

Regulation vs. Protection

What you need to know

The following answers about government regulation are based on the in-depth research, not “alternative facts”. They are provided by the Bluegrass Activist Alliance Research Team.

Our Values

The Bluegrass Activist Alliance believes regulations are protections and that government has a responsibility to protect ordinary citizens from the excesses of uncontrolled capitalism. One way to do this is through an open and fair regulation process.

Our Values:

1. **What is the difference between a government regulation and a protection?** There really is no difference. It depends on who defines it. Many government agencies have the word protection as part of their name. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Most of the regulations designed by government agencies are there to protect average citizens from people and practices that are more intent on making money or controlling politics than protecting the health and welfare of average citizens.
2. **Do these regulations/protections ever become burdens to businesses and others and, if so, how do we control that?** Of course. Balancing what is best for the public welfare and what is best for business is a continuing activity. Our political

system is designed so that average people, who are usually represented by consumer groups, and lobbyists for business and industry compete for the ears of politicians to keep an appropriate balance.

3. **Does that balancing system work?** In a word, No. Because our current political system is so controlled by big donations, and business and industry have so much more money than average citizens and consumer groups, even important health regulations like the clean air act can be altered in industry’s favor.
4. **What are some examples of this balancing act?** One recent example is the weakening of the Dodd Frank Act, which was passed after the 2008 financial crash. Dodd Frank was designed to control parts of the banking and investment system that were unregulated and that helped cause the 2008 crash in which millions of Americans lost their homes and retirement savings. Its goal was to insure that such a crisis would not happen again. This year, the House passed the Financial Choice Act, cosponsored by Andy Barr, which rolls back nearly all those protections in favor of much less regulation on banks, hedge fund investors and others. Many believe this lack of regulation is what led to the 2008 crash.

Another example is the elimination of the Clean Power Plan, which was put in place to deal with the growing

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consequences of climate change and with air pollution from coal burning power plants. That pollution is the cause of thousands of illnesses and hundreds of deaths in Kentucky each year from asthma, heart attacks and chronic bronchitis. Though nearly 70% of Americans support the Clean Power Plan, the fossil fuel industry pushed hard to get rid of it and Congressman Barr, who receives large contributions from the coal industry, voted with them.

5. **How can I know what really protects me and what is overregulation?** Generally speaking, follow the money and ratings. If a particular industry is a big donor to your congressperson and he or she votes in favor of doing away with regulations on that industry, you should be wary. Also, powerful interest groups, on the left and right, rate congress people on how they vote. You can check these donations and ratings at the websites listed below. Note: Watch out. Many interest groups call themselves by names that conceal their true purpose.

Barr donations

<http://www.indivisiblebluegrass.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Barr-Campaign-Donors-etc..pdf>

Barr ratings

<https://votesmart.org/candidate/evaluations/117290/andy-barr#.WgRjPGhSwTU>