The Daily Dish

CRA, Yawn

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | MARCH 27, 2025

Like most Americans, I was glued to C-SPAN yesterday for the House debate carrying the chyron: "REPEAL COMMERCIAL REFIGERATION EFFICIENCY RULE." Ok, maybe not *most* Americans, but certainly an important demographic. Ok, maybe not even that.

But I was struck as I watched by the relative lack of attention paid to activity under the Congressional Review Act (CRA). As longtime readers of Eakinomics know, the CRA provides a procedure to remove rules that were finalized in the last 60 legislative days of the previous Congress (so-called "midnight rulemakings"), and it is most effective when one party controls both houses of Congress and that party is the opposition of the previous president. In this case, Republican majorities are busy taking down Biden Administration rules. According to the CRA Tracker, the running totals are:

- Number of Rules Addressed: 39
- Total Costs From Rules Addressed: $137.5 Billion
- Number of Resolutions Passed by House: 6
- Number of Resolutions Passed by Senate: 4
- Number of Resolutions Passed Into Law: 2

That's a lot of deregulatory activity, but it is seemingly happening outside the public eye. In similar circumstances in 2017, there was tremendous attention paid to CRA actions and the general topic of controlling regulatory burdens. Is it possible the public has become used to the CRA activity – or had it perhaps expected these actions and, as a result, didn't see them as news? That would be quite an accomplishment.

It also seems to be the case that controlling the regulatory state is further down the list of the administration's economic priorities. If so, that may be a mistake. The success in changing the course of regulation was an important part of the jumpstart the economy received in 2017. Given the self-inflicted economic wounds the tariff policy is producing, a vigorous approach to regulations would provide both a substantive and visible counterweight of good news for the growth outlook and disinflation.

Eakinomics fully expects that at the conclusion of his term in office, Trump's success in controlling regulatory costs will again be among his top economic achievements. But you would be hard-pressed to identify it right now.