

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3972

To amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 25, 2019

Mr. SENSENBRENNER (for himself, Mr. ARMSTRONG, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, Mr. HAGEDORN, and Mr. BUCK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Rules, and the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Regulations from the  
5 Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act of 2019”.

1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

2       The purpose of this Act is to increase accountability  
 3 for and transparency in the Federal regulatory process.  
 4 Section 1 of article I of the United States Constitution  
 5 grants all legislative powers to Congress. Over time, Con-  
 6 gress has excessively delegated its constitutional charge  
 7 while failing to conduct appropriate oversight and retain  
 8 accountability for the content of the laws it passes. By  
 9 requiring a vote in Congress, the REINS Act will result  
 10 in more carefully drafted and detailed legislation, an im-  
 11 proved regulatory process, and a legislative branch that  
 12 is truly accountable to the American people for the laws  
 13 imposed upon them.

14 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW OF AGENCY RULE-**  
 15 **MAKING.**

16       Chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, is amended  
 17 to read as follows:

18 **“CHAPTER 8—CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW**  
 19 **OF AGENCY RULEMAKING**

“Sec.

“801. Congressional review.

“802. Congressional approval procedure for major rules.

“803. Congressional disapproval procedure for nonmajor rules.

“804. Definitions.

“805. Judicial review.

“806. Exemption for monetary policy.

“807. Effective date of certain rules.

1 **“§ 801. Congressional review**

2 “(a)(1)(A) Before a rule may take effect, the Federal  
3 agency promulgating such rule shall publish in the Federal  
4 Register a list of information on which the rule is based,  
5 including data, scientific and economic studies, and cost-  
6 benefit analyses, and identify how the public can access  
7 such information online, and shall submit to each House  
8 of the Congress and to the Comptroller General a report  
9 containing—

10 “(i) a copy of the rule;

11 “(ii) a concise general statement relating to the  
12 rule;

13 “(iii) a classification of the rule as a major or  
14 nonmajor rule, including an explanation of the clas-  
15 sification specifically addressing each criteria for a  
16 major rule contained within sections 804(2)(A),  
17 804(2)(B), and 804(2)(C);

18 “(iv) a list of any other related regulatory ac-  
19 tions intended to implement the same statutory pro-  
20 vision or regulatory objective as well as the indi-  
21 vidual and aggregate economic effects of those ac-  
22 tions; and

23 “(v) the proposed effective date of the rule.

24 “(B) On the date of the submission of the report  
25 under subparagraph (A), the Federal agency promulgating

1 the rule shall submit to the Comptroller General and make  
2 available to each House of Congress—

3 “(i) a complete copy of the cost-benefit analysis  
4 of the rule, if any, including an analysis of any jobs  
5 added or lost, differentiating between public and pri-  
6 vate sector jobs;

7 “(ii) the agency’s actions pursuant to sections  
8 603, 604, 605, 607, and 609 of this title;

9 “(iii) the agency’s actions pursuant to sections  
10 202, 203, 204, and 205 of the Unfunded Mandates  
11 Reform Act of 1995; and

12 “(iv) any other relevant information or require-  
13 ments under any other Act and any relevant Execu-  
14 tive orders.

15 “(C) Upon receipt of a report submitted under sub-  
16 paragraph (A), each House shall provide copies of the re-  
17 port to the chairman and ranking member of each stand-  
18 ing committee with jurisdiction under the rules of the  
19 House of Representatives or the Senate to report a bill  
20 to amend the provision of law under which the rule is  
21 issued.

22 “(2)(A) The Comptroller General shall provide a re-  
23 port on each major rule to the committees of jurisdiction  
24 by the end of 15 calendar days after the submission or  
25 publication date. The report of the Comptroller General

1 shall include an assessment of the agency’s compliance  
2 with procedural steps required by paragraph (1)(B) and  
3 an assessment of whether the major rule imposes any new  
4 limits or mandates on private-sector activity.

