



TEN THOUSAND COMMANDMENTS 2017: A FACT SHEET

Ten Thousand Commandments is the Competitive Enterprise Institute's annual survey of the size, scope, and cost of federal regulations, and how they affect American consumers, businesses, and the U.S. economy. Authored by CEI Vice President for Policy Clyde Wayne Crews Jr., it shines a light on the large and growing "hidden tax" of America's regulatory state.

Federal government spending, deficits, and the national debt are staggering, but so is the impact of federal regulations. Unfortunately, regulations get little attention in policy debates because, unlike taxes, they are unbudgeted, difficult to quantify, and their effects are often indirect. By making Washington's rules and mandates more comprehensible, Crews underscores the need for more review, transparency, and accountability for new and existing federal regulations.

The 2017 report is unique and will serve as a benchmark to measure President Trump's efforts to cut red tape against those of his predecessors. President Obama's final year in office showed a regulatory surge. Will Trump keep his promise and slam the breaks on overregulation?

Highlights from the 2017 edition include:

- Federal regulations and intervention **cost American consumers and businesses \$1.9 trillion in 2016**. When you add the taxpayer dollars government agencies spent administering these regulations, **the total cost of the regulatory state reached \$1.963 trillion last year**.
- Federal regulation is a hidden tax that amounts to nearly **\$15,000 per U.S. household each year**.
- In 2016, 214 laws were enacted by Congress during the calendar year, while 3,853 rules were issued by agencies. Thus, **18 rules were issued for every law enacted last year**.
- If it were a country, **U.S. federal regulation would be the world's seventh-largest economy**, ranking behind India and ahead of Italy.
- Many Americans are concerned about their annual tax burden, but **total regulatory costs exceeded the \$1.92 trillion the IRS collected in both individual and corporate income taxes** in 2016.
- Some **60 federal departments, agencies, and commissions have 3,318 regulations in development** at various stages in the pipeline.
- The **five most active rulemaking entities**—the Departments of the Treasury, Interior, Transportation, Commerce and the Environmental Protection Agency—**account for 1,428 rules, or 43 percent of all federal regulations**, under consideration.
- The 2016 *Federal Register* contains **95,894 pages, the highest level in its history** and 19 percent higher than the previous year's 80,260 pages.
- Last year, **the Obama administration averaged 86 "major" rules**, a 36 percent higher average annual output than that of George W. Bush. **Obama issued 685 major rules during his term**, compared with Bush's 505.

The information in this report is based on a compilation of best available government and private data.