated objectives of applicable statutes, to minimize any significant economic impact of

the rules upon a substantial number of such small entities. The plan shall provide for the review of all such agency rules existing on the effective date of this chapter within ten years of that date and for the review of such rules adopted after the effective date of this chapter within ten years of the publication of such rules as the final rule. If the head of the agency determines that completion of the review of existing rules is not feasible by the established date, he shall so certify in a statement published in the Federal Register and may extend the completion date by one year at a time for a total of not more than five years.

[(b) In reviewing rules to minimize any significant economic impact of the rule on a substantial number of small entities in a manner consistent with the stated objectives of applicable statutes, the agency shall consider the following factors—

- [(1) the continued need for the rule;
- [(2) the nature of complaints or comments received concerning the rule from the public;
- [(3) the complexity of the rule;
- [(4) the extent to which the rule overlaps, duplicates or conflicts with other Federal rules, and, to the extent feasible, with State and local governmental rules; and
- [(5) the length of time since the rule has been evaluated or the degree to which technology, economic conditions, or other factors have changed in the area affected by the rule.

[(c) Each year, each agency shall publish in the Federal Register a list of the rules which have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities, which are to be reviewed pursuant to this section during the succeeding twelve months. The list shall include a brief description of each rule and the need for and legal basis of such rule and shall invite public comment upon the rule.]

§ 610. Periodic review of rules

(a) Not later than 180 days after the enactment of the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013, each agency shall publish in the Federal Register and place on its website a plan for the periodic review of rules issued by the agency which the head of the agency determines have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. Such determination shall be made without regard to whether the agency performed an analysis under section 604. The purpose of the review shall be to determine whether such rules should be continued without change, or should be amended or rescinded, consistent with the stated objectives of applicable statutes, to minimize any adverse significant economic impacts or maximize any beneficial significant economic impacts on a substantial number of small entities. Such plan may be amended by the agency at any time by publishing the revision in the Federal Register and subsequently placing the amended plan on the agency's website.

(b) The plan shall provide for the review of all such agency rules existing on the date of the enactment of the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013 within 10 years of the date of publication of the plan in the Federal Register and for review of rules adopted after the date of enactment of the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013 within 10 years after the publication of the

final rule in the Federal Register. If the head of the agency determines that completion of the review of existing rules is not feasible by the established date, the head of the agency shall so certify in a statement published in the Federal Register and may extend the review for not longer than 2 years after publication of notice of extension in the Federal Register. Such certification and notice shall be sent to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration and the Congress.

(c) The plan shall include a section that details how an agency will conduct outreach to and meaningfully include small businesses for the purposes of carrying out this section. The agency shall include in this section a plan for how the agency will contact small businesses and gather their input on existing agency rules.

(d) Each agency shall annually submit a report regarding the results of its review pursuant to such plan to the Congress, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, and, in the case of agencies other than independent regulatory agencies (as defined in section 3502(5) of title 44) to the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of the Office of Management and Budget. Such report shall include the identification of any rule with respect to which the head of the agency made a determination described in paragraph (5) or (6) of subsection (e) and a detailed explanation of the reasons for such determination.

(e) In reviewing a rule pursuant to subsections (a) through (d), the agency shall amend or rescind the rule to minimize any adverse significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities or disproportionate economic impact on a specific class of small entities, or maximize any beneficial significant economic impact of the rule on a substantial number of small entities to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the stated objectives of applicable statutes. In amending or rescinding the rule, the agency shall consider the following factors:

- (1) The continued need for the rule.*
- (2) The nature of complaints received by the agency from small entities concerning the rule.*
- (3) Comments by the Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman and the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration.*
- (4) The complexity of the rule.*
- (5) The extent to which the rule overlaps, duplicates, or conflicts with other Federal rules and, unless the head of the agency determines it to be infeasible, State, territorial, and local rules.*
- (6) The contribution of the rule to the cumulative economic impact of all Federal rules on the class of small entities affected by the rule, unless the head of the agency determines that such calculations cannot be made and reports that determination in the annual report required under subsection (d).*

(7) The length of time since the rule has been evaluated or the degree to which technology, economic conditions, or other factors have changed in the area affected by the rule.

(f) The agency shall publish in the Federal Register and on its website a list of rules to be reviewed pursuant to such plan. Such publication shall include a brief description of the rule, the reason why the agency determined that it has a significant economic im-

fact on a substantial number of small entities (without regard to whether it had prepared a final regulatory flexibility analysis for the rule), and request comments from the public, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, and the Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman concerning the enforcement of the rule.

§ 611. Judicial review

(a)(1) For any rule subject to this chapter, a small entity that is adversely affected or aggrieved by **final agency action** *such rule* is entitled to judicial review of agency compliance with the requirements of sections 601, 604, 605(b), **608(b),** and 610 in accordance with chapter 7. Agency compliance with sections 607 and 609(a) shall be judicially reviewable in connection with judicial review of section 604.

(2) Each court having jurisdiction to review such rule for compliance with section 553, or under any other provision of law, *(or which would have such jurisdiction if publication of the final rule constituted final agency action)* shall have jurisdiction to review any claims of noncompliance with sections 601, 604, 605(b), **608(b),** and 610 in accordance with chapter 7. Agency compliance with sections 607 and 609(a) shall be judicially reviewable in connection with judicial review of section 604.

[(3)(A) A small entity]

(3) A *small entity* may seek such review during the period beginning on the date of **final agency action** *publication of the final rule* and ending one year later, except that, *in the case of a rule for which the date of final agency action is the same date as the publication of the final rule*, where a provision of law requires that an action challenging a final agency action be commenced before the expiration of one year, such lesser period shall apply to an action for judicial review under this section.

[(B) In the case where an agency delays the issuance of a final regulatory flexibility analysis pursuant to section 608(b) of this chapter, an action for judicial review under this section shall be filed not later than—

[(i) one year after the date the analysis is made available to the public, or

[(ii) where a provision of law requires that an action challenging a final agency regulation be commenced before the expiration of the 1-year period, the number of days specified in such provision of law that is after the date the analysis is made available to the public.]

* * * * *

§ 612. Reports and intervention rights

(a) * * *

(b) The Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration is authorized to appear as amicus curiae in any action brought in a court of the United States to review a rule *or agency compliance with section 601, 603, 604, 605(b), 609, or 610*. In any such action, the Chief Counsel is authorized to present his or her views with respect to compliance with this chapter, *chapter 5, and*

chapter 7, the adequacy of the rulemaking record with respect to small entities and the effect of the rule on small entities.

