

Memo of the Month



— CFO BULLETIN

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ALL FEMA EMPLOYEES

Subject: AUTHORIZED RETURN HOME TRAVEL DURING EXTENDED TEMPORARY DUTY (TDY) ASSIGNMENT.

This CFO Bulletin is to clarify recent discrepancies regarding authorized return home travel for FEMA personnel on extended TDY assignment.

FEMA allows employees on extended TDY assignments to return home once every 30 to 45 days at government expense. Disaster Assistance Employees (DAE's) assisting in presidentially declared disasters may also be returned home once every 30 to 45 days.

With the approaching holidays, it has come to our attention that some employees would rather travel to alternate locations instead of returning home. Even though the alternate travel may produce a cost savings to the government, the Federal Travel Regulation does not allow FEMA the flexibility to reimburse travel expenses to alternate locations. Employees may only be authorized to return to his/her official duty station or place of abode.

The Case for (Some) Regulation

*By not distinguishing
between good and bad
regulations, the GOP
could do more harm
than good*

BY JOSHUA WOLF SHENK

Jack Faris, president of the National Federation of Independent Business, has a simple message for the 104th Congress. "Our members want the federal government off their backs, out of their pockets, and off their land." Simple enough for you?

It is for Congressional Republicans. NFIB played a crucial role in beating back universal health coverage. Now the small business lobby—with 600,000 members—has a new target: federal regulations. They've asked for a freeze in all new rules, and they are likely to get it. The "Regulatory Transition Act of 1995," sponsored by Rep. Tom DeLay (R-Texas), would impose a six-month moratorium on federal regulations, retroactive to last election day.

But don't ask NFIB precisely what this will accomplish. Kim McKernan, the group's chief lobbyist for the House of Representatives, cannot even name a single regulation she'd like to see repealed. "That's what the moratorium is for," she says. "Stop the bleeding. Let's take a look at the landscape and re-evaluate."

Indeed, for opponents of regulation, vagueness is a powerful weapon. Polls show vigorous public support for federal controls on the environment, consumer safety, and food and drugs. Businesses, meanwhile, despise these regulations: They don't want to be told what to do, especially if it costs them money. "Regulatory reform" is the Republicans' magic bullet. Reducing excessive burdens on business, they argue, will create jobs and lower prices for consumer goods. Everyone, they say, ends up richer, safer, and healthier.

But there is no magic bullet. Real regulatory reform—making the process smarter and more efficient, paring out senseless rules and toughening others—would take hard work and political courage. The Republican agenda is old-fashioned laissez-faire capitalism in disguise. Rather than dismantle agencies and provoke a public outcry, they plan to hogtie the system with cumbersome new rules and restrictions. This is a boon to business owners and corporate managers; it's a disaster for the ordinary guy.

Take this moratorium. It's billed as an antidote to red tape, but the volume of paperwork, procedu-