

## Twitter Thread by Tom Coates

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**If you want to know what the Trump administration has been about, then read this list of ‘midnight regulations’ that they’re trying to implement in their final days in office. I’ll post a few of them below.**

The Trump administration is expected to move forward plans to make families of noncitizen immigrants ineligible for subsidized housing.

HOUSING

🕒 *Experts expect this rule to move ahead before Inauguration Day*

### **Making Families of Noncitizen Immigrants Ineligible for Subsidized Housing** ↗

Earlier in 2019, the Department of Housing and Urban Development proposed a rule denying subsidized housing for the families of noncitizen immigrants. Now, the Department of Agriculture is doing the same for the Rural Housing Service, which could result in the eviction of many low-income families.

Department of Agriculture, Rural Housing Service • Read more: [reginfo.gov](https://www.reginfo.gov)

The Trump administration is expected to move forward plans to increase the speed at which chickens may be slaughtered by putting workers at higher risk of amputations.

## White House Reviewing Proposal

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FOOD & AGRICULTURE

*This rule has moved ahead since Election Day*

### Increasing the Speed at Which Chickens May Be Slaughtered

Under this rule chicken factories would be allowed to run faster, increasing potential profits but putting workers at higher risk of injuries like amputations and carpal tunnel. These safety concerns thwarted a previous effort to raise speeds during the Obama administration, but the Trump administration issued case-by-case waivers allowing some plants to speed up anyway, laying the groundwork for an across-the-board increase. This process usually takes about two years, so it's not clear if this rule can be finished before the inauguration.

Department of Agriculture , Food Safety and Inspection Service • Read more: [reginfo.gov](https://www.reginfo.gov)

The Trump administration is moving forward with plans to allow 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds to operate long haul trucks even though those age groups are generally much more likely to have accidents.

LABOR

*This rule has moved ahead since Election Day*

### Under-21 Driver Pilot Program

In response to trucking industry complaints that companies can't find enough drivers, the Department of Transportation proposed a pilot program that would allow 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds to operate long-haul trucks. Labor and road safety groups oppose the idea.

Department of Transportation , Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration • Read more: [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

The Trump administration is moving forward with plans allow federally subsidized homeless shelters to exclude transgender people.

HOUSING

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### Allowing Federally Subsidized Homeless Shelters to Exclude Transgender People

This rule would allow Housing and Urban Development-funded homeless shelters, when segregating men and women, to assign transgender people to an area based on their biological sex, rather than the individual's self-identification.

Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development • Read more: [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

The Trump administration is moving forward with plans to loosen restrictions on over-fishing, making it harder to declare locations critical (and therefore protected habitats) and making it easier to develop near waterways and wetlands.

ENVIRONMENT

*This rule has moved ahead since Election Day*

## Loosening Restrictions on Overfishing

This proposal would increase the allowable level of risk of overfishing when setting caps on catches for certain species. Published after the election, it allows only two weeks for public input, instead of the typical 60 days.

Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration • Read more: [federalregister.gov](https://www.federalregister.gov)

ENVIRONMENT

*This rule has moved ahead since Election Day*

## Loosening Permits to Develop Near Waterways and Wetlands

This rule would expedite the permits for many activities regulated by the Clean Water Act. Some of the items are relatively innocuous, such as boat ramps. But others — such as oil and gas pipelines or surface coal mining — have huge impacts that environmentalists say shouldn't get waved through without scrutiny.

Army Corps of Engineers • Read more: [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

ENVIRONMENT

 *Experts expect this rule to move ahead before Inauguration Day*

## Endangered and Threatened Species: Regulations for Designating Critical Habitat

This rule clarifies standards for designating endangered species habitats to give more weight to landowners' rights and economic factors, making it less likely that land will be protected for wildlife preservation. The agency allowed only 30 days to comment, rather than the usual 60.

The Trump administration is moving forward with plans allow companies that discriminate against people on religious grounds to compete for federal grants.