* * * * *

TITLE 28, UNITED STATES CODE

* * * * *

PART VI—PARTICULAR PROCEEDINGS

* * * * *

**CHAPTER 158—ORDERS OF FEDERAL AGENCIES;
REVIEW**

§ 2341. Definitions

As used in this chapter—

(1) * * *

* * * * *

(3) “agency” means—

(A) * * *

* * * * *

(D) the Secretary, when the order is under section 812 of the Fair Housing Act; **[and]**

(E) the Board, when the order was entered by the Surface Transportation Board~~].~~; *and*

(F) *the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, when the final rule is under section 608(a) of title 5.*

§ 2342. Jurisdiction of court of appeals

The court of appeals (other than the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit) has exclusive jurisdiction to enjoin, set aside, suspend (in whole or in part), or to determine the validity of—

(1) * * *

* * * * *

(6) all final orders under section 812 of the Fair Housing Act; **[and]**

(7) all final agency actions described in section 20114(c) of title 49~~].~~; *and*

(8) *all final rules under section 608(a) of title 5.*

* * * * *

SMALL BUSINESS ACT

* * * * *

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

(a) **SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS.—**

(1) * * *

(2) ESTABLISHMENT OF SIZE STANDARDS.—

【(A) IN GENERAL.—In addition to the criteria specified in paragraph (1), the Administrator may specify detailed definitions or standards by which a business concern may be determined to be a small business concern for the purposes of this Act or any other Act.】

(A) IN GENERAL.—*In addition to the criteria specified in paragraph (1)—*

(i) the Administrator may specify detailed definitions or standards by which a business concern may be determined to be a small business concern for purposes of this Act or the Small Business Investment Act of 1958; and

(ii) the Chief Counsel for Advocacy may specify such definitions or standards for purposes of any other Act.

* * * * *

(C) REQUIREMENTS.—Unless specifically authorized by statute, no Federal department or agency may prescribe a size standard for categorizing a business concern as a small business concern, unless such proposed size standard—

(i) * * *

* * * * *

【(iii) is approved by the Administrator.】

(iii) except in the case of a size standard prescribed by the Administrator, is approved by the Chief Counsel for Advocacy.

(3) VARIATION BY INDUSTRY AND CONSIDERATION OF OTHER FACTORS.—When establishing or approving any size standard pursuant to paragraph (2), the Administrator or Chief Counsel for Advocacy, as appropriate shall ensure that the size standard varies from industry to industry to the extent necessary to reflect the differing characteristics of the various industries and consider other factors deemed to be relevant by the Administrator or Chief Counsel for Advocacy.

* * * * *

(9) JUDICIAL REVIEW OF STANDARDS APPROVED BY CHIEF COUNSEL.—*In the case of an action for judicial review of a rule which includes a definition or standard approved by the Chief Counsel for Advocacy under this subsection, the party seeking such review shall be entitled to join the Chief Counsel as a party in such action.*

* * * * *

SECTION 212 OF THE SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT FAIRNESS ACT OF 1996

SEC. 212. COMPLIANCE GUIDES.

(a) COMPLIANCE GUIDE.—

(1) * * *

* * * * *

【(5) AGENCY PREPARATION OF GUIDES.—The agency shall, in its sole discretion, taking into account the subject matter of the rule and the language of relevant statutes, ensure that the guide is written using sufficiently plain language likely to be understood by affected small entities. Agencies may prepare separate guides covering groups or classes of similarly affected small entities and may cooperate with associations of small entities to develop and distribute such guides. An agency may prepare guides and apply this section with respect to a rule or a group of related rules.】

(5) AGENCY PREPARATION OF GUIDES.—The agency shall, in its sole discretion, taking into account the subject matter of the rule and the language of relevant statutes, ensure that the guide is written using sufficiently plain language likely to be understood by affected small entities. Agencies may prepare separate guides covering groups or classes of similarly affected small entities and may cooperate with associations of small entities to distribute such guides. In developing guides, agencies shall solicit input from affected small entities or associations of affected small entities. An agency may prepare guides and apply this section with respect to a rule or a group of related rules.

* * * * *

Dissenting Views

INTRODUCTION

H.R. 2542, the “Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013,” (RFIA) amends the Regulatory Flexibility Act¹ (RFA) in ways that will significantly hinder the promulgation of critical public health and safety rules by Federal administrative agencies. While H.R. 2542’s proponents claim that these changes to the RFA will ease the alleged burden of regulatory compliance on small businesses and other small entities, an examination of the bill’s provisions makes clear that the bill is really intended to slow down, if not halt, most agency rulemaking.

H.R. 2542 does nothing to help small businesses and other small entities reduce compliance costs or to ensure agency compliance with the RFA. Instead, the bill imposes numerous and unnecessary burdens on agencies while ignoring the fact that small businesses,

¹Pub. L. No. 96–354, 94 Stat. 1164 (codified at 5 U.S.C. §§601–612). The RFA requires Federal agencies to assess the impact of proposed rules on “small entities,” which it defines as either a small business, small organization, or small governmental jurisdiction. The RFA requires agencies to prepare a regulatory flexibility analysis at the time certain proposed and final rules are promulgated. The analysis must: (1) describe the reasons why action by the agency is necessary; (2) include a succinct statement of the regulation’s objectives and legal basis; (3) describe which small entities are affected by the rule as well as provide an estimate of the number of such entities so affected; (4) describe anticipated reporting, recordkeeping, and other compliance requirements; (5) identify any relevant Federal regulations that may duplicate, overlap, or conflict with the rule, and (6) identify any significant alternatives to the rule. This analysis is not required, however, if the agency certifies that the rule will not have a “significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.”

In 1996, the RFA was amended by Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104–121, §242, 110 Stat. 847, 857 (1996), to permit judicial review under certain circumstances of, among other matters, an agency’s regulatory flexibility analysis for a final rule and any certification by an agency averring that a rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

like their larger counterparts, can substantially impact the health and safety of their workers as well as that of the general public.² Small businesses, like all businesses, provide services and goods that also affect our lives and can carry the same risk of harm as the services and goods that large businesses provide. It makes no difference to someone who is breathing dirty air or drinking poisoned water whether the hazards come from a small or large business.

Accordingly, we must oppose attempts like H.R. 2542 that create an unacceptable barrier to agency rulemaking. Specifically we are opposed to this legislation because it: (1) is based on the false premise that regulatory costs stifle economic growth and job creation; (2) will threaten public health and safety by severely undermining Federal agency rulemaking; (3) imposes additional duties on agencies while failing to provide for any additional resources to meet these burdens; and (4) allows more opportunities for industry to delay or defeat proposed rulemakings.

Consumer groups and organizations concerned with protecting public health and safety have raised many of these same concerns. The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards, a broad coalition of 72 environmental, labor, and consumer organizations, including the AFL-CIO, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the American Lung Association, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, the League of Conservation Voters, Public Citizen, and the Union of Concerned Scientists, strongly opposed substantially similar legislation to H.R. 2542 in the 112th Congress.³

²For example, workplace safety rules may impact tens of millions of Americans who work for small businesses. As of 2008, there were 5.93 million small firms employing 120,903,551 workers, including 5,294,970 firms of 20 or fewer employees, employing 21,461,733 workers and 5,684,120 firms of 50 or fewer employees, employing 33,453,284 workers, according to the SBA. See U.S. Census Bureau, Statistics of U.S. Businesses, U.S. NAICS Sectors, small employment sizes, 2008, available at <http://www.census.gov/econ/sub/>. There were 4,383 fatal occupational injuries last year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Press Release, U.S. Dept of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2012 (Preliminary Results), Aug. 13, 2013, available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cfoi.pdf>. Additionally, an analysis by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the American Cancer Society, and Emory University's School of Public Health estimates that after factoring in disease and injury data "there are a total of 55,200 US deaths annually resulting from occupational disease or injury (range 32,200-78,200)." Kyle Steenland *et al.*, Dying for Work: The Magnitude of US Mortality from Selected Cases of Death Associated with Occupation, 43 *Am. J. Industrial Medicine* 461 (2003).

