October 12, 2011

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), we are writing to urge you to oppose the REINS Act (H.R. 10) when it is considered by the Judiciary Committee on Thursday.

Contrary to claims made by sponsors of the REINS Act, this bill is not aimed at reforming rulemaking. It is aimed at crippling the ability of agencies to implement the laws passed by Congress. The REINS Act would block the issuance of rules, no matter how vital they are to safeguarding the public’s health, reining in the excesses of Wall Street, cleaning our air and water, protecting our food supply and keeping the workplace safe. Simply put, the bill is a backdoor effort to nullify legislation approved by previous Congresses, without going through the democratic step of actually repealing these popular laws.

No doubt it would be difficult to explain to constituents an outright vote to roll back food safety laws after the recent recall of tainted cantaloupe that has killed 21 citizens or the recall of one-half billion tainted eggs last summer that made more than a thousand ill. No doubt it would be difficult to acknowledge a vote to weaken clean air rules, when more than half the population lives in areas with pollution levels that are too often dangerous, especially for children. No doubt it would be hard to explain a vote to weaken job safety standards when four to five thousand workers are killed on the job each year and 10 times this number die each year of occupational diseases.

The REINS Act is a sneak attack on the protections that Americans count on to keep them safe. We urge you to oppose this legislation.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Loveless
Director of Legislation

CML: bcr