

U.S. Rep. Grothman: Finds progress in regulatory reform initiative

Posted on Tuesday, Nov 14, 2017

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Nov. 14, 2017

Contact: Bernadette Green, [\(202\) 225-2476](tel:(202)225-2476)

Grothman Finds Progress in Regulatory Reform Initiative

(Washington, D.C.) – Congressman Glenn Grothman (R-Glenbeulah) today questioned officials on the effectiveness of three federal agencies’ Regulatory Reform Task Forces during a House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Healthcare, Benefits and Administrative Rules hearing.

Witnesses at the hearing included Ms. Rebeckah Adcock, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Robert Eitel, Senior Counselor to the Secretary of Education and Mr. Charles Keckler, Associate Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Excerpts of Grothman’s questioning

Congressman Grothman: “I’ve got some general questions for you. How many recommendations has your task force reported that your agency had to repeal or amend? Duplicative, outdated or unnecessary regulatory actions or other policies. Do you just have a general number?”

Ms. Adcock: *“Yes, we identified through the Regulatory Reform Task Force over 275 broad actions, and about half of those were regulatory and we’re getting ready to dig back in again and sort through public comments and dig deeper in what we consider round two. So that was our first go at it.”*

Mr. Eitel: *"As for the Department of Education, we've identified as of today six regulations for deregulatory action. We have additional items pending on our fall agenda. In addition to that we have withdrawn approximately 600 out of date guidance documents of various types."*

Mr. Keckler: *"Our Regulatory Reform Task Force gets only some of the overall regulatory activity that goes on. But thus far the task force itself has made 34 recommendations after receiving reports from our working groups for deregulatory actions."*

Congressman Grothman: *"Okay. I'll ask you to respond to something that could be criticism of what we're doing here, a concern I have. Obviously there are mandatory regulations in the sense that Congress passes bills that demand interpretation. So, you can publish new regulations that actually are less burdensome on business, less burdensome on other areas of government and I don't necessarily think that's a bad thing. Could you give me just general statements, as far as when you withdraw regulations or begin to promulgate new regulations, as to what you're aiming at? I guess what I'm getting at, like I said, is sometimes that only way to deal with a bad regulation is not to repeal it, because then maybe you're left with the underlying statute, but to improve it or make it less burdensome. And I guess I'd just like a comment from each of you as how you're approaching regulations."*

Mr. Eitel: *"I think the first is legal sufficiency. That is, are we acting with the intent of Congress based on legislative language and the history and intent of the law; are we going beyond the law. Second is to provide clarity and better understanding for stakeholders. Whether it be a state educational agency or local school district or an educational institution or parents, students and teachers. I think the third would be to examine what is the cost of the regulation and what is the benefit to the public."*

Ms. Adcock: *"We have followed closely with the principles laid out by the President relating to due process and many of the considerations the Department of Education has mentioned. We also at USDA, at the behest of the Secretary, are looking into very strongly the cost, the benefits, the barriers, the opportunities, what is the impact on jobs and the economy, how does it serve the rural constituents and customers that we have through or various agencies everywhere from the forest service to our frontline offices at NRCS and FSA and our food and nutrition programs. So we are going through and trying to be very thoughtful and relying very heavily on the expertise of the people who have been in the agency for a long time to weigh what they know about how we can do better whether it is*

regulatory, operational or otherwise. And as you mentioned it's not always remove the regulation, often it is modernize it or revise it or combine it and find efficiencies in those matters."

Congressman Grothman: "I'm going to jump back to Mr. Eitel. Have you looked at all at the special Ed[ucation] Regulations, which I think can kind of be unintentionally damaging to some children? Is that something you'd review over there or try to give more flexibility to the local school district?"

Eitel: *"We are looking at that but have not made any final decisions on how to proceed."*

Click [here](#) to view Grothman's full remarks.

Background

Earlier this year, President Trump signed two executive orders to unveil the Administration's position on regulatory reform. The first establishes that federal agencies must repeal two old regulations before issuing any new regulation. The second requires each agency to designate a Regulatory Reform Officer as well as a Regulatory Reform Task Force to identify unnecessarily costly, burdensome, outdated or redundant regulations for review or repeal.

This hearing is the second part in a series looking at Regulatory Task Forces. The first was held on October 24, 2017.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has learned that Regulatory Reform Task Forces are producing unprecedented progress in their regulatory cleanup efforts.