

insights

TYPES NOT MAPPED YET October 01, 2024 | TTR not mapped yet | Christopher T. Murray, Jack N. Jacobson, James A. Conway

OIRA

A branch of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) within the Executive Office of the President that is tasked with reviewing drafts of proposed and final regulations.

The Winter Soldier

Congress established the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) with the [Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980](#). OIRA is comprised of five subject-matter offices and is the Executive Branch's central authority for reviewing regulations, information collections, and statistic-based initiatives. The office is currently led by Administrator Richard Revesz. This position is nominated by the president and requires Senate confirmation.

Brave New World

Prior to OIRA's establishment in 1980, high-level review of agency regulations did occur at the White House, though in a more limited form. President Reagan issued [Executive Order \(EO\) 12291](#) in 1981, formalizing the OMB's regulatory review process.

Subsequent presidents have taken executive actions to expand or contract OIRA's functions. In 1993, President Clinton issued [EO 12866](#), adjusting the language that calls for the review of "major rules" and modifying it to only include "economically significant" ones. This reduced the office's workload from over 2,500 regulations reviewed per year to about 600. President George W. Bush further adjusted the policy in 2007, using [EO 13422](#) to include guidance documents issued by federal agencies within OIRA's jurisdiction.

Most recently, the Biden Administration used OIRA to issue revisions to [Circular A-4](#), the government-wide guidance on regulatory analysis. The White House's aim with these revisions was to modernize and expand the regulatory review process by raising the threshold of economically significant and tying it to inflation; requiring increased engagement with underrepresented communities during rulemaking; and making the regulatory process more transparent. This comes after the Trump Administration took steps to deconstruct "unnecessary" rules and protections.

Civil War

As with many other offices and statutes related to regulatory review, especially in a post-[Chevron](#) world, the 2024 election looms large over OIRA. The winner will ultimately decide the future role of this office. It remains to be seen whether Vice President Harris, should she win, would continue the same expansions we have seen under President Biden. Conversely, it appears certain that a second Trump Administration would utilize OMB broadly and OIRA specifically to undo much of the Biden-Harris policy agenda.

About Wonkology

What is a policy rider? How long is a legislative day? Political jargon can be headache-inducing. But your ability to understand how Washington works could significantly impact your business. Wonkology is a monthly alert from the Thompson Coburn Lobbying & Policy group. In each edition, we will decode Washington lingo by giving you a straightforward definition of a political term that is in the news.

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