

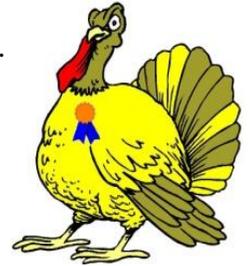
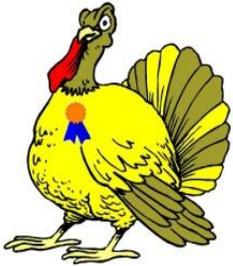


## Tell the Federal Highway Administration to Make a U-Turn

July 2011

The RSC Golden Turkey award highlights absurd – yet obscure – government regulations. These bureaucratic rules hit taxpayers' wallets with a one-two punch. First you pay to enforce them, then you pay to follow them.

**IN THIS MONTH'S EDITION:** The Federal Highway Administration has initiated new across-the-board deadlines that require individual localities to update and replace their road signs by 2015 and 2018. This new unfunded mandate would require states to replace their road signs before the end of their lifecycle.



The Fiscal Year 1993 Department of Transportation Appropriations Act (P.L. 102-388) directed the Secretary of Transportation to revise the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, including the minimum standard for levels of traffic sign retroreflectivity. The [2009 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices](#) requires that state and local governments replace their regulatory, warning, and ground-mounted guide signs by January 22, 2015. It also mandates that state and local governments replace their overhead guide signs and street name signs by January 22, 2018.

Local governments have already had to tighten their belts and carefully manage their budgets during these tough economic times. Why would the Federal Highway Administration mandate the replacement of road signs that are still safe and useable? This mandate only places another financial burden on states and localities, many of which are under serious fiscal stress.

[Rep. Chuck Fleischman](#) (R-TN), along with [Rep. Scott DesJarlais](#) (R-TN), has introduced H.R. 2257, which would waive the requirement that existing traffic signs meet the minimum retroreflectivity standards before the compliance dates established by the Federal Highway Administration. This legislation will allow states to waive the new timeline and allow local governments to meet the new standards when they replace signs at the end of their natural life cycle. For more information, or to cosponsor this legislation, contact Jordan Spencer at [Jordan.Spencer@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jordan.Spencer@mail.house.gov). In Tennessee alone, H.R. 2257 is estimated to save more than \$50 million.

Additionally, some localities may find it impossible to comply with this unfunded mandate. This would expose various units of local government to potential litigation for non-compliance.

As President Obama stated in his [State of the Union Address](#), there is great need to fix “rules that put an unnecessary burden on businesses.” This recent mandate by the Federal Highway Administration is a burden on states and localities, and serves as another example of how out of touch Washington can be. It is time for Congress to put the brakes on the Federal Highway Administration.

**RSC Staff Contact:** Curtis Rhyne, [Curtis.Rhyne@mail.house.gov](mailto:Curtis.Rhyne@mail.house.gov), (202) 226-8576.

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