

Overlooked amidst all the other news, the White House [picked](#) a new acting regulatory czar earlier this month. The acting Director of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs is Paul Ray, who is very junior and a virtual unknown. It's difficult to imagine that he's going to be very effective at telling cabinet officials or other agency heads that they need to fix their proposed regulatory actions. That's a tough thing to do anyway, especially for a person with a temporary position. But I guess that's the idea: his job is just to carry out Mick Mulvaney's orders and rubber-stamp every regulatory rollback to come across his desk.

Paul Ray is something of a cipher. It's hard to find any information about him online because he just hasn't done much of anything to warrant attention. Ray is clearly a talented young lawyer, and he's got the resume that might make him a candidate for an entry-level job in law teaching, if he published a few good papers. He quite likely would have made partner in another five or six years if he had stayed at his law firm, assuming his supervising attorney's current praise reflects his actual views. Here's what we know about him based on his LinkedIn page, which still lists him as a law firm associate: He was an English major at Hillsdale College and graduated from Harvard Law School in 2011. Then he clerked on the Second Circuit and for Justice Sam Alito. Following that he went to Sidley & Austin in 2014. The clients he worked for included American Chemistry Council, American Forest and Paper Association, National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), Portland Cement Association, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, although he was probably too junior to have much direct contact with higher-ups. Then he spent some time working for Secretary of Labor Acosta before moving to OIRA last July. Being Acting Director should be a nice resume builder for him.

Regardless of how talented Ray may be, you don't pick someone that junior and inexperienced for a government job that you consider really important. It's like picking a really talented 1st Lieutenant as acting head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (Imagine nominating Ray as Attorney General, a job for which he is probably more qualified than OIRA head). And given the extra job insecurity that comes with being acting director, it's unlikely that someone with that thin a resume will make waves by actually having any opinions of his own. Rather, the appointment seems to be a sign that OIRA just isn't taken very seriously by this Administration.