5 “(B) Federal agencies shall cooperate with the Comp-  
6 troller General by providing information relevant to the  
7 Comptroller General’s report under subparagraph (A).

8 “(3) A major rule relating to a report submitted  
9 under paragraph (1) shall take effect upon enactment of  
10 a joint resolution of approval described in section 802 or  
11 as provided for in the rule following enactment of a joint  
12 resolution of approval described in section 802, whichever  
13 is later.

14 “(4) A nonmajor rule shall take effect as provided  
15 by section 803 after submission to Congress under para-  
16 graph (1).

17 “(5) If a joint resolution of approval relating to a  
18 major rule is not enacted within the period provided in  
19 subsection (b)(2), then a joint resolution of approval relat-  
20 ing to the same rule may not be considered under this  
21 chapter in the same Congress by either the House of Rep-  
22 resentatives or the Senate.

23 “(b)(1) A major rule shall not take effect unless the  
24 Congress enacts a joint resolution of approval described  
25 under section 802.

1           “(2) If a joint resolution described in subsection (a)  
2 is not enacted into law by the end of 70 session days or  
3 legislative days, as applicable, beginning on the date on  
4 which the report referred to in section 801(a)(1)(A) is re-  
5 ceived by Congress (excluding days either House of Con-  
6 gress is adjourned for more than 3 days during a session  
7 of Congress), then the rule described in that resolution  
8 shall be deemed not to be approved and such rule shall  
9 not take effect.

10           “(c)(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this  
11 section (except subject to paragraph (3)), a major rule  
12 may take effect for one 90-calendar-day period if the  
13 President makes a determination under paragraph (2) and  
14 submits written notice of such determination to the Con-  
15 gress.

16           “(2) Paragraph (1) applies to a determination made  
17 by the President by Executive order that the major rule  
18 should take effect because such rule is—

19                   “(A) necessary because of an imminent threat  
20 to health or safety or other emergency;

21                   “(B) necessary for the enforcement of criminal  
22 laws;

23                   “(C) necessary for national security; or

24                   “(D) issued pursuant to any statute imple-  
25 menting an international trade agreement.

1       “(3) An exercise by the President of the authority  
2 under this subsection shall have no effect on the proce-  
3 dures under section 802.

4       “(d)(1) In addition to the opportunity for review oth-  
5 erwise provided under this chapter, in the case of any rule  
6 for which a report was submitted in accordance with sub-  
7 section (a)(1)(A) during the period beginning on the date  
8 occurring—

9               “(A) in the case of the Senate, 60 session days;

10       or

11               “(B) in the case of the House of Representa-  
12 tives, 60 legislative days,

13 before the date the Congress is scheduled to adjourn a  
14 session of Congress through the date on which the same  
15 or succeeding Congress first convenes its next session, sec-  
16 tions 802 and 803 shall apply to such rule in the suc-  
17 ceeding session of Congress.

18       “(2)(A) In applying sections 802 and 803 for pur-  
19 poses of such additional review, a rule described under  
20 paragraph (1) shall be treated as though—

21               “(i) such rule were published in the Federal  
22 Register on—

23                       “(I) in the case of the Senate, the 15th  
24 session day; or

1 “(II) in the case of the House of Rep-  
2 resentatives, the 15th legislative day,  
3 after the succeeding session of Congress first con-  
4 venes; and

5 “(ii) a report on such rule were submitted to  
6 Congress under subsection (a)(1) on such date.

7 “(B) Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed  
8 to affect the requirement under subsection (a)(1) that a  
9 report shall be submitted to Congress before a rule can  
10 take effect.

11 “(3) A rule described under paragraph (1) shall take  
12 effect as otherwise provided by law (including other sub-  
13 sections of this section).

