

Four decades of leading scholarship on regulatory reform

Regulation at 40

This year marks the 40th anniversary of *Regulation* magazine, Cato's quarterly journal where the nation's top economists, law professors, and other policy experts offer easy-to-understand explanations and insights on current topics in regulatory policy.

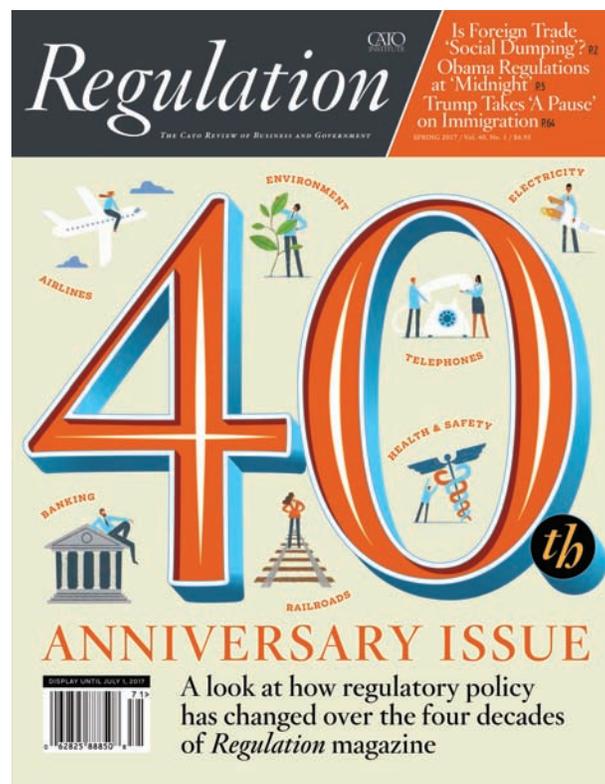
Regulation was initially published by the American Enterprise Institute but moved to the Cato Institute in 1990 under the editorship of Bill Niskanen. Its other past editors include such esteemed policy thinkers as Murray Weidenbaum, Antonin Scalia, Walter Olson, Peter Huber, and Christopher C. DeMuth. It has published articles by Alfred Kahn, James C. Miller III, Robert Crandall, Charles Schultze, Walter Oi, Robert Bork, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Anne Brunsdale, Bruce Yandle, Richard Gordon, Peter Schuck, Louis Lasagna, Christopher DeMuth, Richard Epstein, Michelle White, Kate Baicker, Joseph Kalt, Kenneth Arrow, Paul Joskow, Robert Litan, Kip Viscusi, Thomas Gale Moore, Ronald Coase, George Stigler, Charles Calomiris, Richard Wilson, Susan Dudley, Edward Glaeser, Robert Pindyck, Daniel Shaviro, and numerous other distinguished thinkers.

Cato's Peter Van Doren has edited the magazine since 1999, with the goal of making it a summary of important articles in economic journals, along the lines of *Scientific American* or *Reader's Digest*—something that college-educated readers with an interest in regulatory reform, but without advanced training in economics, can easily access. Its readers include newspaper columnists; staff economists for Congress and government agencies, who use its articles to fill their noneconomic bosses in on pressing economic issues; corporate executives; and college professors, who frequently use *Regulation* articles in their

undergraduate classes.

In a special 40th-anniversary edition of *Regulation*, Van Doren and managing editor Thomas Firey reflect on how regulation has changed in the four decades since the magazine's inception. There have been major victories, thanks in part to the scholarship that has appeared in the pages of *Regulation*. In the mid-20th century, they note, economists and legal scholars became increasingly skeptical of “market failure” justifications for regulations. At the same time, computer technology and the increased availability of social science data allowed them to test their suspicions and prove that regulations were hurting, rather than helping, the economy. Their work inspired a push toward deregulation and doing away with the traditional price and entry regulations that *Regulation* was initially founded to critique, such as railroad and airline regulations. And even more hearteningly, these regulations are not in danger of returning anytime soon. “There is no movement to reinstitute the Civil Aeronautics Board or repeal branch banking,” write Van Doren and Firey. “Even in the darkest days of last decade's financial crisis, calls for restoring the repealed sections of the Glass-Steagall Act gained little traction.”

But unfortunately, other types of regulation have cropped up in their place, and the momentum for market liberalization has stalled in recent years. “No policy change in the last 16 years would seem to qualify as a major deregulation, while such initiatives as



the 2001 USA PATRIOT Act, 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley corporate governance act, 2002 and subsequent farm bills, 2005 Energy Policy Act, 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, 2010 Dodd-Frank financial regulation act, and 2015 Federal Communications Commission ‘net neutrality’ regulations have expanded federal intervention in markets and added tens of thousands of pages to the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations,” they write.

Nevertheless, the history of *Regulation* and its demonstrable impact on American scholarship and policymaking should provide hope for the future. *Regulation* will continue educating policymakers and students on cutting-edge research in regulatory policy, and spreading the objective, fact-based case for freer markets. ■

READ REGULATION ONLINE AT CATO.ORG, OR SUBSCRIBE TO RECEIVE IT QUARTERLY IN YOUR MAILBOX.