

GOP battles over rules

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WASHINGTON (AP) -- Top House Republicans say that despite President Barack Obama's pledge to eliminate federal rules that cause economic harm, there are far too many regulations and they will try to get rid of them.

Michigan Republican Rep. Fred Upton says Republicans will identify rules that destroy jobs and seek their repeal. And Florida GOP Rep. Cliff Stearns says the pace of issuing new regulations has been "breathtaking" in recent years. He says that despite the economy's severe downturn, the Obama administration has used led a 'rush to regulate.'

Upton and Stearns are leaders of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which today was questioning Cass Sunstein, who heads the White House office that reviews rules.

California Democratic Rep. Henry Waxman says Republicans are using a myth when they say regulations kill jobs and slow the economy. He says the recent financial collapse was due to too little regulation, not too much of it.

With a sympathetic ear to corporate America, Republicans are talking about fighting existing and proposed regulations that Obama and congressional Democrats prize, including limits on greenhouse gas emissions and rules to enforce last year's financial and health care overhauls.

In one of several recent business-friendly moves, Obama issued an executive order last week ordering agencies to use the 'least burdensome tools' when issuing regulations and to eliminate 'outmoded, ineffective, insufficient or excessively burdensome' ones.

But the examples the administration has cited are far narrower than the GOP's targets.

'A lot of what each party may want to go after is supported by some set of the public,' said Peter Van Doren, editor of Regulation magazine, published by the Cato Institute, which favors limiting government's reach. He predicted numerous partisan clashes, 'and in 2012 we'll have the election and see what happens.'