14 **“§ 802. Congressional approval procedure for major  
15 rules**

16 “(a)(1) For purposes of this section, the term ‘joint  
17 resolution’ means only a joint resolution addressing a re-  
18 port classifying a rule as major pursuant to section  
19 801(a)(1)(A)(iii) that—

20 “(A) bears no preamble;

21 “(B) bears the following title (with blanks filled  
22 as appropriate): ‘Approving the rule submitted by  
23 \_\_\_\_\_ relating to \_\_\_\_\_.’;

24 “(C) includes after its resolving clause only the  
25 following (with blanks filled as appropriate): ‘That



1 Congress approves the rule submitted by \_\_\_\_\_ re-  
2 lating to \_\_\_\_\_.’; and

3 “(D) is introduced pursuant to paragraph (2).

4 “(2) After a House of Congress receives a report  
5 classifying a rule as major pursuant to section  
6 801(a)(1)(A)(iii), the majority leader of that House (or  
7 his or her respective designee) shall introduce (by request,  
8 if appropriate) a joint resolution described in paragraph  
9 (1)—

10 “(A) in the case of the House of Representa-  
11 tives, within 3 legislative days; and

12 “(B) in the case of the Senate, within 3 session  
13 days.

14 “(3) A joint resolution described in paragraph (1)  
15 shall not be subject to amendment at any stage of pro-  
16 ceeding.

17 “(b) A joint resolution described in subsection (a)  
18 shall be referred in each House of Congress to the commit-  
19 tees having jurisdiction over the provision of law under  
20 which the rule is issued.

21 “(c) In the Senate, if the committee or committees  
22 to which a joint resolution described in subsection (a) has  
23 been referred have not reported it at the end of 15 session  
24 days after its introduction, such committee or committees  
25 shall be automatically discharged from further consider-

1 ation of the resolution and it shall be placed on the cal-  
2endar. A vote on final passage of the resolution shall be  
3 taken on or before the close of the 15th session day after  
4 the resolution is reported by the committee or committees  
5 to which it was referred, or after such committee or com-  
6 mittees have been discharged from further consideration  
7 of the resolution.

8       “(d)(1) In the Senate, when the committee or com-  
9 mittees to which a joint resolution is referred have re-  
10 ported, or when a committee or committees are discharged  
11 (under subsection (c)) from further consideration of a  
12 joint resolution described in subsection (a), it is at any  
13 time thereafter in order (even though a previous motion  
14 to the same effect has been disagreed to) for a motion  
15 to proceed to the consideration of the joint resolution, and  
16 all points of order against the joint resolution (and against  
17 consideration of the joint resolution) are waived. The mo-  
18 tion is not subject to amendment, or to a motion to post-  
19 pone, or to a motion to proceed to the consideration of  
20 other business. A motion to reconsider the vote by which  
21 the motion is agreed to or disagreed to shall not be in  
22 order. If a motion to proceed to the consideration of the  
23 joint resolution is agreed to, the joint resolution shall re-  
24 main the unfinished business of the Senate until disposed  
25 of.

1       “(2) In the Senate, debate on the joint resolution,  
2 and on all debatable motions and appeals in connection  
3 therewith, shall be limited to not more than 2 hours, which  
4 shall be divided equally between those favoring and those  
5 opposing the joint resolution. A motion to further limit  
6 debate is in order and not debatable. An amendment to,  
7 or a motion to postpone, or a motion to proceed to the  
8 consideration of other business, or a motion to recommit  
9 the joint resolution is not in order.

10       “(3) In the Senate, immediately following the conclu-  
11 sion of the debate on a joint resolution described in sub-  
12 section (a), and a single quorum call at the conclusion of  
13 the debate if requested in accordance with the rules of the  
14 Senate, the vote on final passage of the joint resolution  
15 shall occur.

16       “(4) Appeals from the decisions of the Chair relating  
17 to the application of the rules of the Senate to the proce-  
18 dure relating to a joint resolution described in subsection  
19 (a) shall be decided without debate.

