

# Regulatory Watchdogs Call for Oversight Reform

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**TONY CORVO**

Tony Corvo (tcorvo54@gmail.com) writes from Beavercreek, Ohio. (read full bio)

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A government watchdog organization is calling for changes to how the federal government handles regulatory oversight 35 years after the creation of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), a government agency that oversees all regulations coming out of Washington, DC.

OIRA is responsible for reviewing and finalizing all federal regulations before they are enacted.

The Center for Regulatory Effectiveness (CRE), a nonprofit organization specializing in independent analyses of federal agency

regulations and government transparency problems, is drafting recommendations for reforming OIRA.

## Reviewing Regulations

John Ellig, a senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center, says OIRA has significantly more regulatory power than people may think.

“OIRA has two jobs,” Ellig said. “First, their job is to review regulations to make sure they reflect the administration’s policies. This includes coordinating comments and reviews from other federal agencies. Their other task is examining the regulations and accompanying analyses to make sure they are consistent with the principles of the executive orders.”

## ‘Stronger’ Oversight Power Needed

Ellig says the reforms should include provisions that would make OIRA’s decisions enforceable.

“My bottom-line conclusion after studying the federal regulatory process, the quality of agency analysis, and what OIRA has done is that OIRA has certainly helped, but we probably need some regulatory reform, in addition to a stronger OIRA, in order to get a real significant change in the quality of analysis and information about regulations,” Ellig said. “That will probably require putting some type of standards for analysis in statute and making them enforceable in court.”

Ken Glozer, a former deputy associate director of the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and a member of CRE’s advisory board, says OIRA has been weakened to help advance political goals.

“I lived through the OIRA process when it was first established in the early 1980s, and I am convinced that OIRA and OMB will never be effective over a longer period of time because they have become politicized,” Glozer said. “Since Obama came in, OIRA has been pretty much pushed to the margins, totally ineffective. ... It has been locked up and muzzled.”

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## Internet Info:

Jennifer Nou, “Agency Self-Insulation Under Presidential Review,” *Harvard Law Review*: <https://www.heartland.org/policy-documents/agency-self-insulation-under-presidential-review/>



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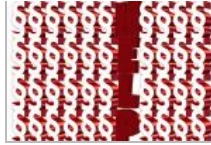
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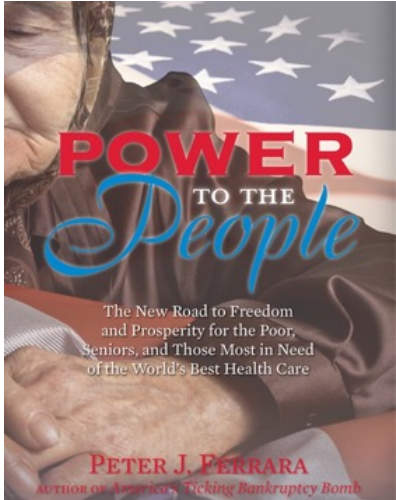
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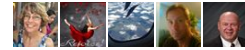
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