³The other organizations include: Alliance for Justice, American Association of University Professors, American Federation of Teachers, Americans for Financial Reform, American Rivers, American Values Campaign, American Sustainable Business Council, BlueGreen Alliance, Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform, Center for Effective Government, Center for Food Safety, Center for Foodborne Illness Research and Prevention, Center for Independent Living, Center for Science in the Public Interest, Citizens for Sludge-Free Land, Clean Air Watch, Clean Water Network, Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, Countercorp, Cumberland Countians for Peace and Justice, Demos, Economic Policy Institute, Edmonds Institute, Environment America, Farmworker Justice, Free Press, Friends of the Earth, Green for All, Health Care for America Now, In the Public Interest, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, International Center for Technology Assessment, International Union of United Automobile, Aerospace, & Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, Main Street Alliance, National Association of Consumer Advocates, National Center for Healthy Housing, National Consumers League, National Council for Occupational Safety and Health, National Employment Law Project, National Lawyers Guild Louisville Chapter, National Women's Health Network, National Women's Law Center, Natural Resources Defense Council, Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility of the United Church of Christ, New Jersey Work Environment Council, New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health, Oregon Peaceworks, People for the American Way, Protect All Children's Environment, Reproductive Health Technologies Project, Safe Tables Our Priority (S.T.O.P.), Service Employees International Union, Southern Illinois Committee for Occupational Safety and Health, The Arc of the United States, The Partnership for Working Families, Trust for America's Health, U.S. Camber Watch, U.S.

Moreover, the Obama administration issued a veto threat against the earlier iteration of the RFIA in the 112th Congress, explaining that the RFIA “would impede the ability of agencies to provide the public with basic protections, and create needless confusion and delay that would prove disruptive for businesses, as well as for state, tribal and local governments.”⁴

We wholeheartedly agree with the Administration’s assessment of the RFIA and for the reasons discussed below, we respectfully dissent and urge our colleagues to reject this seriously flawed legislation.

BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

I. BACKGROUND

Enacted in 1980, the RFA requires Federal agencies to assess the impact of proposed regulations on “small entities,” which the Act defines as either a small business, small organization, or small governmental jurisdiction.⁵ The RFA requires agencies to prepare a regulatory flexibility analysis at the time certain proposed and final rules are promulgated. The analysis must: (1) describe the reasons why action by the agency is necessary; (2) include a succinct statement of the regulation’s objectives and legal basis; (3) describe which small entities are affected by the rule as well as provide an estimate of the number of such entities so affected; (4) describe anticipated reporting, recordkeeping, and other compliance requirements, (5) identify any relevant Federal regulations that may duplicate, overlap, or conflict with the rule, and (6) identify any significant alternatives to the rule.⁶ This analysis is not required, however, if the agency certifies that the rule will not have a “significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.”⁷ Whether a proposed rule will have such an impact is, therefore, the threshold inquiry under the RFA.

In addition, the RFA requires each agency to publish twice a year in the Federal Register a regulatory flexibility agenda identifying regulations that have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities which the agency expects to propose.⁸ Further, the RFA requires agencies to conduct periodic reviews of rules having a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities⁹ and to ensure that small entities have an opportunity to participate in the rulemaking process.¹⁰

Congress amended the RFA in 1996 with the enactment of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA)¹¹ to permit judicial review of an agency’s regulatory flexibility analysis for a final rule and of an agency’s certification that a rule

PIRG, Union Plus, United Food and Commercial Workers Union, United Steelworkers, Waterkeeper Alliance, Worksafe. See Letter from 72 organizations to Representative John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI), Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary (Nov. 29, 2011) (on file with the United States House of Representatives, Comm. on the Judiciary, Democrats).

⁴ Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, Statement of Administration Policy for H.R. 527—Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2011 (Nov. 29, 2011) (emphasis in original), available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/legislative/sap/112/saphr527r_20111129.pdf.

⁵ 5 U.S.C. § 601(6) (2013).

⁶ See 5 U.S.C. §§ 603, 604 (2013).

⁷ 5 U.S.C. § 605(b) (2013).

⁸ 5 U.S.C. § 602 (2013).

⁹ 5 U.S.C. § 610 (2013).

¹⁰ 5 U.S.C. § 609 (2013).

¹¹ Pub. L. No. 104–121, § 242, 110 Stat. 847, 857 (1996).

would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. SBREFA also requires that proposed rules of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) be subject to an advocacy review panel consisting of representatives of the agency promulgating the rule, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, and the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA).¹²

II. DESCRIPTION

H.R. 2542's supporters contend that agencies have failed to comply with the RFA. In response to this purported concern, H.R. 2542 amends the RFA to expand the scope of its provisions and impose new procedural and analytical requirements on agencies whenever a rule is subject to the RFA.

First, H.R. 2542 expands the type of rules covered by the RFA to include those that have a reasonably foreseeable indirect effect on small entities, which is a highly speculative requirement. It also includes documents like land management plans and certain guidance documents under the definition of "rule," further expanding the RFA's scope. Second, the bill would require agencies to provide more detail and analysis in their initial and final regulatory analyses of proposed and final rules. Third, H.R. 2542 repeals the emergency authority that the RFA gives to agencies to waive or delay an initial regulatory flexibility analysis or to delay a final regulatory flexibility analysis. This provision will prevent agencies from quickly responding to a public health or safety emergency. Fourth, H.R. 2542 grants additional power to the Small Business Administration's (SBA's) Chief Counsel for Advocacy to promulgate rules governing agencies' RFA compliance, to intervene in agency adjudications, and to file comments on proposed rules. Fifth, the bill expands the use of advocacy review panels to cover rules with a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities that are proposed by all agencies—not just rules issued by the EPA, OSHA, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), as is under current law—and would also apply to rules that would be considered "major rules" regardless of whether such rules would otherwise be subject to the RFA.

Sixth, H.R. 2542 amends the RFA's requirement that agencies periodically review rules to require that agencies review all rules that exist on H.R. 2542's enactment date. The bill would also mandate that agencies amend or rescind those rules, regardless of the review's findings. In addition, H.R. 2542 expands the availability of judicial review to include any agency action taken to comply with the RFA, and not just "final agency action," as is the case under current law. Finally, H.R. 2542 grants exclusive jurisdiction to the Federal courts of appeal to enjoin, set aside, suspend, or determine the validity of all final rules concerning RFA implementation that have been promulgated by the SBA's Chief Counsel for Advocacy under the authority granted to it under this legislation.

A detailed section-by-section analysis of H.R. 2542 appears later in our dissenting views.

¹² 5 U.S.C. § 609(b) (2013). The review panel requirement was extended to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in 2010. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 609(d) (2013).