20       “(e) In the House of Representatives, if any com-  
21 mittee to which a joint resolution described in subsection  
22 (a) has been referred has not reported it to the House  
23 at the end of 15 legislative days after its introduction,  
24 such committee shall be discharged from further consider-  
25 ation of the joint resolution, and it shall be placed on the

1 appropriate calendar. On the second and fourth Thursdays  
2 of each month it shall be in order at any time for the  
3 Speaker to recognize a Member who favors passage of a  
4 joint resolution that has appeared on the calendar for at  
5 least 5 legislative days to call up that joint resolution for  
6 immediate consideration in the House without intervention  
7 of any point of order. When so called up a joint resolution  
8 shall be considered as read and shall be debatable for 1  
9 hour equally divided and controlled by the proponent and  
10 an opponent, and the previous question shall be considered  
11 as ordered to its passage without intervening motion. It  
12 shall not be in order to reconsider the vote on passage.  
13 If a vote on final passage of the joint resolution has not  
14 been taken by the third Thursday on which the Speaker  
15 may recognize a Member under this subsection, such vote  
16 shall be taken on that day.

17 “(f)(1) If, before passing a joint resolution described  
18 in subsection (a), one House receives from the other a  
19 joint resolution having the same text, then—

20 “(A) the joint resolution of the other House  
21 shall not be referred to a committee; and

22 “(B) the procedure in the receiving House shall  
23 be the same as if no joint resolution had been re-  
24 ceived from the other House until the vote on pas-  
25 sage, when the joint resolution received from the

1 other House shall supplant the joint resolution of  
2 the receiving House.

3 “(2) This subsection shall not apply to the House of  
4 Representatives if the joint resolution received from the  
5 Senate is a revenue measure.

6 “(g) If either House has not taken a vote on final  
7 passage of the joint resolution by the last day of the period  
8 described in section 801(b)(2), then such vote shall be  
9 taken on that day.

10 “(h) This section and section 803 are enacted by  
11 Congress—

12 “(1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of  
13 the Senate and House of Representatives, respec-  
14 tively, and as such is deemed to be part of the rules  
15 of each House, respectively, but applicable only with  
16 respect to the procedure to be followed in that  
17 House in the case of a joint resolution described in  
18 subsection (a) and superseding other rules only  
19 where explicitly so; and

20 “(2) with full recognition of the Constitutional  
21 right of either House to change the rules (so far as  
22 they relate to the procedure of that House) at any  
23 time, in the same manner and to the same extent as  
24 in the case of any other rule of that House.

1 **“§ 803. Congressional disapproval procedure for**  
2 **nonmajor rules**

3 “(a) For purposes of this section, the term ‘joint res-  
4 olution’ means only a joint resolution introduced in the  
5 period beginning on the date on which the report referred  
6 to in section 801(a)(1)(A) is received by Congress and  
7 ending 60 days thereafter (excluding days either House  
8 of Congress is adjourned for more than 3 days during a  
9 session of Congress), the matter after the resolving clause  
10 of which is as follows: ‘That Congress disapproves the  
11 nonmajor rule submitted by the \_\_\_\_\_ relating to  
12 \_\_\_\_\_, and such rule shall have no force or effect.’ (The  
13 blank spaces being appropriately filled in).

14 “(b) A joint resolution described in subsection (a)  
15 shall be referred to the committees in each House of Con-  
16 gress with jurisdiction.

17 “(c) In the Senate, if the committee to which is re-  
18 ferred a joint resolution described in subsection (a) has  
19 not reported such joint resolution (or an identical joint  
20 resolution) at the end of 15 session days after the date  
21 of introduction of the joint resolution, such committee may  
22 be discharged from further consideration of such joint res-  
23 olution upon a petition supported in writing by 30 Mem-  
24 bers of the Senate, and such joint resolution shall be  
25 placed on the calendar.

