



## TEN THOUSAND COMMANDMENTS 2015: 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, growing "hidden tax" of America's regulatory state.

The scope of federal government spending, deficits and the national debt is staggering, but so is the impact of federal regulations, which now exceeds half the amount the federal government spends annually. Unfortunately, regulations get too little attention in policy debates because, unlike taxes, they are unbudgeted. They are also difficult to quantify because their effects are often indirect. In *Ten Thousand Commandments*, Crews compiles available data on regulatory costs and trends. By making the size, extent and cost of Washington's rules and mandates more comprehensible, Crews underscores the need for more review, transparency and accountability—for both new and existing federal regulations.

### Highlights of the 2015 edition include:

- Federal regulation and intervention cost American consumers and businesses an estimated **\$1.88 trillion in 2014** in lost economic productivity and higher prices.
- If U.S. federal regulation was a country, it would be the world's **10<sup>th</sup> largest economy**, ranking behind Russia and ahead of India.
- Economy-wide regulatory costs amount to an average of **\$14,976 per household** – around **29 percent of an average family budget** of \$51,100. Although not paid directly by individuals, this "cost" of regulation exceeds the amount an average family spends on health care, food and transportation.
- The "Unconstitutionality Index" is the ratio of regulations issued by unelected agency officials compared to legislation enacted by Congress in a given year. In 2014, agencies issued **16 new regulations for every law**—that's **3,554 new regulations** compared to 224 new laws.
- Many Americans complain about taxes, but regulatory compliance costs exceed what the IRS is expected to collect in both individual and corporate income taxes for last year—**by more than \$160 billion**.
- Some **60 federal departments, agencies and commissions** have 3,415 regulations in development at various stages in the pipeline. The top six federal rulemaking agencies account for **48 percent of all federal regulations**. These are the Departments of the Treasury, Commerce, Interior, Health and Human Services and Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency.
- The 2014 *Federal Register* contains **77,687 pages**, the **sixth highest page count in its history**. Among the six all-time-high *Federal Register* total page counts, five occurred under President Obama.
- The George W. Bush administration **averaged 62 major regulations annually** over eight years, while the Obama administration has averaged **81 major regulations annually** over six years.