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## **House Passes Bill to Silence Agency Experts and Frustrate Public Participation in the Regulatory Process**

Last night, the House of Representatives, in an almost completely party-line vote, passed the Regulatory Integrity Act (H.R. 5226), a bill that would prohibit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and other agencies from engaging the public on their pending efforts to address climate change, prevent foodborne illness, and otherwise act in the public interest. Center for Progressive Reform Senior Policy Analyst James Goodwin offered the following reaction to the bill's passage:

"Poll after poll shows that the more the American people hear about individual regulatory safeguards, the more they support them. So it's no surprise that House conservatives, acting at the behest of their corporate benefactors, want to muzzle the agency experts who help develop these crucial protections.

"Make no mistake, this bill is about preventing agencies from making the public aware of proposed health, safety, and environmental protections and soliciting the feedback needed for informing and strengthening those policies. As such, this bill flies in the face of the Administrative Procedure Act and the agencies' authorizing statutes, all of which mandate public engagement in rule development. Under the bill's vague and broad language, agencies could not even discuss the results of the cost-benefit analyses they must perform for these rules, since a finding of benefits in excess of costs might constitute improper 'promotion' of the regulation. Given that the bill's sponsors are such avowed fans of cost-benefit analysis, this would be a strange result indeed.

"In the end, when agencies cannot communicate with the public about their own rules, corporate lobbyists and anti-regulatory members of Congress will only be too happy to fill in the resulting silence. You can bet the message they share about pending rules will be inaccurate and calculated to deceive. Such a bad government bill shouldn't be taking up Congress's precious time, particularly when there are so many pressing challenges facing the country. It's a good thing for the public interest that President Obama has promised to veto this bill in the unlikely event it reaches his desk."

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*The Center for Progressive Reform is a nonprofit research and educational organization with a network of Member Scholars working to protect health, safety, and the environment through analysis and commentary. Read [CPRBlog](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), and like us on [Facebook](#).*