CONCERNS WITH H.R. 2542

I. H.R. 2542 IS BASED UPON THE FALSE PREMISE THAT REGULATIONS STIFLE JOB CREATION

H.R. 2542 is based on the false premise that regulations impose overwhelmingly burdensome costs on small businesses that ultimately hampers economic growth and job creation. In particular, H.R. 2542's supporters rely almost exclusively on an SBA study conducted by economists Nicole and Mark Crain (Crain study)¹³ which concluded that Federal regulations impose a \$1.75 trillion cost on all businesses and that a disproportionate share of these costs are borne by small businesses.¹⁴

The Crain study, however, has been thoroughly debunked for exaggerating the costs of Federal rulemaking on small businesses. For example, the Center for Progressive Reform (CPR) notes that the \$1.75 trillion cumulative burden cited by the study fails to account for *any* benefits of regulation.¹⁵ CPR observes that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) estimated in 2008 that major rules imposed \$46 billion to \$54 billion in costs, but also produced \$122 billion to \$656 billion in benefits.¹⁶ Moreover, the Crain study's methodology is flawed with respect to how it calculated economic costs. The study, which relied on international public opinion polling by the World Bank on how friendly a particular country was to business interests, ignored actual data on costs imposed by Federal regulation in the United States.¹⁷

The Congressional Research Service (CRS)—which is independent and nonpartisan—also conducted an extensive examination of the Crain study and criticized much of its methodology.¹⁸ CRS noted that the authors of the Crain study themselves admitted that their study was “not meant to be a decision-making tool for lawmakers or Federal regulatory agencies to use in choosing the ‘right’ level of regulation. In no place in any of the reports do we imply that our reports should be used for this purpose. (How could we recommend this use when we make no attempt to estimate the benefits?)”¹⁹ Accordingly, CRS concluded that “a valid, reasoned policy decision can only be made after considering information on both costs and benefits” of regulation.²⁰

The Crain study's failure to account for the net benefits of regulation in general was particularly shortsighted given the fact that

¹³Nicole V. Crain & W. Mark Crain, *The Impact of Regulatory Costs on Small Firms*, Rep. No. SBAHQ-08-M-0466 (Sept. 2010), available at <http://archive.sba.gov/advo/research/rs371tot.pdf>.

¹⁴H.R. 527, the “Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2011”—*Unleashing Small Businesses to Create Jobs: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Courts, Commercial and Administrative L. of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 112th Cong. (2011) [hereinafter “H.R. 527 Hearing”] (prepared statements of Richard Gimmel, President, Atlas Machine & Supply, Inc., on behalf of the National Association of Manufacturers, pp. 4–5; Thomas Sullivan, former Chief Counsel for Advocacy, Small Business Administration, p. 3; and Karen R. Harned, Executive Director, Small Business Legal Center, National Federation of Independent Businesses, unnumbered p. 1).

¹⁵Sid Shapiro, Ruth Ruttenberg, & James Goodwin, *Setting the Record Straight: The Crain and Crain Report on Regulatory Costs*, Center for Progressive Reform White Paper #1103 (Feb. 2011), available at http://www.progressivereform.org/articles/SBA_Regulatory_Costs_Analysis_1103.pdf.

¹⁶*Id.*

¹⁷*Id.*

¹⁸Curtis W. Copeland, *Analysis of an Estimate of the Total Costs of Federal Regulations*, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, R41763 (Apr. 6, 2011).

¹⁹*Id.* at 26 (quoting an e-mail from Nicole and W. Mark Crain to the author of the CRS report).

²⁰*Id.*

regulation can result in net economic benefits for business. For example, promulgation of OSHA's Cotton Dust Standard resulted in the affected industry growing and prospering in the aftermath of the rule's promulgation.²¹ Much of that growth and prosperity was the result of business innovations relating to compliance with the rule.²² Indeed, the costs of the rule ended up being much smaller than predicted because of these innovations.²³

Sally Katzen, a former OIRA Administrator during the Clinton administration, noted in testimony before the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Courts, Commercial and Administrative Law, that the OMB regularly finds that the aggregate benefits of Federal regulations outweigh their costs.²⁴ Katzen noted that:

OMB's Report to Congress does include data on benefits, and the numbers are striking: according to OMB, the benefits from the regulations issued during the 10-year period ranged from \$128 billion to \$616 billion. Therefore, even if one uses OMB's highest estimate of costs and its lowest estimate of benefits, the regulations issued over the past 10 years have produced net benefits of \$73 billion to our society. This cannot be dismissed as a partisan report by the current Administration, because OMB issued reports with similar results (benefits greatly exceeding costs) throughout the George W. Bush administration (e.g., for FY 1998–2008, major regulations cost between \$51 and \$60 billion, with benefits estimated to be \$126 to \$663 billion dollars). Given that the benefits of regulations consistently exceed the costs, the need for any legislation that would make the issuance of regulations more difficult or time consuming is certainly in question.²⁵

OMB's draft 2013 Report to Congress further bolsters the conclusion that the benefits of regulations far outweigh their costs. It found that the "estimated annual benefits of major Federal regulations reviewed by OMB from October 1, 2002, to September 30, 2012, for which agencies estimated and monetized both benefits and costs, are in the aggregate between \$193 billion and \$800 billion, while the estimated annual costs are in the aggregate between \$57 billion and \$84 billion."²⁶ The draft 2013 report further noted that some benefits and costs cannot be quantified or monetized.²⁷

Representative Jerrold Nadler (D–NY) offered an amendment at the Committee's markup of H.R. 2542 that would have required agencies to assess the indirect benefits of a rule as part of the required regulatory flexibility analysis under H.R. 2542. The Major-

²¹ Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Regulatory Review of OSHA's Cotton Dust Standard, at 35–38 (Sept. 2000), available at http://www.osha.gov/dea/lookback/cottondust_final2000.pdf.

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.* at 38–39.

²⁴ *The REINS Act—Promoting Jobs and Expanding Freedom by Reducing Needless Regulations Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Courts, Commercial and Administrative L. of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 112th Cong. 3 (2011) (prepared statement of Sally Katzen, former Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs).

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ Office of Management and Budget, Draft 2013 Report to Congress on the Benefits and Costs of Federal Regulations and Agency Compliance with the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/inforg/2013_cb/draft_2013_cost_benefit_report.pdf.

²⁷ *Id.*

ity, however, opposed this amendment and it was defeated by a 12 to 17 vote along party lines.

II. H.R. 2542 THREATENS PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY BY
UNDERMINING FEDERAL AGENCY RULEMAKING

H.R. 2542 will undermine the ability of agencies to protect public health and safety by imposing new and unnecessary requirements on the rulemaking process and will force these agencies to shift resources to this more complex, costly, and time-consuming rulemaking process. The bill will prevent agencies from effectively promulgating regulations designed to protect Americans' health and safety.

A. *H.R. 2542's Elimination of Agencies' Waiver and Delay Authority Undermines the Agencies' Ability To Respond To Emergencies*

Section 5 of H.R. 2542 eliminates agencies' ability to waive or delay any required initial regulatory flexibility analysis or to delay any required final regulatory flexibility analysis in the event of an emergency. By eliminating this safeguard, H.R. 2542 undermines an agency's ability to respond to emergency situations.

