



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 3, 2016

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Memo to the Next President: Let's Make Government Work for *All* of Us

Over the past several weeks, the Center for Progressive Reform (CPR) has urged the next president to take a constructive approach to our government and our system of health, safety, environmental, and financial safeguards. With Election Day just three months away, CPR is releasing [a new paper](#) that expands on those themes and provides a comprehensive blueprint for how the next president can rebuild our system of regulatory protections.

The new paper, *Memo to the Next President: A Progressive Vision of Government and Protective Safeguards*, calls on the next leader of the United States to put forth a positive vision of government and to ensure that our system for developing regulatory protections advances the public interest.

"The decades-long campaign against regulation and government helped set the stage for avoidable disasters such as the Flint, Michigan, water contamination crisis, and anti-regulatory rhetoric and the policy decisions it inspires will continue to cause serious damage unless something changes," said Robert Glicksman, Board Member at CPR and a co-author of the paper. "As a nation, we can chart a better course in how we talk about regulation and government and the constructive role they play in our society."

Indeed, regulations work and have immense benefits. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Air Act rules saved 164,300 adult lives in 2010 alone, and by 2020, they will save an estimated 237,000 lives each year.

"To allow agencies to continue to protect people from air pollution, foodborne illnesses, workplace hazards, and unscrupulous banks and credit card companies, it is crucial that the next president match actions to words," said James Goodwin, Senior Policy Analyst at CPR and co-author of the paper. "He or she should commit to building a 21st century regulatory system, one that safeguards all of us in a timely, effective manner."

To build a successful regulatory system that works for all Americans, the next president will need to seek broad-based reform. Among other things, he or she should:

- Work to ensure that each agency has adequate budgetary resources, equipment, and personnel to fulfill its statutory mission.
- Demand that Congress provide and support the use of enhanced or updated legal authorities to better address any gaps in regulatory safeguards, as well as new and emerging threats.
- Eliminate all unnecessary and burdensome analytical and procedural requirements that unduly delay agency action and waste scarce agency resources.
- Appoint qualified experts with a demonstrated commitment to the public interest to relevant leadership posts within agencies, preserve expert-driven discretion against interference from political officials at the White House or in Congress, and strongly defend agency actions against political and other self-serving attacks.
- Promote regulatory decision-making that prioritizes public protections over narrow, private economic concerns, and refuse to allow scientific uncertainty to serve as a justification for regulatory inaction in the face of significant threats of harm.
- Enhance transparency measures for key decision points in the rulemaking process to guard against regulatory capture.
- Take affirmative steps to ensure that the opportunities for individuals, families, and small businesses to participate in the regulatory system are at or near parity with those enjoyed by large corporations and trade associations.
- Preserve individual access to the courts by vetoing legislation that cuts off the ability of citizens to sue corporations whose actions harm health, safety, or the environment and blocking efforts by regulatory agencies to preempt or block such lawsuits.

The paper was authored by CPR Member Scholars Alejandro Camacho, David Driesen, Robert Glicksman, Thomas McGarity, Sidney Shapiro, Joseph Tomain, and Robert Verchick, and CPR Senior Policy Analyst James Goodwin. It is available online at <http://www.progressivereform.org/pretransition.cfm>. Later in the year, CPR will release an additional set of recommendations specific to crucial public protections covering air and water quality, climate change, worker health and safety, energy, natural resources, consumer safety, and more.

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