Drinking from a Firehose: Keeping up with Administration Initiatives

By Barbara Engstrom, Executive Director

Every day there is news of the demise of yet another long-standing federal government agency or policy. While it's difficult enough to keep up with just the news reports, it can seem nigh impossible to actually dig in and research the nitty gritty details of this deluge of regulatory change. As I was researching the progression of a regulation the other day, I recalled an excellent presentation that law librarians Susan Koenig and Quinn Ford gave to the Law Librarians of Puget Sound in January on monitoring administration change during the transition. They discussed a variety of trackers for keeping tabs on executive orders, cabinet appointments, and regulatory changes during the first one hundred days of the Trump administration.

Fortunately, now that we are well beyond that first hundred days, there continue to be trackers on myriad hot button issues such as immigration, education, climate and environment, tariffs and finance, defense, and the federal workforce. Additionally, you can find trackers on campaign promises kept, Project 2025 policy enactments, approval ratings, and even the number of days spent golfing. I am heartily grateful to the academics, journalists, scientists, librarians, and regular Joes who have taken on the burden of keeping us informed of the state of our brave new world.

The flip-side of this information overload is the staggering amount of government data that has gone and continues to go missing. Government data is a national treasure akin to national parks, public lands, and even the Smithsonian museums. The availability of current and accurate government data is a cornerstone of government accountability and ultimately democracy itself. It is critical that it be maintained and made freely available. Intrepid researchers are doing their best to preserve these precious public resources.

In this article we'll take a brief walk through a few regulatory trackers and government data preservation resources.

Regulatory Trackers

General

Librarians can always be counted on to be one step ahead in times of upheaval. Librarian **Kelly Smith at UC San Diego** created and maintains **US Government Information: Trump Trackers**, an excellent research guide which will point you to resources for tracking federal administrative changes for a variety of subject areas. https://ucsd.libguides.com/usgov/trumptrackers

One of the most sophisticated and heavily used general trackers is the **Brookings Center on Regulation and Market's Regulatory Tracker (Reg Tracker)** https://www.brookings.edu/articles/tracking-regulatory-changes-in-the-second-trump-administration/ "This tracker allows you to monitor a curated selection of new, delayed, and repealed rules, notable guidance and policy revocations, executive actions, and important court battles across key policy areas such as environmental, health, labor, and more." The current Reg Tracker is focused on the second Trump administration but can be adjusted to research the Biden and first Trump administrations as well. Reg Tracker has a ton of search

functionality. Results can be sorted by Nature of Action, Category, Status, or Agency. Keyword searching is also available.

Climate and Environment

Columbia Law School's Sabine Center for Climate Change Law has created **The Climate Backtracker** https://climate.law.columbia.edu/content/climate-backtracker which "identifies steps taken by the Trump-Vance administration to scale back or wholly eliminate federal climate mitigation and adaptation measures. The tracker is linked to our database of climate change regulations, related news, and two previous climate regulation trackers: the Climate Deregulation Tracker covering the first Trump administration and the Climate Reregulation Tracker covering the Biden administration."

Immigration

Stanford Professor Lucas Guttentag has put together the **Immigration Policy Tracking Project** https://immpolicytracking.org/ which can be searched by Subject Matter [Enforcement, Humanitarian, Non-immigrant Visas, Immigrant Visas, Citizenship, Labor, or Hearing and Adjudications] Agency [DHS, DOJ, DOL, State Department, & HHS] or Type of Action [Adjudication, Agency Directive, Change in Practice, Data and Reports, Forms and Information Collection, Presidential Orders, Program Termination, Rule, or Legislation]

Health Care

Formerly Kaiser News, **KFF's Health Provisions in the 2025 Federal Budget Reconciliation Bill** https://www.kff.org/tracking-the-medicaid-provisions-in-the-2025-budget-bill/ summarizes the provisions related to Medicaid, The Affordable Care Act, Medicare & Health Savings Accounts. Related resources (ex: Medicaid Expansion Tracker) are included with each of the summaries.

Federal Workforce

The National Employment Law Project's Worker Policy Watch https://www.nelp.org/worker-policy-watch/ tracks federal employee firings along with the news and litigation surrounding the decimation of the federal workforce.

The graphics in **CNN**'s tracker of **Trump's Overhaul of the Federal Workforce** https://www.cnn.com/politics/tracking-federal-workforce-firings-dg/index.html provide a bleak visual of the obliteration of some of the various agencies tracked. The tracker notes both the raw number of employees fired along with the percentage staff. Related litigation is also noted.

Litigation

Litigation is tracked on **Just Security's Litigation Tracker: Legal Challenges to Trump Administration Actions**. https://www.justsecurity.org/107087/tracker-litigation-legal-challenges-trump-administration/ Robust case summaries and links to the complaint and docket are included. A much-appreciated feature is the continually updated information for ongoing and related litigation.

Also fascinating is **The Revolving Door Project's Trump Administration Non-Adherence to Court Orders** https://therevolvingdoorproject.org/non-adherence-trump-administration-to-court-orders/ which tracks notable examples of non-adherence and court efforts to enforce their orders.

Recovering Government Data

Occurring alongside this decimation of federal agencies is the disappearance of government data. As librarian **Kelly Smith at UC San Diego** notes in her research guide **Federal Government Information After the 2025 Transition**:

> The federal web landscape changes with every new administration to reflect changes in policy, which means there has always been a problem of certain federal information/websites being taken down when a new administration begins. The difference this time around is the scale and speed of change. Entire offices, such as USAID and the Department of Education, are being closed or threatened with closure. Large numbers of websites, datasets, articles, and other types of content have been deleted or altered. Research grants have been terminated. Massive dismissals of staff mean fewer people to research, create, publish, and maintain information resources such as websites and databases. Resources we have relied on for years may no longer be available, and access to certain federal webpages may change from day-to-day or even hour-to-hour.
>
> Information related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) has been hit especially hard, following White House executive actions including new executive orders (EOs) and rescission of EOs from previous administrations. Environmental justice, vaccines and other health information, census research, the January 6 attack on the Capitol, and other important issues have also seen significant changes across federal websites.
> https://ucsd.libguides.com/FederalGovInfoPostTransition

Librarians at **American University** have created the **Government Information Data Rescue** research guide https://subjectguides.library.american.edu/data_rescue to link researchers to trusted repositories that have rescued U.S. government data. Their guide gives step-by-step strategies to retrieve information scrubbed from federal websites.

Need a Break from the Firehose? Visit Us @ KCLL.org

If you're encountering information overload, contact us for tips and suggestions for resources to help smooth your research path. If you have questions about regulatory tracking, becoming a subscriber, or any other law related topics, feel free to contact the law library at services@kcll.org.