The override of an agency's authority to respond to emergencies without having to first go through the arduous and time-consuming task of review and analysis is absolutely wrong. Federal agencies are charged with promulgating regulations that impact virtually every aspect of our lives, including the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the cars we drive, and the play toys we give our children.

At the Committee markup, Ranking Member John Conyers, Jr. offered an amendment that would have preserved the waiver or delay authority agencies have under current law to quickly respond to emergencies, without being hampered or second-guessed by others. The amendment was defeated by an 11 to 17 party-line vote.

B. *H.R. 2542's Expanded Use of Advocacy Review Panels Creates a Serious Impediment To Agency Rulemaking*

As discussed earlier, SBREFA²⁸ amended the RFA to require that rules proposed by the EPA and OSHA be subject to an advocacy review panel consisting of a representative of the agency promulgating the rule, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of SBA, and OIRA.²⁹ The Dodd-Frank Act later added the CFPB to this list of agencies subject to advocacy review panels. Section 6 of H.R. 2542 significantly expands the reach of this requirement to make it apply to rules proposed by all agencies. In addition, section 6 would make the review panel requirement apply to all major rules regardless of whether they have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities, that is, regardless of whether the RFA would apply. Under section 6, the review panel would review a proposed rule, solicit and obtain input from business interests, and then issue a report assessing the economic impact of the proposed rule on small entities, including the energy cost impact, as well as a discussion of regulatory alternatives. This report is then

²⁸ Pub. L. No. 104-121, § 242, 110 Stat. 847, 857 (1996).

²⁹ 5 U.S.C. § 609(b) (2013). The review panel requirement was extended to the CFPB in 2010. See 5 U.S.C. § 609(d) (2013).

to be made part of the rulemaking record, and the agency must explain what, if anything, it did in response to the report.

By requiring the cumbersome review panel process to apply to *all* agency rules having a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities, as well as by requiring this process to apply to *all* major rules—regardless of whether they have such an impact—this provision will slow down the rulemaking process and substantially empower business interests to throw sand into the gears of rulemaking. The use of advocacy review panels is already cumbersome. SBA’s Office of Advocacy, which was established with the express purpose of acting as an independent advocate for business interests within the Federal Government,³⁰ is already able to delay the issuance of final EPA, OSHA, and CFPB rules and to shape them in industry-friendly ways.³¹ Expanding the use of these panels to include *all* agencies and *all* rules that do not necessarily have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities would guarantee that most rulemakings would be delayed and reflect a less consumer-oriented perspective. Moreover, this expansion of the review panel process takes it well beyond the scope of the RFA.

Amit Narang, Regulatory Policy Advocate for Public Citizen, testified before the Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law (Subcommittee) that the “dramatic expansion” of review panels under the RFIA “will result in these panels giving feedback on rules that have no application and place no requirements on small businesses. Once again, the RFIA stretches the boundaries of what is considered a regulation that impacts small businesses to such a degree that the distinction between what does and what does not impact small businesses is rendered meaningless.”³² Mr. Narang further noted that a Government Accountability Office report detailing the “glacially slow pace of rulemaking at OSHA identified the SBREFA panel process as one of the factors delaying OSHA, finding that it takes about 8 months of work for OSHA to prepare for the panel”³³ Greatly expanding use of these panels can only cause similar rulemaking delays at other agencies.

III. H.R. 2542 FORCES AGENCIES TO ENGAGE IN WASTEFUL, SPECULATIVE ANALYSES

Section 2 of H.R. 2542 defines, among other things, “economic impact” to include any reasonably foreseeable “indirect economic ef-

³⁰Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, *About Us*, available at <http://www.sba.gov/category/advocacy-navigation-structure/about-us>.

³¹The Center for Progressive Reform prepared a report earlier this year detailing the Office of Advocacy’s role in politicizing debates about regulation and “funneling special interest pressure into agency rulemakings, even though such interests have already had ample opportunity to comment on proposed regulations.” Sidney Shapiro & James Goodwin, *Distorting the Interests of Small Business: How the Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy’s Politicization of Small Business Concerns Undermines Public Health and Safety*, Center for Progressive Reform White Paper #1302 (Jan. 2013), available at http://www.progressivereform.org/articles/SBA_Office_of_Advocacy_1302.pdf. Additionally, the Center for Effective Government issued a report detailing how the Office of Advocacy interfered with regulators’ scientific assessments in order to promote the interests of large chemical companies having nothing to do with small business. Randy Rabinowitz, Katie Greenhaw, & Katie Weatherford, *Small Business, Public Health, and Scientific Integrity: Whose Interests Does the Office of Advocacy at the Small Business Administration Serve?*, Center for Effective Government (Jan. 2013), available at <http://www.foreffectivegov.org/files/regs/office-of-advocacy-report.pdf>.

³²H.R. 2542, the “Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013”: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust L. of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary, 113th Cong. (2013) (statement of Amit Narang, Regulatory Policy Advocate, Public Citizen).

³³*Id.*

fect” that a proposed rule may have on a small entity. This provision would force agencies to conduct highly speculative and labor-intensive assessments, all of which could be subject to litigation by well-financed business interests. In effect, H.R. 2542 could kill a rulemaking as a result of “paralysis by analysis.”

The bill’s onerous requirements will prevent agencies from engaging in effective rulemaking. As Mr. Narang testified before the Subcommittee, the:

RFIA does little to clarify what constitutes, and more importantly, what does *not* constitute an indirect economic effect, giving agencies only the vague and perfunctory guidance that it be “reasonably foreseeable.” This ill-defined and indeterminate new mandate will exert strong pressure on agencies to engage in a guessing game of sorts as they attempt to identify all possible indirect effects of a rule, an enterprise akin to ordering a meteorologist to discern the effects on Washington, D.C. weather of a butterfly flapping its wings in Japan.³⁴

A. H.R. 2542 Imposes Additional Duties on Agencies, But Fails To Provide Any Additional Funding for Agencies to Comply with Burdensome New Requirements

In addition to requiring agency assessments of a rule’s indirect effects and expanding the use of advocacy review panels, H.R. 2542 substantially increases other agency responsibilities with respect to rulemaking. For example, section 4 of the bill requires agencies, with respect to regulatory analyses, to:

- specifically detail the required descriptions;³⁵
- provide a detailed explanation of significant issues raised by any public comments submitted in response to the initial regulatory flexibility analysis, provide the agency’s assessment of the issues, and explain any changes made in the proposed rule as a result of such comments;³⁶
- describe any disproportionate economic impact on small entities or a specific class of small entities;³⁷
- supply a detailed statement—including the factual and legal bases—of the reasons why an agency has determined that a proposed or final rule will not have a significant economic impact;³⁸ and
- provide in every instance (rather than simply making discretionary, as under current law) a quantifiable or numerical description of the effects of a proposed rule and alternatives to a proposed rule or a general description of such effects with a detailed statement explaining why quantification is not practicable or reliable.³⁹

These heightened responsibilities and other duties imposed by H.R. 2542 will force agencies to expend already-strained resources

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ H.R. 2542, 113th Cong., § 4(b)(1)(B) (2013).

