

LA Small Biz proclaims, “Federal regulations are stifling business!”

Louisiana small businesses need relief from overly burdensome regulations. The Office of Advocacy (Advocacy) heard this message loud and clear from more than 100 small businesses who attended roundtables in Baton Rouge and New Orleans in June.

On June 7th and 8th, Advocacy hosted the first of many Regional Regulatory Reform Roundtables to hear firsthand from small businesses across the country that are facing regulatory burdens. These important listening sessions are the first step in Advocacy’s action plan, designed to aid federal agencies in identifying federal regulations that should be revised or eliminated. As an independent voice for small business, Advocacy has a unique and important role to play by promoting small business interest in regulatory reform.

By now, most of us have heard of the two important executive orders signed by President Trump addressing the regulatory burden faced by the private sector. E.O. 13771, *Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs*, was signed on January 30, 2017, with a goal of reducing costs associated with complying with federal regulations. Under this E.O., a federal regulatory agency may not issue a rule in fiscal year 2017 unless it has identified at least two existing rules to be repealed. A second executive order was signed on February 24, 2017. E.O. 13777, *Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda*, further outlines steps agencies must take when considering their regulatory agenda, and requires each agency to form a task force to make recommendations on which rules should be changed, replaced or repealed.

What you may not have heard of is Advocacy’s plan to help agencies develop these important lists of burdensome rules, by 1) listening to actual small businesses across the country, 2) developing a list of the most problematic regulations for small business, and 3) working with federal agencies to try and reduce this burden. Advocacy kicked off this crucial outreach effort in June with the first two roundtables in Louisiana, and boy did we hear an earful!

Louisiana Small businesses are hurting. According to a recent Mercatus Study, Louisiana ranked 1st in the nation for impact of federal regulation.

(<http://regdata.org/50states/>)

Time and time again, small business owners told Advocacy that they are not opposed to regulations that are fair and take into consideration the small businesses that have to comply with them. However, staggering and unnecessary paperwork burdens, combined with a one-size-fits-all approach to regulations, has led to an uneven playing field for small business. We heard concerns about DOL's Fiduciary rule, Department of Education's Gainful Employment rule, DOL's Family and Medical Leave rules, DOL's Overtime & Minimum wage rules, Army Corps of Engineers' levee rules, OSHA's Communication Towers, Fall Protection & Process Safety Management rules, EPA's Stormwater permits & Wetlands rules, FMCSA's Hours of Service rules, Fish and Wildlife Service's Critical Habitat rules, how CFPB's new rules have affected small businesses in the real estate industry (financial advisors, title companies, builders, etc.), the unintended consequences of FDA's regulation of tobacco, how CMS rules affect struggling pharmacies, and so much more.

Small businesses clearly are speaking up... and Advocacy is ready to listen. Together we will help their voices be heard. Upon returning to the DC Office, Advocacy attorneys immediately began reaching out to agencies on behalf of the Louisiana small businesses. At the end of this effort, Advocacy will publish a comprehensive report on what we heard directly from small business owners and leaders at these roundtables.

Stay tuned for more information on Advocacy's Regional Regulatory Reform Roundtables and our upcoming report on small business burdensome regulations. To see where the next roundtable will be or leave a comment about federal regulatory concerns affecting small business, please visit our Regulatory Reform page on our website: www.sba.gov/advocacy/regulatory-reform.