



Consumer Federation of America

RE: Oppose The Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act (REINS Act), S. 21, Legislation that will Undermine Crucial Consumer Protection Regulations

May 16, 2017

Honorable Senator Ron Johnson
Hart Senate Office Building 328
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Claire McCaskill
Hart Senate Office Building 503
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Johnson and Senator McCaskill:

The Consumer Federation of America (CFA)¹ writes to express our strong opposition to a bill that will undermine important consumer protections and that will be voted on by the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee this week. The Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act (REINS Act), S. 21, would undercut the ability of federal agencies to protect consumers from unsafe food, predatory financial products and schemes, and dangerous consumer products. The federal rulemaking process is already lengthy and difficult. This bill will make it even more time-consuming, expensive, and burdensome for federal agencies to implement consumer protection measures. The end result will be harm to American consumers.

The REINS Act would require that any agency that issues a rule with an economic impact of \$100 million or more must obtain approval from both Houses of Congress of the entire rule without changes, within 70 legislative days of the rule being received by Congress. This would affect all major rules; even the many that are not controversial. With few exceptions, if Congress fails to act in the allotted time, the rule could not be brought up again until the next Congress and would not be implemented.

This hurdle would be virtually impossible for important consumer protection rules to overcome. The bill strips away the authority of federal agencies that Congress created to develop expertise on how to protect American consumers from dangerous products, tainted food and

¹ CFA is an association of more than 250 non-profit consumer organizations that was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy and education. Member organizations include local, state, and national consumer advocacy groups, senior citizen associations, consumer cooperatives, trade unions and food safety organizations.

deceptive financial services products. If an agency does persist in its efforts, it faces the prospect of squandering enormous resources to research, write and evaluate an important consumer protection rule, because opponents of the effort have been able to bottle it up in a single House of Congress over a short period of time.

Congress already has numerous methods for holding agencies accountable for their actions. The REINS Act would further delay the rulemaking process, waste federal resources, minimize the ability of federal agencies to do their jobs to protect the public and ultimately harm American consumers.

We strongly urge you to oppose this harmful bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Weintraub". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rachel Weintraub
Legislative Director and General Counsel

CC: Members of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee