

“Stop the Madness and Fix the Mess!”

Texas Small Businesses Plead for Regulatory Relief

By Claudia Rodgers, Senior Counsel

Overly burdensome federal regulations seem to be the norm, not the exception for small business owners in Texas. The Office of Advocacy recently hosted Regional Regulatory Reform Roundtables in San Antonio and Houston, Texas, March 19-20, 2018. As a result of President Donald J. Trump’s mandate to federal agencies to take regulatory reform seriously and to find burdensome regulations to eliminate, Advocacy staff has been hosting small business roundtables across the country. These important meetings are an opportunity for Advocacy to be the voice of those small business owners and hear directly from them regarding their regulatory burden and ways in which it can be eased. This recent trip to Texas was informative and eye-opening.

Apparently everything really IS bigger in Texas — geography, state pride and the number of federal regulations — at least according to small businesses that attended these most recent roundtables. In San Antonio, transportation companies complained that “new technologies are transforming our industry, yet federal regulations aren’t keeping the pace.” They urged the federal government to reduce their burden by making the regulations clearer and more attuned to the changing times in order that they “may grow their businesses instead of deal with needless regulation.”

Another common complaint was about the endless mountain of paperwork requirements that have stifled their businesses and “are not designed to be truly fair to small businesses.” Many small business owners told Advocacy that as a result of federal regulations, they feel forced to hire additional staff and attorneys to figure out the complicated rules and keep up with the never ending paperwork burden. Similarly, small businesses are frustrated when the rules keep changing. “The government changes the regulations so often we can’t keep up!”, declared a small consulting company representative.

“What we have is a case of federal regulations gone crazy! Something must be done,” another small business owner declared.

A one-size-fits-all approach to regulating various industries was also something small businesses stated was particularly problematic. Without the specific knowledge of how some of these businesses operate, they felt that the federal government would not know exactly what exact problem they were trying to fix, nor what the most effective and least costly way would be to fix it.

While there were numerous regulatory issues that were highlighted at these roundtables, a few agency rules stood out:

- The Federal Acquisition Regulation procurement regulations
- the animal ID program at the Food and Drug Administration under the Food Safety Modernization Act
- the Federal Trade Commission's cybersecurity rules
- the many changes to health care rules as a result of the Affordable Care Act
- the Department of Interior's Waters of the United States rule
- the Department of Transportation Hours of Service rule
- the Electronic Logging Device rule's impact on small trucking companies
- The Internal Revenue Services' 1099C rules
- and many more.

One thing was certain —small businesses in Texas are in need of regulatory relief across the board. The Office of Advocacy will be contacting the regulatory agencies to inform them of the small business issues raised during these important meetings, so that small businesses will have a voice in the regulatory reform process. For more information on Advocacy's regulatory reform effort or to see where the next Regional Regulatory Reform Roundtables will be held, please visit.

www.sba.gov/advocacy/regulatory-reform.

Advocacy was in San Antonio and Houston, Texas for Regional Regulatory Reform Roundtable and NAFTA Modernization Outreach Meetings on March 19-20.

Can't get to a roundtable near you? Fill out this form and tell us about your federal regulatory burdens. We will pass this information on to the appropriate agency and use it in the planning of upcoming Regional Regulatory Reform Roundtables.

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