

Chairman Gary Palmer
Opening Statement
Subcommittees on Interior, Energy and the Environment and
Intergovernmental Affairs
Joint Hearing
“Regulatory Reform Task Forces Check-In Part: III”
Wednesday, November 29, 2017

This Administration has seized upon a real opportunity to undo much of the damage our government has created through years of overregulation. Many of us have seen firsthand the consequences of excessive regulation, by way of lost jobs, strained economic conditions, and stifled growth in our districts and really in the entire American economy. There has been a major decline in business startups. In fact, the Gallop organization put out a report that said that prior to 2008, there were 100,000 more businesses starting up than were closing but by 2014 there were 70,000 more businesses closing than starting up and this was a period of unprecedented overregulation.

My Subcommittee has heard countless stories from states, local governments, and individuals about their inability to make the decisions that are most important to them simply because their hands are tied by the cost or logjam or the uncertainty created by inconsistent and often contradictory federal regulations. The issue has simply gotten out of hand. Even agencies themselves have testified they were "amazed" at the number of guidance documents, policy memos, other regulatory documents that they maintain once they began their review.

As the Chairman noted, it has been encouraging to hear from agency representatives that they are working to end this practice of overregulation and start repairing the relationship the government has with its people, beginning with the elimination of obsolete and duplicative and contradictory regulations. It is my understanding that tomorrow the full Committee will be considering a bill by our colleague, Mark Meadows from North Carolina, which seeks to codify the Administration's regulatory reform proposals. I look forward to that discussion.

I appreciate the input our agency witnesses have provided in these hearings to show how these policies are yielding real results for the public, by reducing not only the number of federal regulations and guidance documents, but also the costs and burdens Americans face every day - which amount to the trillions of dollars every year. In fact, last year alone regulation cost the average household almost \$15,000, which I'd like to point out, places a disproportionate burden on lower income households, similar to what I grew up in.

Agencies report that in just the first half of this year, their Task Forces have identified and withdrawn thousands of out of date, duplicative, burdensome, and costly regulations and policy documents. I do want to comment, not to put any burden on our witnesses, the enthusiasm with

which the people have come in a testified about what they are doing. This is not policy work, we are not asking you to legislate, and we commend you for what you are doing.

We have a remarkable opportunity here before us to modernize and streamline the federal government's approach to regulation. Mr. Jitinder Kohli, who led the United Kingdom's one-in two-out regulatory reform initiative, testified at our first hearing that this is "fundamentally about culture change" and "changing the culture of government." I couldn't agree more. Getting our government to take a fresh look at how it operates and change its behavior is no small task. And I commend you for the enthusiasm with which you have taken on this task because I really believe that you are trying to do what's right for the American people and I am excited about what you are doing.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today on how their deregulatory efforts will have a lasting effect and how we can all work together to make the most of your progress and do the most for the American people.