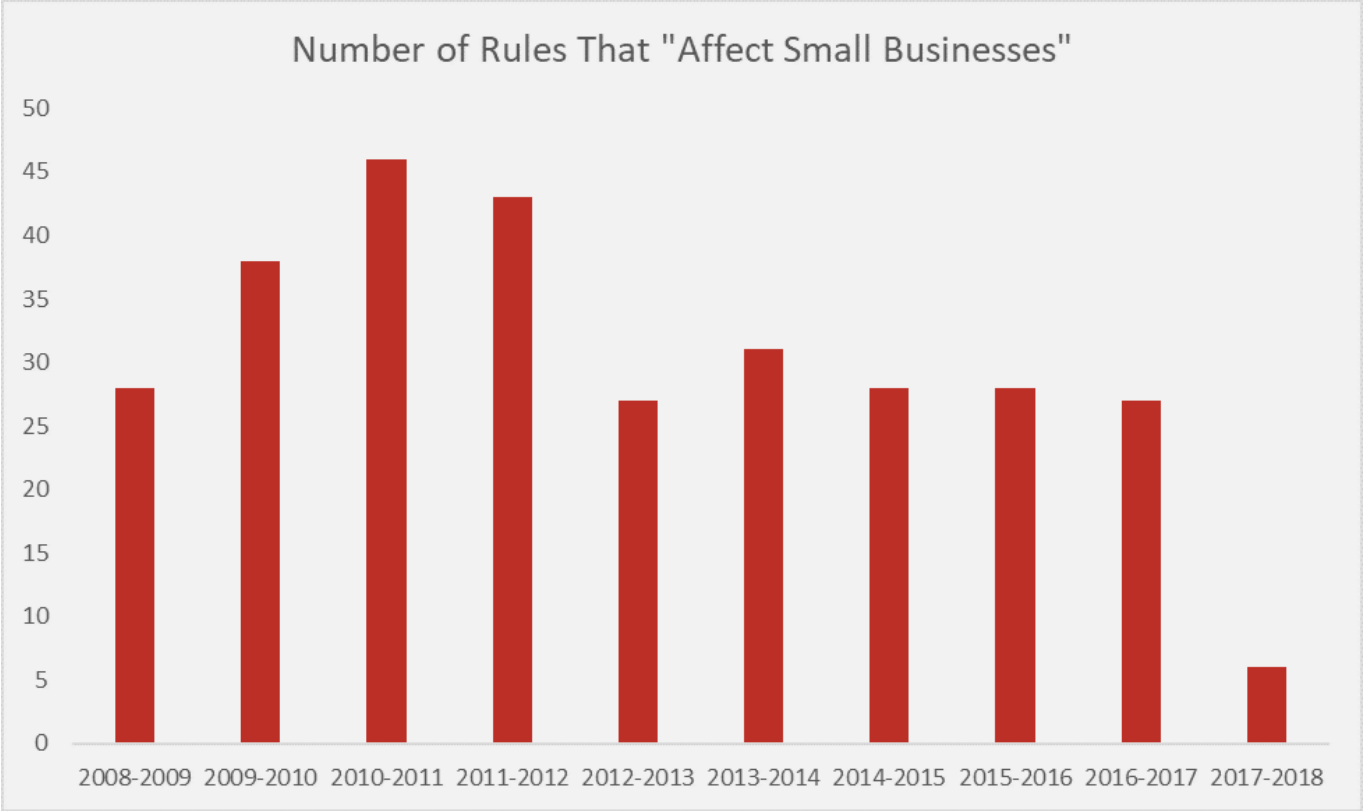
Insight

A New Era for "Small Business Week"

