

# Bush's Backward Sprint to the Finish



## *Health Care*

- **Cutting back Medicaid:** New rules "[narrowed the scope of services](#) that can be provided to poor people under Medicaid's outpatient hospital benefit."
- **Allowing federally funded institutions to turn down abortion requests for moral or religious reasons:** The rule offers "stronger job protections for doctors and other health care workers who refuse to participate in abortions [because of religious or moral objections](#)." Pro-choice supporters say "the rule could stretch the definition of abortion to [include birth control](#)."

## *Labor*

- **Making it harder to take paid time off:** Changes to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) "make it [more difficult for employees](#) to use paid vacation or personal days when they take leave for medical or family emergencies," and state that "a worker with a chronic health condition is required to [certify doctor visits](#) at least twice a year for that condition."
- **Allowing truck drivers to work 14 hour days:** Changes to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration rules "[allow truckers to drive as many as 11 consecutive hours](#)" and work up to 14 hour days.

## *Environment*

- **Allowing mining near the Grand Canyon:** A proposed rule by the Bureau of Land Management would [prevent Congress](#) from ordering emergency withdrawal of federal land from mining claims. The House Natural Resources Committee "issued such a withdrawal order in June for about [1 million acres near the Grand Canyon](#)."

- **Allowing federal agencies to discount global warming when assessing risks to endangered species:** The goal of the change is to “is to eliminate a long-standing provision of the Endangered Species Act that [requires an independent scientific review](#) by either the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of any federal project that could affect a protected species.” Instead, individual agencies would decide whether a project could harm an imperiled species.

- **Weakening the Endangered Species Act:** The rules would eliminate the [input of federal wildlife scientists](#) in some endangered species cases, [by allowing] the federal agency in charge of building, authorizing or funding a project to determine for itself whether a project would be likely to harm endangered wildlife and plants.

– **Eliminating environmental reviews of fishing regulations:** A rule change proposed by National Marine Fisheries Service would repeal a requirement that “[environmental impact statements be prepared](#) for certain fisheries-management decisions.” Instead, the government would “give review authority to regional councils dominated by commercial and recreational fishing interests.”

– **Allowing more emissions from power plants:** The Environmental Protection Agency is “finalizing new air-quality rules that would make it easier to build coal-fired power plants, oil refineries and other major polluters near national parks and wilderness areas” by [weakening the Clean Air Act](#).

– **Opening protected wilderness areas to energy development:** Despite being blocked by “federal court and administrative rulings,” the Bureau of Land Management is “reviving plans to [sell oil and gas leases in pristine wilderness areas](#) in eastern Utah that have long been protected from development.”

- **Letting factory farms voluntarily decide if they need permits to discharge waste into waterways:** The new rule “asks companies that run confined animal feeding operations to voluntarily apply for permits to discharge waste into waterways. If the operators don’t think they pollute enough, they are under [no obligation to get permits](#).”

- **Altering the definition of solid waste:** This rule “effectively [exempts about 1.5 million tons of hazardous waste](#) that is recycled from a regulation that required such material to meet strict labeling, transportation and disposal rules.”

## *Civil Liberties*

- **Allowing guns in national parks:** The Department of the Interior plans to “rewrite the policy for the national parks, with the idea that federal regulations should “mirror” state laws on guns in parks. That would mean [guns could be allowed in national parks](#) in states where they are allowed in state parks.”

- **Broadening law enforcements monitoring abilities:** The new rule “would broaden the scope of activities authorities could monitor to include organizations as well as individuals, along with non-criminal activities that are deemed ‘suspicious.’”

## *Administration*

- **Protecting political appointees by shifting them to permanent posts:** The administration’s shifting of political appointees to civil service posts in the Interior, Labor, and Housing and Urban Development departments, “at least initially will deprive the incoming Obama administration of the chance to install its preferred appointees in some key jobs.”