

# Rep. Ballweg: Efforts to alleviate burdensome regulations continues

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What has more than five times as many words as the King James Bible, Harry Potter series, and the Lord of the Rings combined? The Wisconsin Administrative Code, which contains around 12 million words.

Red Tape Review is an initiative that started in 2015 in order to review and update all of Wisconsin's Administrative Code. The administrative code encompasses all of the various rules implemented by state agencies to allow for the efficient running of the state and is comprised of 159,253 rules that have been put in place by agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Justice. With the many different agencies implementing these rules, the regulations are very diverse; the code encompasses everything from deer hunting to voter registration.

It is essential that we continue to look at the rules to make sure that they stay current, and repeal or replace those that are no longer needed. Since we started the Red Tape Review, we have combed through 40% of the Administrative Code and eliminated and repealed rules that were outdated or burdened Wisconsin citizens and businesses. So far, 769 of 1,736 chapters have been reviewed.

In order to streamline the process of repealing unauthorized rules, I authored 2017 Wisconsin Act 108, which helps establish a way for state agencies to review their regulations on a regular basis, as well as organize a system to examine the impact of new acts on present legislation by doing the following three things:

First, it provides an avenue for agencies to petition the Joint Committee for Review

of Administrative Rules if they believe they lack the power to execute rules provided by the code. The Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR) is the legislative committee that is in charge of the Administrative Code, and if petitioned by an agency, would vote whether to keep, revise, or repeal rules.

Second, Act 108 creates a system for state agencies to routinely audit their sections of the administrative code to determine whether sections are still up to date, if they are unneeded, or if they could be fixed. This system will create a solution so that projects like the Red Tape Review Initiative won't be necessary in the future.

Finally, Act 108 generates another procedure for agencies to look at how new pieces of legislation will affect the current administrative code. This process will examine the code to make sure that it is relevant after new acts, so that rules are reviewed immediately. I hope to make sure Wisconsin's administrative rules are current, so that government can run as efficiently as possible.

Administrative rules affect people and businesses just like laws, and it is important that elected officials have oversight over their potential impacts. If you or your business are impacted by a rule that seems unnecessary or burdensome, please contact me with your concern, and how I can help you cut government red tape.