

Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson: Business Meeting, Oct. 7, 2015

As prepared for the record:

Good morning.

Today our committee will be reporting out 11 bills that fix government, enhance our national security, and reform the regulatory process. The main focus for this markup is the federal regulatory burden. According to the Congressional Research Service, “the number of final rules published each year is generally in the range of 2,500-4,500,” and the nation’s Code of Federal Regulation contains over one million discrete regulatory restrictions. It is a priority of mine to ensure that this committee is taking a look at bipartisan ways to reduce that regulatory burden and improve the quality of the regulatory process.

The legislation that the committee will consider today will address gaps among agencies in the requirement to do cost-benefit and other analyses and to build automatic lookback procedures so that regulations are reviewed after several years. Further, the reforms address deficiencies in the rulemaking process aimed at improving the quality of regulatory analysis, making more uniform these analysis requirements across all agencies, and codifying smart regulation principles that have been supported by Democratic and Republican administrations for over two decades. While our work to reform the regulatory state in our country is just starting, the legislation being considered today is a crucial first step.

There are other key bills on the markup that should be noticed. I am proud that our committee will be approving a bill that can have a significant impact on Americans who are coming out of prison and trying to turn their lives around. The Fair Chance Act gives an opportunity to formerly incarcerated individuals to have a fair chance at employment. The dignity of work is probably the best way we can keep people from turning back to a life of crime. This makes our communities safer, keeps families together, and makes people less dependent on the government. I thank Senator Booker for his tremendous leadership on these issues and am pleased to do my part shepherding it through the committee.

In addition to these bills, the committee will also consider important bills that reduce government waste, increase accountability, and help protect our borders.

As always, I want to thank the ranking member, members of the committee, and all their staff for their hard work. We have a group of senators on this committee with diverse backgrounds and political views, and the members and staff have committed to finding bipartisan ways to help keep Americans safe and prosperous.