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RELEASE: JUNE 2, 1981

REAGAN'S REGULATORY RELIEF

Regulatory relief for every segment of the economy is an essential part of Ronald Reagan's economic program. Under the capable command of Murray L. Weidenbaum, chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, the Reagan Administration did 104 acts of deregulation in its first four months.

The number of final rules published in the Federal Register dropped by 47%. The number of proposed rules dropped by 54%. The number of published pages dropped by 60%.

Weidenbaum's goal is to reverse the intrusion of the Federal Government into the lives of citizens, into the decisions of businessmen, and into the choices faced by tens of thousands of state and local government officials and administrators. He doesn't think that workers, managers, investors or administrators need the Federal Government to make decisions for them on how to organize and run their daily lives and activities.

Look at the embattled auto industry. The liberal forumula is to hamstring it with costly regulations (a burden that Japanese manufacturers don't have to bear), raise taxes, and give a federal subsidy or loan. The Reagan-Weidenbaum way is to rescind ~~or repropose~~ 34 specific regulations which, over a five-year period, will save the American motorist $9.3 billion in the cost of buying and operating cars and trucks.

This will also release $1.3 billion in company funds which can now go into capital improvement rather than down the drain of federally-mandated equipment, facilities, and compliance paperwork.

The regulations being lifted or lightened range from rules on bumper strength to exhaust emissions standards and cerification procedures. The Administration will also propose that Congress amend the Clean Air Act by eliminating the requirement that all passenger cars meet 1984 emissions standards at higher altitudes.

Here is one example of how a simple change in an auto regulation will reduce costs greatly, allow consumers a wider range of choice, but have no adverse effect on clean air. The Reagan EPA will allow auto manufacturers to meet diesel exhaust emissions standards

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by using sales-weighted averages of the results from all their different model lines. Some can emit more pollution, some less, but the total of a manufacturer's emissions will be within the clean air standards.

The Reagan Administration has requested the D.C. Court of Appeals to remand to the Environmental Protection Agency for reconsideration a rule EPA previously issued which set noise emissions standards for garbage trucks. The costs, although not great by federal standards, are high in relation to the benefits sought.

More important, the Federal Government has no business being a busybody in the matter of garbage collection, which is a strictly local matter. If noise is a problem, municipalities could solve it better by altering truck routes to accommodate residential neighborhoods, rather than buying expensive sound-proof trucks to comply with EPA regulations.

The Reagan Administration withdrew the Department of Energy's proposed standards for the minimum energy efficiency of major household appliances, such as refrigerators and air conditioners. The energy saved under these regulations would have required the complete redesign of almost every appliance model by 1986. Appliance purchase prices would increase by $500 million a year, a cost that would never be recouped in saved energy costs, and which would bankrupt the smaller manufacturers that couldn't afford such rapid model changes.

The Secretary of Education withdrew proposed rules that would have required all school systems to offer a particular form of bilingual instruction to children whose primary language is other than English. The cost saving will be substantial and the lifting of this federal harassment of local school curriculum is welcome.

The Department of Transportation delayed four regulations which would have imposed costly requirements on state and local governments, dictating how they conduct urban transportation planning, design traffic control devices, and rehabilitate or stockpile buses.

The Federal regulatory burden has simply risen way out of all reason. Between 1970 and 1981, federal spending for regulatory activities alone rose from $0.9 billion to $7.1 billion. In constant dollars, that was an increase of 3-1/2 times. The Reagan Administration is moving on schedule to try to stimulate a more productive economy.

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