³⁶ H.R. 2542, 113th Cong., § 4(b)(1)(A) (2013).

³⁷ H.R. 2542, 113th Cong., § 4(a) (2013).

³⁸ H.R. 2542, 113th Cong., § 4(d) (2013).

³⁹ H.R. 2542, 113th Cong., § 4(e) (2013).

and incur considerable costs to implement the bill. Not surprisingly, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that H.R. 2542 would cost American taxpayers \$45 million between 2014 and 2018.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, the CBO identified *no* cost savings stemming from H.R. 2542.⁴¹

B. H.R. 2542 Would Overwhelm Agencies by Requiring Them To Conduct Exhaustive Reviews of All Existing Rules

Section 7 of H.R. 2542 threatens to undermine agencies' ability to fulfill their regulatory responsibilities by requiring that *all* agencies review *all* rules—not just those subject to the RFA—existing on the bill's enactment date issued within 10 years of the publication of a required plan by each agency for retrospective review. The review must consist of a determination of whether these rules have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities, regardless of whether they already went through a final regulatory flexibility analysis previously.

As a result of this provision, agencies would be forced to re-justify safeguards like regulations designed to ensure clean air, clean water, food safety, automobile safety, and workplace safety. Agencies will be forced to redirect their scarce resources to meet this burdensome requirement.

To put this requirement in context, it should be noted that there are currently more than 165,000 pages of regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations, as well as several hundred thousand guidance documents that could be subjected to H.R. 2542's look-back requirement. At a time when agencies are already under strain with limited resources, they can ill-afford this substantial increase in their workload. Meanwhile, Congress continues to slash funding for critical child welfare, indigent assistance, and law enforcement programs.

In addition, section 2 of H.R. 2542 expands the scope of rules subject to the RFA by including land management plans as well as rules pertaining to Tribal Organizations and certain Internal Revenue Service interpretive rules. These types of guidance documents traditionally are not “rules” subject to the RFA. Expanding the scope of items subject to review will require additional resources that would otherwise be used by the agency to carry out its duties as delegated by Congress.

Further, section 7 imposes the absurd and wasteful requirement that agencies amend or rescind *all* existing rules. Specifically, section 7 of H.R. 2542 states that in “reviewing a rule, the agency *shall* amend or rescind the rule to minimize any adverse significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities or disproportionate economic impact on a specific class of small entities. . . .”⁴² In other words, regardless of the findings of any review of existing regulations, agencies must amend or rescind *all* existing rules, even when the review finds there is no need to amend or rescind a particular rule. Why require agencies to engage in a review to determine whether a rule should be amended or re-

⁴⁰ Congressional Budget Office, *Cost Estimate for H.R. 2542, the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013* (Sept. 5, 2013), available at <http://cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/hr2542.pdf>.

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² H.R. 2542, 113th Cong, § 7 (2013) (emphasis added).

scinded if amending or rescinding the rule is required regardless of what the review would find? Taken literally, this provision would force agencies to: (1) review the hundreds of thousands of pages of rules and guidance documents existing on H.R. 2542's enactment date, and (2) amend or rescind every rule in existence on that date regardless of the review's findings. As J. Robert Shull noted in testimony before the Subcommittee last Congress, the mandatory "amend or rescind" provision requires that "the agency . . . embark upon new rulemakings for all of those [existing] regulations."⁴³ While we find much of the bill's provisions to be wasteful, surely, the sponsors of H.R. 2542 hopefully could not have intended to include this absurd and monumental waste of taxpayer resources.

IV. THE EXPANSION OF JUDICIAL REVIEW TO INCLUDE ALL AGENCY ACTIONS, AND NOT JUST "FINAL AGENCY ACTION," ALLOWS SPECIAL INTERESTS TO OBSTRUCT RULEMAKING BY CHALLENGING AGENCY ACTION BEFORE A RULE IS FINALIZED

Section 8 of H.R. 2542 creates the opportunity for well-funded anti-regulatory business interests to engage in frivolous litigation. It does this by expanding the scope of judicial review to include court challenges to agency actions to issuance of a final rule, including agency compliance with H.R. 2542's numerous, vague, speculative, and cumbersome analytical and other requirements. Current law limits such judicial review to final agency actions.

As Mr. Narang noted at the Subcommittee's hearing on H.R. 2542, the bill's expansion of judicial review to include challenges to the adequacy of regulatory flexibility analyses would open the door to endless litigation, stating, in the context of discussing the bill's requirement that agencies assess a rule's indirect effects, that:

the RFIA ensures that if agencies guess wrong on indirect effects, regulated entities will have the ability to draft the agency into court and overturn a rule because the agency wasn't able to satisfy this new and highly speculative mandate of determining all indirect effects. Thus, the RFIA opens the floodgates of litigation and transforms a statute that is supposed to target rules that apply to small businesses into one that forces agencies, by default, to assume that their rules will in some indirect and attenuated fashion apply to small businesses.⁴⁴

Similarly, Mr. Shull testified that the RFIA would "dramatically" expand the RFA's judicial review provisions "to allow corporate special interests to challenge the adequacy of analysis over a wide range of agency activities, not limited to the 'final agency actions' that normally are the decision point that must be reached before an agency can be dragged into court."⁴⁵

⁴³*The Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2011—Unleashing Small Businesses to Create Jobs: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Commercial and Administrative L. of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary, 112th Cong. (2011)* (statement of J. Robert Shull).

⁴⁴H.R. 2542, the "Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2013": *Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust L. of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary, 113th Cong. (2013)* (statement of Amit Narang, Regulatory Policy Advocate, Public Citizen).

⁴⁵*The Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2011—Unleashing Small Businesses to Create Jobs: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Commercial and Administrative L. of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary, 112th Cong. (2011)* (statement of J. Robert Shull).

To address the threat to public health and safety posed by the various provisions of H.R. 2542 outlined above, Representative Hank Johnson (D-GA) offered at markup an amendment that would have exempted rules implementing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act from H.R. 2542. The Majority opposed this amendment and it was defeated by a 5 to 11 party-line vote. Similarly, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) offered an amendment that would have exempted rules issued by the Food and Drug Administration from H.R. 2542. The Majority opposed this amendment and it was defeated by an 8 to 14 party-line vote.

SECTION-BY-SECTION EXPLANATION

A section-by-section explanation of the bill's substantive provisions follows. Section 2(a) amends 5 U.S.C. § 601(2) to provide that the term "rule" does not include a rule of particular applicability related to rates, wages, corporate or financial structures (or reorganizations thereof), prices, facilities, appliances, services, or allowances.

Section 2(b) amends 5 U.S.C. § 601 to define "economic impact" as any direct economic effect on small entities by a proposed or final rule and any indirect economic effect on small entities that is reasonably foreseeable and results from such rule, without regard to whether small entities will be directly regulated by the rule.

Section 2(c) amends 5 U.S.C. §§ 603(c) and 604(a)(7) to require each initial and final regulatory flexibility analysis to contain a detailed description of alternatives to the rule that minimize any significant adverse economic impact or maximize any significant beneficial economic impact on small entities.

