

April 14, 2015

Dear Representative:

The Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists, representing more than 450,000 members and supporters across the country, strongly opposes H.R. 427, the Regulations From the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act of 2015 (“REINS” Act), scheduled for a markup on April 15.

This misguided legislation adds a new and unjustified layer to the rulemaking process by requiring both chambers of an often gridlocked Congress to approve any rule with an annual economic impact of \$100 million or more within a timeline of 70 legislative days. If Congress votes no or even fails to vote, the rule would not take effect, no matter how critical it was to safeguarding public health, safety, and the environment.

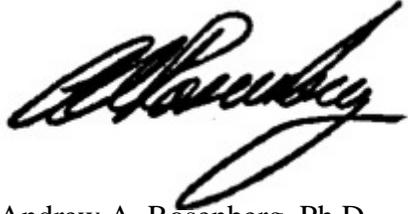
Congress writes the laws to ensure access to clean air and water, safe consumer products, and untainted food and drugs. But agencies are responsible for developing the regulations to implement those mandates. Expecting Congress to review hundreds of rules within a tight deadline makes the regulatory process much more vulnerable to political manipulation. It is essentially a recipe for stymieing regulatory action.

Currently, federal agencies propose regulations that are grounded in independent science and are already subject to an extensive review process with multiple opportunities for public comment, including from businesses. And while this process is far from perfect, the REINS Act would override the entire process by a Congressional review with no articulated standards or goals.

The REINS Act radically alters the separation of powers and jeopardizes the public interest. It would prevent agencies from safeguarding public health, safety, and the environment as mandated by law. It would also call into question judicial review procedures that typically ensure that agencies have met their mandated requirements. Furthermore, the bill would increase uncertainty in the rulemaking process by highly politicizing what should be a science-based assessment.

The REINS Act does not improve or even streamline the regulatory system. Rather, it drastically undermines our system of public protections. The protections afforded to us by our landmark public health laws such as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and others, would all be targeted. This is why we strongly urge a no vote on H.R. 427. It does not deserve your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Rosenberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Andrew A. Rosenberg, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Science and Democracy
Union of Concerned Scientists