1       “(d)(1) In the Senate, when the committee to which  
2 a joint resolution is referred has reported, or when a com-  
3 mittee is discharged (under subsection (c)) from further  
4 consideration of a joint resolution described in subsection  
5 (a), it is at any time thereafter in order (even though a  
6 previous motion to the same effect has been disagreed to)  
7 for a motion to proceed to the consideration of the joint  
8 resolution, and all points of order against the joint resolu-  
9 tion (and against consideration of the joint resolution) are  
10 waived. The motion is not subject to amendment, or to  
11 a motion to postpone, or to a motion to proceed to the  
12 consideration of other business. A motion to reconsider the  
13 vote by which the motion is agreed to or disagreed to shall  
14 not be in order. If a motion to proceed to the consideration  
15 of the joint resolution is agreed to, the joint resolution  
16 shall remain the unfinished business of the Senate until  
17 disposed of.

18       “(2) In the Senate, debate on the joint resolution,  
19 and on all debatable motions and appeals in connection  
20 therewith, shall be limited to not more than 10 hours,  
21 which shall be divided equally between those favoring and  
22 those opposing the joint resolution. A motion to further  
23 limit debate is in order and not debatable. An amendment  
24 to, or a motion to postpone, or a motion to proceed to

1 the consideration of other business, or a motion to recom-  
2 mit the joint resolution is not in order.

3 “(3) In the Senate, immediately following the conclu-  
4 sion of the debate on a joint resolution described in sub-  
5 section (a), and a single quorum call at the conclusion of  
6 the debate if requested in accordance with the rules of the  
7 Senate, the vote on final passage of the joint resolution  
8 shall occur.

9 “(4) Appeals from the decisions of the Chair relating  
10 to the application of the rules of the Senate to the proce-  
11 dure relating to a joint resolution described in subsection  
12 (a) shall be decided without debate.

13 “(e) In the Senate, the procedure specified in sub-  
14 section (e) or (d) shall not apply to the consideration of  
15 a joint resolution respecting a nonmajor rule—

16 “(1) after the expiration of the 60 session days  
17 beginning with the applicable submission or publica-  
18 tion date; or

19 “(2) if the report under section 801(a)(1)(A)  
20 was submitted during the period referred to in sec-  
21 tion 801(d)(1), after the expiration of the 60 session  
22 days beginning on the 15th session day after the  
23 succeeding session of Congress first convenes.

24 “(f) If, before the passage by one House of a joint  
25 resolution of that House described in subsection (a), that



1 House receives from the other House a joint resolution  
2 described in subsection (a), then the following procedures  
3 shall apply:

4 “(1) The joint resolution of the other House  
5 shall not be referred to a committee.

6 “(2) With respect to a joint resolution described  
7 in subsection (a) of the House receiving the joint  
8 resolution—

9 “(A) the procedure in that House shall be  
10 the same as if no joint resolution had been re-  
11 ceived from the other House; but

12 “(B) the vote on final passage shall be on  
13 the joint resolution of the other House.

14 **“§ 804. Definitions**

15 “For purposes of this chapter:

16 “(1) The term ‘Federal agency’ means any  
17 agency as that term is defined in section 551(1).

18 “(2) The term ‘major rule’ means any rule, in-  
19 cluding an interim final rule, that the Administrator  
20 of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs  
21 of the Office of Management and Budget finds has  
22 resulted in or is likely to result in—

23 “(A) an annual effect on the economy of  
24 \$100,000,000 or more;

1           “(B) a major increase in costs or prices for  
2 consumers, individual industries, Federal,  
3 State, or local government agencies, or geo-  
4 graphic regions; or

5           “(C) significant adverse effects on competi-  
6 tion, employment, investment, productivity, in-  
7 novation, or on the ability of United States-  
8 based enterprises to compete with foreign-based  
9 enterprises in domestic and export markets.

10          “(3) The term ‘nonmajor rule’ means any rule  
11 that is not a major rule.

12          “(4) The term ‘rule’ has the meaning given  
13 such term in section 551, except that such term does  
14 not include—

15               “(A) any rule of particular applicability,  
16 including a rule that approves or prescribes for  
17 the future rates, wages, prices, services, or al-  
18 lowances therefore, corporate or financial struc-  
19 tures, reorganizations, mergers, or acquisitions  
20 thereof, or accounting practices or disclosures  
21 bearing on any of the foregoing;

22               “(B) any rule relating to agency manage-  
23 ment or personnel; or

24               “(C) any rule of agency organization, pro-  
25 cedure, or practice that does not substantially

1           affect the rights or obligations of non-agency  
2           parties.

