

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<http://oversight.house.gov>

February 23, 2018

The Honorable Trey Gowdy
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to request that you issue subpoenas to eight federal agencies that are refusing to disclose to Congress the members of their Regulatory Reform Task Forces. One of our key responsibilities on this Committee is to conduct vigorous oversight to protect against conflicts of interest that have the potential to alter federal policy to benefit corporate and other interests rather than the interests of the American people, and it should not take the better part of a year just to obtain this basic information.

On February 24, 2017, President Donald Trump issued Executive Order 13777, which required each agency to create a Regulatory Reform Task Force to “evaluate existing regulations,” “make recommendations to the agency head regarding their repeal, replacement, or modification,” and identify regulations that “eliminate jobs, or inhibit job creation,” “are outdated, unnecessary, or ineffective,” or “impose costs that exceed benefits.”¹

Employees who serve on these Task Forces may play a significant role in proposing regulatory changes over the course of the Trump Administration.²

On August 7, 2017, I sent a letter to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, along with Ranking Members John Conyers, Jr., Gerald E. Connolly, and David Cicilline, requesting the identities of Task Force participants. As we noted in our request, “the interests of the American public must be paramount when reviewing the worthiness of regulations,” and it is critical that these Task Forces guard “against conflicts of interest, especially those in which industry

¹ Exec. Order No. 13777, *Presidential Executive Order on Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda* (Feb. 24, 2017), 82 Fed. Reg. 12285 (Mar. 1, 2017) (online at www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/03/01/2017-04107/enforcing-the-regulatory-reform-agenda).

² See, e.g., *The Deep Industry Ties of Trump's Deregulation Teams*, New York Times (July 11, 2017) (online at www.nytimes.com/2017/07/11/business/the-deep-industry-ties-of-trumps-deregulation-teams.html).

lobbyists seek to overturn environmental and health protections for financial gain.”³ We received no response to our request.

On February 7, 2018, I sent letters, along with Ranking Members Jerrold Nadler, Connolly, and Cicilline, to the 12 agencies that still had not disclosed the identities of their Task Force members. We requested the identities of their Task Force members by February 20, 2018.⁴

In response to our requests, four agencies provided the information we requested, but the following eight agencies provided no response:

Department of Commerce
Department of Homeland Security
Department of Justice
Department of Labor
Department of State
General Services Administration
Small Business Administration
Social Security Administration

For these reasons, I now ask that you issue subpoenas to compel these eight agencies to produce documents sufficient to identify the members of their Regulatory Reform Task Forces. If you choose not to do so, then I ask you to place this matter on the agenda for our next regularly scheduled business meeting so all Committee members will have the opportunity to vote on a motion to subpoena the agencies for this information.

Sincerely,



Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member

³ Letter from Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, et al., to the Honorable Mick Mulvaney, Director, Office of Management and Budget, and the Honorable Neomi Rao, Administrator, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (Aug. 7, 2017) (online at https://democrats-oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/documents/2017-08-7.%20EEC%20Connolly%20Conyers%20Cicilline%20to%20OMB_0.pdf).

⁴ See, e.g., Letter from Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, et al., to the Honorable Wilbur Ross, Secretary, Department of Commerce (Feb. 7, 2018) (online at <https://democrats-oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2018-02-07.EEC%20Nadler%20Connolly%20Cicilline%20to%20Ross-DOC%20re%20Reg%20Reform%20Task%20Force1.pdf>).