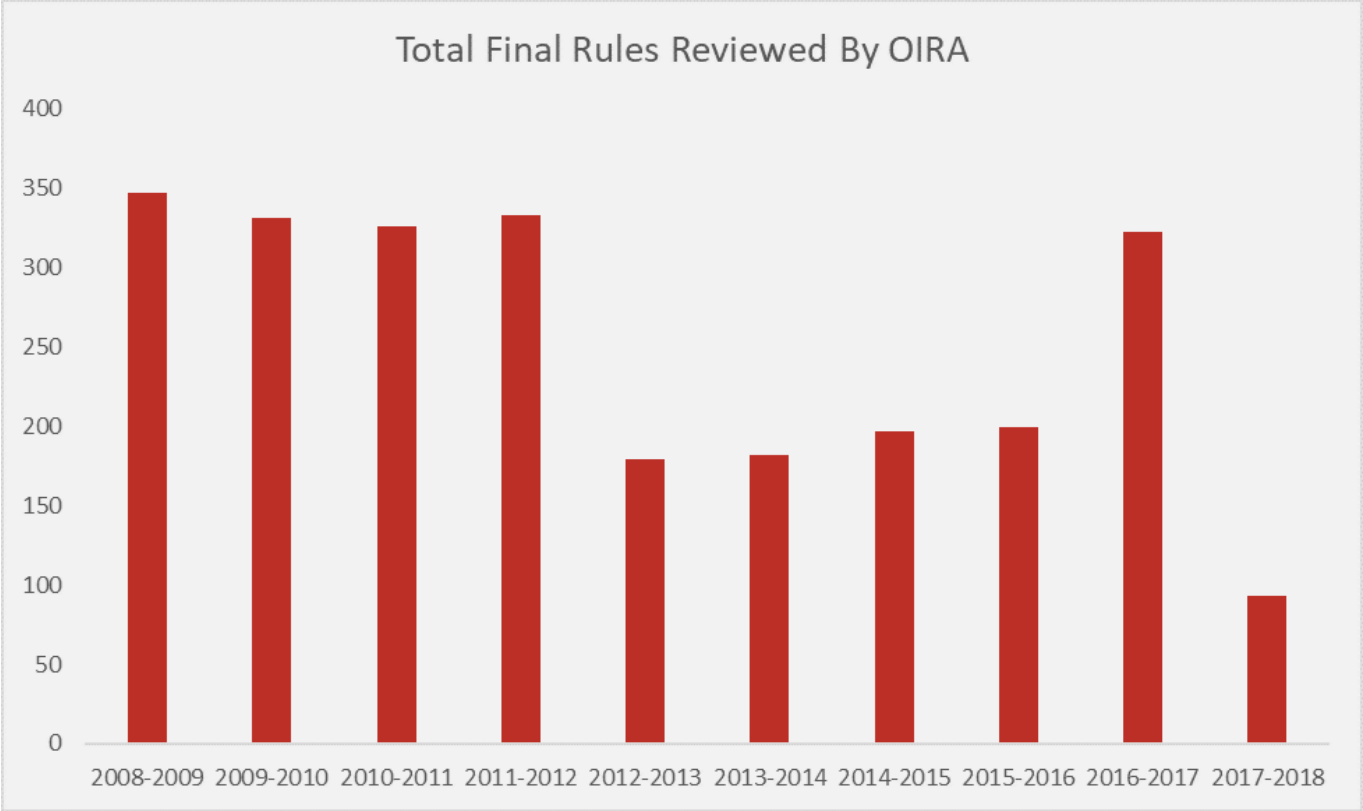
DAN GOLDBECK | MAY 4, 2018

On Wednesday, the Federal Register published President Trump's official proclamation declaring the week of April 29 – May 5 as "National Small Business Week 2018." While this annual nod to small business is nothing new, an American Action Forum (AAF) review of available data suggests that this year's edition marks a new regulatory trend that many small businesses likely appreciate. AAF has found that, over the past year, there has been a historic decline in the volume of regulatory actions most directly affecting small businesses – even accounting for the overall downward trend in regulatory activity under the Trump Administration.