Section 2(d) amends 5 U.S.C. § 601(5) (which defines small governmental jurisdiction) to expand its applicability to tribal organizations.

Section 2(e) amends 5 U.S.C. §§ 603(a) and 604(a) to make the requirement to prepare an initial and final regulatory impact analysis applicable to instances where an agency publishes a revision or amendment to a land management plan or issues a proposed rule made on the record after opportunity for an agency hearing. In addition, section 2(e) amends 5 U.S.C. § 601 to define land management plan, revision of a land management plan, and amendment of a land management plan.

Section 2(f)(1) amends 5 U.S.C. § 603(a) with respect to its requirement for an initial regulatory flexibility analysis for Internal Revenue Service interpretative rules published in the Federal Register for codification in the Code of Federal Regulations the bill provides, to the extent that such interpretative rules require small entities to collect information. Section 603(a) applies to recordkeeping requirements imposed by such rules on small entities, without regard to whether such requirements are imposed by statute or regulation.

Section 2(f)(2) amends 5 U.S.C. § 601(7), which defines the term "collection of information" to provide that the term has the same meaning as set forth in 44 U.S.C. § 3502(3).⁴⁶

⁴⁶Section 3502(3) defines "collection of information" as follows:

Section 2(f)(3) amends 5 U.S.C. § 601(8), which defines the term “recordkeeping requirement” “as a requirement imposed by an agency on persons to maintain specified records.” Section 2(f)(3) amends the definition to provide that the term has the same meaning as set forth in 44 U.S.C. § 3502(13).⁴⁷

Section 2(g) amends 5 U.S.C. § 601(4), which defines the term “small organization” as “any not-for-profit enterprise which is independently owned and operated and is not dominant in its field, unless an agency establishes, after opportunity for public comment, one or more definitions of such term which are appropriate to the activities of the agency and publishes such definition(s) in the Federal Register[.]” Section 2(g) provides that this term includes any not-for-profit enterprise that “as of the issuance of the notice of proposed rulemaking” does not exceed the specified size standard for small business concerns established by the SBA Administrator applicable to a classification code of the North American Industrial Classification System, providing such enterprise has a net worth of less than \$7 million and has fewer than 500 employees. For a local labor organization, the definition applies regardless of whether the organization is a part of a national or international organization. These definitions do not apply to the extent that an agency, after consulting the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration and public comments, establishes its own definition of “small organization” and publishes such definition in the Federal register.

Section 3 amends 5 U.S.C. § 602 by adding a requirement for a brief description of the sector that is primarily affected by a rule in its regulatory flexibility agenda and a requirement that the agenda contain a plain-language summary to be published on the agency’s website within 3 days of its publication in the Federal Register.

Section 4(a) amends 5 U.S.C. § 603(b) to require an initial regulatory flexibility analysis to contain a detailed statement: (1) describing the reasons why the action by the agency is being considered; (2) describing the objectives of and legal basis for the proposed rule; (3) estimating the number and type of small businesses to which the rule will apply; (4) describing the rule’s projected reporting, recordkeeping, and other compliance requirements; (5) describing all relevant Federal rules that may duplicate, overlap, or

(A) means the obtaining, causing to be obtained, soliciting, or requiring the disclosure to third parties or the public, of facts or opinions by or for an agency, regardless of form or format, calling for either—

(i) answers to identical questions posed to, or identical reporting or recordkeeping requirements imposed on, ten or more persons, other than agencies, instrumentalities, or employees of the United States; or

(ii) answers to questions posed to agencies, instrumentalities, or employees of the United States which are to be used for general statistical purposes; and

(B) shall not include a collection of information described under section 3518(c)(1).

44 U.S.C. § 3502(3) (2013).

⁴⁷Section 3502(13) defines “recordkeeping requirement” as follows:

[A] requirement imposed by or for an agency on persons to maintain specified records, including a requirement to—

(A) retain such records;

(B) notify third parties, the Federal Government, or the public of the existence of such records;

(C) disclose such records to third parties, the Federal Government, or the public; or

(D) report to third parties, the Federal Government, or the public regarding such records[.]

conflict with the rule or the reasons why such description was not provided; (6) estimating the rule's additional cumulative economic impact on small entities beyond that already imposed on the class of small entities (or an explanation of why such an estimate is not available); and (7) describing any disproportionate economic impact on small entities or a specific class of small entities.

Section 4(b)(1) amends 5 U.S.C. § 604(a), which sets forth the requirements of a final regulatory flexibility analysis, by requiring more detailed descriptions and explanations specifying that an agency describe any disproportionate economic impact on small entities or a specific class of small entities.

Section 4(b)(2) amends 5 U.S.C. § 604(a)(2) to provide that it applies to instances where the agency certifies a proposed rule. Section 4(b)(3) amends 5 U.S.C. § 604(b), which requires an agency to make copies of the final regulatory flexibility analysis available to the public and to publish it (or a summary thereof) in the Federal Register. Section 4(b)(3) expands this requirement to include posting the entire analysis on the agency's website. In addition, the final analysis must also include the telephone number, mailing address, and link to the website where the complete analysis may be found.

Section 4(c) amends 5 U.S.C. § 605(a), which provides that an agency must be treated as having satisfied any requirement regarding an agenda or regulatory flexibility analysis, to require a cross-reference to the specific portion of the other agenda or analysis that satisfies this requirement.

Section 4(d) amends 5 U.S.C. § 605(b), which permits an agency, in lieu of complying with sections 603 and 604, to certify that the rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. As amended, section 605(b) requires such certification to be accompanied by a detailed statement providing the factual and legal basis for it.

Section 4(e) amends 5 U.S.C. § 607, which allows an agency to provide either a quantifiable or numerical description of the effects of a proposed rule or alternatives to a proposed rule, or more general descriptive statements if quantification is not practicable or reliable. This amendment makes section 607 mandatory and specifies that in instances where an agency provides a general descriptive statement, the agency must also provide a detailed statement explaining why quantification is not practicable or reliable.

Section 5(a) replaces current 5 U.S.C. § 608, which allows an agency to waive or delay the completion of some or all of the requirements of section 603 (pertaining to initial regulatory flexibility analyses) and to delay the requirements of section 604 (pertaining to final regulatory flexibility analyses), with a new provision allowing for additional powers of the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration.

New Section 608(a)(1) requires the Chief Counsel for Advocacy to issue rules governing compliance with chapter 6, after opportunity for notice and comment, within 270 days after enactment of the RFIA. New section 608(a)(2) provides that an agency may not issue rules that supplement those promulgated by the Chief Counsel unless such agency has first consulted with the Chief Counsel to ensure that the supplemental rules comply with chapter 6 and the Counsel's rules.

New section 608(b) provides that the Chief Counsel, notwithstanding any other law, may intervene in any adjudication before any Federal agency (unless such agency is authorized to impose a fine or penalty under such adjudication) and may inform the agency of the impact that any decision on the record may have on small entities. The provision prohibits the Chief Counsel from initiating an appeal with respect to any adjudication in which the Chief Counsel intervenes pursuant to new section 613(b).

