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What Should The Powerful Agency 35 Year Old Federal Agency No One Has Ever Heard of Look Like 35 Years From Now?

by Faith Elliott

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Established in 1996, the Center for Regulatory Effectiveness (CRE) is a watchdog agency which provides Congress with independent analyses of Federal agency regulations. The CRE also serves as a clearinghouse for methods to improve the federal regulatory process. Now, the agency is asking for a review of the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA). That agency was established in 1980 to review and sign off on all proposed and final Federal regulations, and to establish what the OIRA should “look like” 35 years from now.

OIRA is a part of the Office of Management and Budget, and was established as part of the Federal Paperwork Reduction Act. OIRA reviews and signs off on all proposed and final U.S. Regulations, reviews requests it receives from federal agencies to collect information from the public, and develops and oversees the implementation of government-wide policies in the areas of information technology, information policy, privacy and statistical policy. It also oversees agency implementation of the Information Quality Law, including the peer review practices of agencies. The review process ensures that agencies, to the extent permitted by law, comply with the regulatory principles stated in Executive Order 12866, and that the President’s policies are reflected in agency rules.

According to a report in [The Hill](#), Jim Tozzi, a member of The Center for Regulatory Effectiveness’ (CRE) advisory board, says of OIRA, “the aircraft is 35 years old. We need a new aircraft.”

Tozzi said the agency should increase its staff, which has decreased by about 50% over the years, and cap the amounts regulators can impose on the public in a given year. Tozzi would also like to improve the Data Quality Act by making the data federal agencies are required to report public, and also subject the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Federal Trade Commission to OIRA review. Tozzi believes that, with a new president in 2017, there will be renewed opportunities for structural changes within OIRA.

“I want them to have a database that goes beyond the next four years,” Tozzi said. “I want them to look at the basic fundamental issues that haven’t been looked at before. This is encouraging them to look beyond four years.”

OIRA, which has a policy of meeting with any parties interested in a particular regulation, has been criticized by progressive groups for being too open to lobbyists, and for watering down various Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations.

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