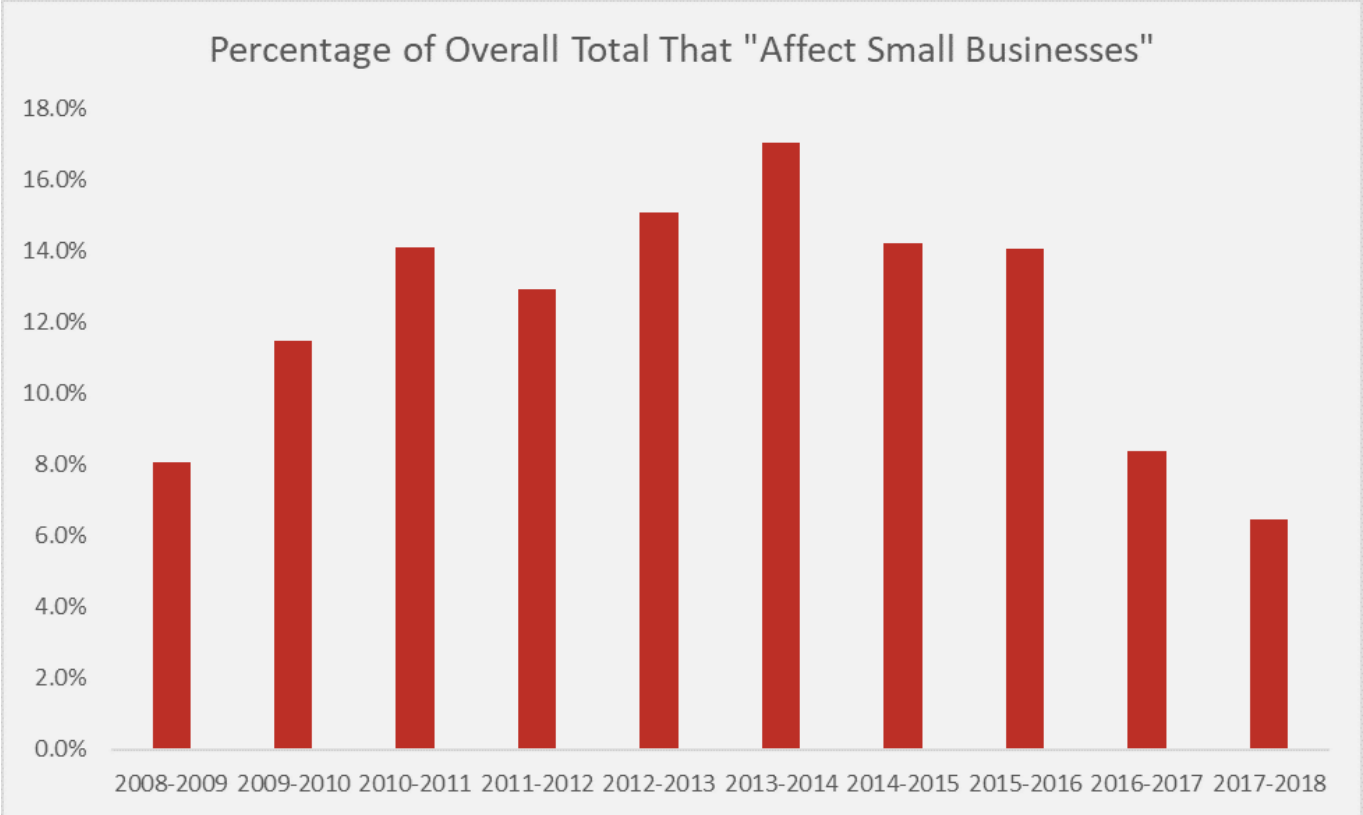
For this analysis, AAF examined trends in Office of Regulatory and Information Affairs (OIRA) data in annual increments from April 30, 2008 through April 29, 2018 (each "year" spans from April 30 in one year until April 29 in the next). Across the past decade, there were 302 final rules that concluded OIRA review and carried the designation of being "likely to have an impact [on small businesses] as defined by the Regulatory Flexibility Act." As shown in the table below, this past year brought a historically low amount of six such rules. The average across the previous nine years was approximately 33.



One potential factor driving this decline is the overall slowdown in regulatory activity under the current administration. AAF has previously noted this phenomenon here. And, as the data in the table below show, there has been a markedly lower level of rules undergoing OIRA review across these annual periods.



This is roughly half of the average for the nine preceding years (12.8 percent). Of note, the next two closest years (2008-2009 at 8.1 percent and 2016-2017 at 8.4 percent) spanned administrations of different parties.



Granted, this is merely one measure of the potential regulatory burden imposed upon small businesses based upon agency analysis that is itself ripe for reform. However, the difference from trends in recent years is hard to miss. As the administration continues to turn more from a regulatory holding pattern to active burden reductions, "National Small Business Week 2018" may mark a particularly historic inflection point for the country's small businesses.