3           “(5) The term ‘submission date or publication  
4           date’, except as otherwise provided in this chapter,  
5           means—

6                   “(A) in the case of a major rule, the date  
7                   on which the Congress receives the report sub-  
8                   mitted under section 801(a)(1); and

9                   “(B) in the case of a nonmajor rule, the  
10                  later of—

11                           “(i) the date on which the Congress  
12                           receives the report submitted under section  
13                           801(a)(1); and

14                           “(ii) the date on which the nonmajor  
15                           rule is published in the Federal Register, if  
16                           so published.

17 **“§ 805. Judicial review**

18           “(a) No determination, finding, action, or omission  
19           under this chapter shall be subject to judicial review.

20           “(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a), a court may de-  
21           termine whether a Federal agency has completed the nec-  
22           essary requirements under this chapter for a rule to take  
23           effect.

24           “(c) The enactment of a joint resolution of approval  
25           under section 802 shall not be interpreted to serve as a

1 grant or modification of statutory authority by Congress  
2 for the promulgation of a rule, shall not extinguish or af-  
3 fect any claim, whether substantive or procedural, against  
4 any alleged defect in a rule, and shall not form part of  
5 the record before the court in any judicial proceeding con-  
6 cerning a rule except for purposes of determining whether  
7 or not the rule is in effect.

8 **“§ 806. Exemption for monetary policy**

9 “Nothing in this chapter shall apply to rules that con-  
10 cern monetary policy proposed or implemented by the  
11 Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System or the  
12 Federal Open Market Committee.

13 **“§ 807. Effective date of certain rules**

14 “Notwithstanding section 801—

15 “(1) any rule that establishes, modifies, opens,  
16 closes, or conducts a regulatory program for a com-  
17 mercial, recreational, or subsistence activity related  
18 to hunting, fishing, or camping; or

19 “(2) any rule other than a major rule which an  
20 agency for good cause finds (and incorporates the  
21 finding and a brief statement of reasons therefore in  
22 the rule issued) that notice and public procedure  
23 thereon are impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary  
24 to the public interest,

1 shall take effect at such time as the Federal agency pro-  
2 mulgating the rule determines.”.

3 **SEC. 4. BUDGETARY EFFECTS OF RULES SUBJECT TO SEC-**  
4 **TION 802 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE.**

5 Section 257(b)(2) of the Balanced Budget and Emer-  
6 gency Deficit Control Act of 1985 is amended by adding  
7 at the end the following new subparagraph:

8 “(E) BUDGETARY EFFECTS OF RULES  
9 SUBJECT TO SECTION 802 OF TITLE 5, UNITED  
10 STATES CODE.—Any rules subject to the con-  
11 gressional approval procedure set forth in sec-  
12 tion 802 of chapter 8 of title 5, United States  
13 Code, affecting budget authority, outlays, or re-  
14 ceipts shall be assumed to be effective unless it  
15 is not approved in accordance with such sec-  
16 tion.”.

17 **SEC. 5. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE STUDY OF**  
18 **RULES.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the  
20 United States shall conduct a study to determine, as of  
21 the date of the enactment of this Act—

22 (1) how many rules (as such term is defined in  
23 section 804 of title 5, United States Code) were in  
24 effect;

1           (2) how many major rules (as such term is de-  
2           fined in section 804 of title 5, United States Code)  
3           were in effect; and

4           (3) the total estimated economic cost imposed  
5           by all such rules.

6           (b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date  
7           of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of  
8           the United States shall submit a report to Congress that  
9           contains the findings of the study conducted under sub-  
10          section (a).

11       **SEC. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

12          Sections 3 and 4, and the amendments made by such  
13          sections, shall take effect beginning on the date that is  
14          1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

○