



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

February 25, 2014

Dear Representative:

This week the House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on a package of “regulatory reform” bills – H.R. 2804, the Achieving Less Excess in Regulation and Requiring Transparency Act (ALERRT Act) and H.R. 899, the Unfunded Mandates and Transparency Act (UMITA). These ill-conceived bills are largely recycled measures that would up-end the regulatory system and make it impossible for the government to protect workers and the public from workplace hazards, dirty air and water, unsafe drugs, tainted food and Wall Street abuses. The AFL-CIO strongly urges you to oppose these bills.

The ALERRT Act packages four measures, all of which are designed to stop, delay, or weaken new protections. The Regulatory Accountability Act (RAA) is the most far-reaching of these measures. It amends the Administrative Procedure Act, but goes far beyond establishing procedures for rulemaking. The RAA acts as a “super mandate” overriding requirements of landmark legislation such as the Occupational Safety and Health Act and Mine Safety and Health Act. The bill would require agencies to adopt the least costly rule, instead of the most protective rule as is required by the OSH Act and MSH Act. It would make protecting workers and the public secondary to limiting costs and impacts on businesses and corporations.

The RAA will not improve the regulatory process; it will cripple it. The bill adds dozens of new analytical, procedural and judicial review requirements to the rulemaking process, which will add years to the process. The development and issuance of major workplace safety rules already takes more than seven years. Some rules now in the pipeline have been under development for more than 20 years. The RAA will further delay these rules and cost workers their lives.

The Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act (H.R. 899) is premised on the notion that regulations are unnecessary. It would allow business interests to get advance notice of proposed regulations, as local governments do, and give them the opportunity to comment, but would exclude the public and workers. It also undermines the independence of important agencies that are working to put new Wall Street reforms and product safety standards in place. Finally, it incorporates many of the same objectionable provisions of the RAA, including requiring agencies to pick the least costly rule to industry, rather than the rule that is most effective at keeping the public safe.

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H.R. 2804 and H.R. 899 would further tilt the regulatory process in favor of business groups and others who want to stop regulations, and make it much more difficult for the government to protect workers and the public. These are dangerous proposals that will not create one new job or solve any of the pressing problems facing our country.

The AFL-CIO strongly opposes H.R. 2804 and H.R. 899 and urges you to vote against these bills.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Samuel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and a long, sweeping tail.

William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs Department