

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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### Opening Statement Rep. Matt Cartwright, Ranking Member

#### Subcommittee on Health Care, Benefits and Administrative Rules Hearing on “Challenges Facing OIRA in Ensuring Transparency and Effective Rulemaking”

March 3, 2015

Thank you Chairmen Jordan and Meadows for calling today’s hearing. I want to also thank our witness, Administrator Shelanski, for testifying today.

OIRA plays a critical role in the federal regulatory process—completing the review of about 500 agency draft rules at both the proposed and final stages of rulemaking every year. OIRA is also responsible for ensuring adequate interagency coordination of draft rules to reduce unnecessary burdens and costs, safeguarding against the issuance of redundant or inconsistent regulations.

OIRA’s regulatory review function serves to improve the daily lives of Americans across our country in a multitude of ways. Its crucial oversight of agency rulemaking leads to the issuance of rules that strengthen worker safety standards, increase access to clean water, lower energy costs, reduce pollutants, and improve public health protections.

Despite OIRA’s key role in helping to address our nation’s environmental, health and public safety challenges, some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have referred to the federal rulemaking process as a highly flawed system that punishes job creators and stifles economic growth.

Yet, according to the Office of Management and Budget’s 2014 Draft Report to Congress on the Benefits and Costs of Federal Regulations, the estimate annual benefits of major rules reviewed by OMB from October 2003 to September 2013, ranged from \$217 billion to \$863 billion—significantly exceeding estimated annual costs which were between \$57 billion and \$84 billion.

That said, there has been longstanding criticism against OIRA for not being transparent enough in its review process, and concerns have also been raised by both Republicans and Democrats about OIRA holding regulations for long periods of time without offering any explanation for the delay.

I share my colleagues' concerns about lengthy delays in OIRA's review of regulations, and would like to hear from Administrator Shelanski today about steps OIRA is taking to eliminate its backlog and increase transparency, including whether a lack of adequate resources has contributed to this problem.

I am also interested in hearing about OIRA's efforts to engage the average citizen in its rulemaking processes. OIRA enjoys enormous oversight over regulations that touch on nearly every aspect of our lives. I want to ensure that OIRA provides consumer and environmental protection groups the same amount of time as it does lobbyists for industry.

In January 2011, the President issued Executive Order 13563. This EO directed agencies to give the public a meaningful opportunity to comment on proposed rules through the Internet, to allow for a minimum 60-day comment period, and to provide online access to the rulemaking docket in an easily searchable and downloadable format. These are all positive actions by the current Administration to improve public confidence in the openness of our regulatory system but more can be done.

I thank the Chairmen again, and look forward to hearing more from Administrator Shelanski about how we can make the existing regulatory process even more efficient and transparent.

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