

# AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS



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## **LEGISLATIVE ALERT!**

(202) 637-5090

May 17, 2001

The Honorable Fred Thompson, Chairman  
Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs  
340 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to convey the opposition of the AFL-CIO to the nomination of John D. Graham, Ph.D. to direct the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

As Administrator of OIRA, Dr. Graham would be the gatekeeper for all federal regulations. In our view, Dr. Graham, with his very strong anti-regulatory views, is simply the wrong choice to serve in this important policy making position.

For years as Director of the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis, Dr. Graham has repeatedly taken the position that cost and economic efficiency should be a more important, if not the determinative consideration, in setting standards and regulations. He has argued for the use of strict cost-benefit and cost-efficiency analysis, even though for many workplace safety and environmental regulations, such analyses are not appropriate or possible or are explicitly prohibited by the underlying statute. If Dr. Graham's views dictated public policy, workplace regulations on hazards like benzene and cotton dust would not have been issued because the benefits of these rules are hard to quantify and are diminished because they occur over many years. Similarly, regulations pertaining to rare catastrophic events such as chemical plant explosions or common sense requirements like these for lighted exit signs couldn't pass Dr. Graham's strict cost-benefit test.

In enacting the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Clean Air Act and other safety and health and environmental laws, Congress made a clear policy choice that protection of health and the environment was to be the paramount consideration in setting regulations and standards. Dr. Graham's views and opinions are directly at odds with these policies.

We are also deeply concerned about Dr. Graham's close ties to the regulated community. The major source of Dr. Graham's funding at the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis has been from companies and trade associations who have vigorously opposed a wide range of health, safety and environmental protections. Much of Dr. Graham's work has been requested and then relied upon by those who seek to block necessary protections.

Given Dr. Graham's extreme views on regulatory policy and close alliance with the regulated communities, we are deeply concerned about his ability to provide for a fair review of regulations that are needed to protect workers and the public. If he is confirmed, we believe that the development of important safeguards to protect the health and safety of workers across the country would be impeded.

Therefore, the AFL-CIO urges you to oppose Dr. Graham's confirmation as Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Samuel".

William Samuel, Director  
DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATION

c: Members of Senate Governmental Affairs Committee

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