New section 608(c) authorizes the Chief Counsel to file comments in response to any agency notice requesting comment, regardless of whether the agency is required to file a general notice of proposed rulemaking under 5 U.S.C. § 553.

Section 6 replaces 5 U.S.C. § 609(b), which sets out procedures that an agency must follow prior to the publication of an initial regulatory flexibility analysis. As amended, section 609(b) requires the agency to provide to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy with the following: (1) all materials prepared by the agency in promulgating the proposed rule, including any drafts of such rule (with certain exceptions); and (2) information on the rule's potential adverse and beneficial impacts on small entities that might be affected.

New section 609(c) requires that within 15 days of receipt of such information, the Chief Counsel must identify small entities or representatives thereof (or a combination of both) for the purpose of obtaining advice, input and recommendations about the rule's potential economic impact and compliance with sections 603 or 605(b) of title 5. The Chief Counsel must also convene a review panel staffed by an Office of Advocacy employee and an employee for the agency promulgating the rule. If the agency is not an independent regulatory agency, the panel must also include an employee from OIRA.

New section 609(d) requires that within 60 days after the panel is convened, the Chief Counsel must, after consultation with the panel, submit a report to the agency (or to OIRA if the agency is an independent regulatory agency). The report must include an assessment of the proposed rule's impact on small entities as well as a discussion of any alternatives that will minimize adverse economic impacts on small entities.

In addition, section 6 mandates that the report become part of the rulemaking record. In the publication of the proposed rule, the agency must explain what actions, if any, the agency took in response to such report.

Section 6 further provides that new section 609(e) applies to a proposed rule if the OIRA Administrator or an agency head (or delegate) determines that the rule is likely to result in any of the following: (1) an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more; (2) a major increase in costs or prices for consumers; individual industries; Federal, state, or local governments; tribal organizations, or geographic regions; (3) significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or on the ability of United States based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises in domestic and export markets; or (4) a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

Finally, section 6(f) permits the Chief Counsel for Advocacy to waive the requirements of subsections (b) through (e) of section 609

if the Counsel determines that compliance with these requirements are impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest.

Section 7 amends 5 U.S.C. § 610, pertaining to the periodic review of rules. In addition to publishing a plan for the periodic review of rules issued by an agency in the Federal Register, the plan must also appear on the agency's website. Section 7 requires the agency's head, rather than the agency, to make the determination of whether the rule has a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. Such determination must be made without regard to whether the agency performed an analysis under section 604. Section 7 revises the objectives of the determination to require consideration of whether the rule maximizes any significant beneficial impacts on a substantial number of small entities. If an agency head determines that the periodic review cannot be performed within the stated time frames, then section 7 permits the agency head to so certify and extend the review period for 2 years after publication of the notice of extension in the Federal Register. In addition, such notice and certification must be provided to the Chief Counsel and Congress. Section 7 also directs the agency to amend or rescind a rule to minimize adverse significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities or a disproportionate economic impact on a specific class of small entities, or to maximize beneficial significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

As amended, section 610 requires an agency to annually submit a report regarding the results of its review to Congress and to OIRA, if the agency is an independent regulatory agency. Section 7 requires the agency to include comments by the Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman and the Chief Counsel for Advocacy. In addition, the agency must consider the rule's contribution to the cumulative economic impact of all Federal rules on the class of small entities affected by the rule, unless the agency head determines that such calculations cannot be made and reports that determination in the annual report required under section 610(c).

In addition to publication in the Federal Register, section 7 requires each agency to publish a list of rules to be reviewed on its website and to include an explanation of why the agency determined such rules have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. In addition, this publication must request comments from the public, Chief Counsel for Advocacy, and the Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman concerning enforcement of such rules.

Section 8(a) amends 5 U.S.C. § 611(a)(1) to provide that a small entity that is adversely affected or aggrieved by any rule under chapter 6 is entitled to judicial review of agency compliance. Section 611(a)(1) currently applies only to "final agency action." Section 8(b) amends 5 U.S.C. § 611(a)(2) to provide that a court may review a rule if publication of the final rule constituted final agency action.

Section 8(c) amends 5 U.S.C. § 611(a)(3) to provide that the time within which judicial review may be sought begins from publication of a final rule. It also specifies that the exception applies in the case of a rule for which the date of final agency action is the same date as the publication date of the final rule.

Section 8(d) amends 5 U.S.C. § 612(b), which authorizes the Chief Counsel for Advocacy to appear as *amicus curiae* in any action brought in a court of the United States to review a rule. As amended, the provision permits the Chief Counsel to also appear as *amicus curiae* in any action to review agency compliance with sections 601, 604, 605(b), 609, or 610.

Section 9(a) amends 28 U.S.C. § 2342 to give the United States Court of Appeals (other than the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit) exclusive jurisdiction to enjoin, set aside, suspend, or to determine the validity of all final rules under 5 U.S.C. § 608(a) (as amended by this Act).

Section 9(b) amends 28 U.S.C. § 2341(3), which defines the term, “agency”. As amended, the definition includes the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, when a final rule is promulgated under section 608(a) of title 5 of the United States Code (as amended by this Act).

Section 9(c) amends 5 U.S.C. § 612(b), which sets out certain intervention rights of the Chief Counsel for Advocacy pertaining to matters under chapter 6. As amended, section 612(b) extends this provision to apply to compliance under chapters 5 and 7, in addition to chapter 6.

Section 10 of the bill amends the Small Business Act to give the SBA’s Chief Counsel for Advocacy the authority to establish small business size standards. This text is identical to the text of H.R. 585, the Small Business Size Standard Flexibility Act of 2011, from the 112th Congress, which was referred to the Committee on Small Business and over which this Committee did not have jurisdiction.

Section 11 makes a number of clerical amendments.

Section 12 amends SBREFA to require that agency guides be written in plain language.

CONCLUSION

H.R. 2542 is the latest iteration of the Majority’s ongoing attack on Federal regulation. Since the beginning of the 112th Congress, the Committee’s Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law has held 22 hearings and considered at least six bills designed to hobble Federal agency rulemaking and to increase the influence of business interests over the rulemaking process. The Majority’s use of pro-small business rhetoric cannot obscure the fact that H.R. 2542, like previous anti-regulatory proposals, will erect significant barriers to rulemaking that will hinder the promulgation of critical public health and safety protections.

We share the Majority’s belief that small business plays an important role in our economy, but H.R. 2542 does nothing to alleviate the purported burden on small entities of complying with Federal regulations. In fact, it includes no provision that offers assistance to small entities, whether through subsidies, government-guaranteed loans, preferential tax treatment for small firms, or fully funded compliance assistance offices. Instead, the bill merely aggrandizes the power of the SBA’s Office of Advocacy and of the professional lobbying class in Washington. If the proponents of H.R. 2542 were serious about helping small entities deal with the regulatory system, they would support instituting mechanisms for small entities that actually help them participate directly in rule-

making, without having to rely on Washington-based intermediaries.

There are other meaningful ways to assist small businesses and small entities to navigate the regulatory landscape that would not threaten agencies' ability to protect public health and safety. We urge our colleagues to shift their attention to these alternatives and to oppose this ill-conceived legislation.

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