



August 18, 2020

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Chairman, Republican Study Committee (RSC)
418 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Greg Gianforte
Chairman, RSC GEAR Task Force
1222 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Johnson and Task Force Chairman Gianforte:

On behalf of National Taxpayers Union, the nation's oldest taxpayer advocacy organization, I write to express our support for seven good-government bills your colleagues have introduced as part of the Republican Study Committee's Government Efficiency, Accountability, and Reform (GEAR) Task Force efforts. All seven bills would take meaningful steps to make our massive and expanding federal government more accountable to taxpayers. Each bill makes its own unique contribution:

- Rep. Ted Budd's **Freedom from Regulations Act** (H.R. 7768) would require independent federal agencies to comply with certain laws governing the rulemaking process, such as the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and the Paperwork Reduction Act.¹ As NTU said at the time of the bill's introduction, "Representative Budd's bill would ensure that these agencies comply with important laws that give taxpayers the opportunity to weigh in on proposed regulations."
- Rep. Mark Walker's **Guidance Out Of Darkness (GOOD) Act** (H.R. 7396) would require federal agencies to publish their non-regulatory guidance documents in a single location online.² Powerful federal agencies can sometimes issue significant rules and policies through means other than a formal regulation, and Rep. Walker's legislation would ensure that items such as memos, news releases, letters, and blog posts are available for public review.
- Rep. Greg Murphy's **Eliminate Agency Excess Space Act** (H.R. 6128) would increase federal agency efficiency with the more than 10,000 excess buildings that are unutilized or underutilized by their government tenants.³ The bill would do so by reducing the General Services Administration's (GSA) role in transferring excess property to other federal agencies or state and local governments. We are also glad to see the bill require that revenues from sale of federal property be devoted to deficit reduction.
- Rep. Kelly Armstrong's **Separation of Powers Restoration Act** (H.R. 7895) would reduce the judicial branch's deference to federal agencies on matters of regulation, giving judges more authority to determine when a regulatory agency has overstepped their boundaries in interpreting the law.⁴

¹ Representative Ted Budd. (July 27, 2020). "Rep. Ted Budd Introduces Freedom From Regulations Act." Retrieved from: <https://budd.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=926> (Accessed August 17, 2020.)

² Congress.gov. (Introduced June 26, 2020). "H.R.7396 - GOOD Act." Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7396> (Accessed August 17, 2020.)

³ Congress.gov. (Introduced March 9, 2020). "H.R.6128 - Eliminate Agency Excess Space Act." Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6128> (Accessed August 17, 2020.)

⁴ Congress.gov. (Introduced July 31, 2020). "H.R.7895 - To amend title 5, United States Code, to clarify the nature of judicial review of agency interpretations of statutory and regulatory provisions." Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7895> (Accessed August 17, 2020.)

- Rep. Ben Cline’s **Sensible Management of Archives, Records, and Technologies (SMART) Government Act** (H.R. 7949) would require federal agency chief information officers (CIOs) to develop plans for consolidating and optimizing their data centers, and improving their record management.⁵ This will support efforts to make the executive branch more accountable to taxpayers.
- Rep. Paul Gosar’s **Regulatory Report Card Act** (H.R. 8006) would require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to report to Congress on the regulatory activities conducted by all federal agencies, including compliance with various deregulatory Executive Orders and efforts to estimate the economic costs of ongoing agency regulations.⁶ The bill would also require GAO to develop an ongoing economic impact score for an agency’s entire history of promulgating regulations. A report card is a simple and easy way for taxpayers to measure federal agency performance against other agencies.
- Rep. Tim Burchett’s **Protecting Jobs and Wages from Regulation Act** (H.R. 8035) would put federal agencies through a more rigorous process to prove that a new regulation is required.⁷ The bill would also ask agencies to consider “incentives for innovation, consistency, predictability, lower costs of enforcement and compliance... and flexibility” in issuing new regulations. These common sense measures would give federal agencies pause in issuing duplicative, overlapping, confusing, or burdensome regulations.

NTU looks forward to working with you and your colleagues to help these bills reach the President’s desk, and we thank you for your ongoing commitment to government reform through the GEAR Task Force.

Sincerely,

Andrew Lautz
Policy and Government Affairs Manager

CC: The Honorable Ted Budd
The Honorable Mark Walker
The Honorable Greg Murphy
The Honorable Kelly Armstrong
The Honorable Ben Cline
The Honorable Paul Gosar
The Honorable Tim Burchett

⁵ Congress.gov. (Introduced August 7, 2020). “H.R.7949 - To direct the chief information officer of each agency to increase efforts to manage data centers, and for other purposes.” Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7949> (Accessed August 17, 2020.)

⁶ Congress.gov. (Introduced August 11, 2020). “H.R.8006 - To direct the Comptroller General of the United States to issue regulatory scorecards to agencies, and for other purposes.” Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/8006> (Accessed August 17, 2020.)

⁷ Congress.gov. (Introduced August 14, 2020). “H.R.8035 - To reform the process by which Federal agencies analyze and formulate new regulations and guidance documents, to clarify the nature of judicial review of agency interpretations, to ensure complete analysis of potential impacts on small entities of rules, and for other purposes.” Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/8035> (Accessed August 17, 2020.)