## Allowing Religious Exemptions for Federal Contractors

Sent to the White House on Election Day after an abbreviated window for public input that nevertheless drew widespread objections, this rule would allow religiously-motivated institutions with federal contracts — including for-profit companies — to not hire people based on their faith.

Department of Labor, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs • Read more: [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

## Bolstering the Position of Faith-Based Organizations in Justice Department Grant-making

This rule strengthens the rights of faith-based organizations to compete for Department of Justice grants, and it includes language that would protect them from any funding conditions that would require them to change their religious practices.

Department of Justice • Read more: [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

In the middle of a pandemic and economic crisis that's affecting millions of Americans, the Trump administration is moving forward with plans to narrow eligibility for food stamps.

## Narrowing Eligibility for Food Stamps

This rule would remove about 3 million individuals from food stamp rolls by changing eligibility so that recipients of other types of benefits do not automatically qualify. Advocacy groups say the change will put more people at risk of hunger during the pandemic.

Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service • Read more: [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

The Trump administration (absurdly, in a way that will have zero effect) is moving forward with plans to loosen efficiency standards for clothes washers, dryers and shower heads. Because Trump doesn't like them.

## Loosening Efficiency Standards for Clothes Washers and Dryers

This rule would loosen water and energy efficiency standards by creating a separate class of clothes washers and dryers based on how long they take to complete a load. More efficient washers use less water, and take longer, because they require more time for the soap to penetrate soiled clothes. Major manufacturers oppose the change, but small-government conservatives still want to slash regulation.

Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy • Read more: [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

## Loosening Efficiency Standards for Showerheads

This rule, which popped up days after President Donald Trump publicly complained about a supposed lack of water pressure in modern appliances, would loosen long-standing requirements that showerheads conserve water. It's backed by the plumbing industry and strongly opposed by environmentalists, consumer groups and utilities.

Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy • Read more: [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

The Trump administration is moving forward with plans to stop Washington State's requiring that truck drivers take sufficient meal and rest breaks, putting truck driver's lives at risk as well as anyone else who uses the roads.

## Voiding Washington State's Meal and Rest Break Rules for Truck Drivers

In 2019, the trucking industry in Washington state asked federal regulators to obviate — or preempt — a new state law requiring a higher number of meal and rest breaks than mandated under nationwide standards. On Nov. 17, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration granted that petition.

Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration • Read more: [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

The Trump administration is moving forward with plans to lower wages for immigrant farm workers on temporary visas while making it possible to refuse entry to higher-skilled workers unless they have higher salaries.



## Lowering Wages for Immigrant Farmworkers

This regulation changes the scale used to determine how much employers must pay immigrant farmworkers on temporary H-2A work visas, freezing it for two years. Farmworker groups oppose the change, saying that it will lower pay for both U.S.-born and immigrant workers — even as there's a worker shortage in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration • Read more: [federalregister.gov](https://www.federalregister.gov)

## Restricting High-Skilled Immigrant Work Visas by Raising Wage Minimums for Visa Holders

This regulation went into effect immediately when issued on Oct. 8, although a public comment period remained open through Nov. 9. It overhauls the rubrics that set how much employers must pay an immigrant to sponsor them on a temporary H-1B "high skilled" worker visa. New wage standards are substantially higher, making many would-be immigrants suddenly ineligible.

Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration • Read more: [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

And to end with, the Trump administration has restarted federal executions, and finalized plans to allow federal death row inmates to be executed by firing squads and electrocution. HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

## Rule Finalized

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## Allowing Federal Death Row Inmates to Be Executed by Means Other Than Lethal Injection

This rule would broaden the acceptable forms of federal capital punishment to include methods that are or may soon be legal in various states, such as firing squads and electrocution. The Trump administration has restarted federal executions, which President-elect Joe Biden has said he would not allow.

Department of Justice • Read more: [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)