

Skepticism about regulation is part of the Cato Institute's DNA. [Cato](#) is the country's leading libertarian think tank. But Cato is no friend of Schedule F, the centerpiece of Trump's attack on the bureaucracy during his presidency. Schedule F, which is also a core part of Project 2025, [aimed](#) to take thousands of senior officials out of the Civil Service system so they could be replaced by Trump loyalists. Trump initial effort was repealed by Biden, but he has promised to try again. But [Thomas Firey](#), the editor of Cato's *Regulation* magazine, says "reinstating Schedule F would likely prove disastrous — especially for people who truly want to see the bureaucracy downsized."

For those who aren't familiar with the libertarian movement, there are basically two kinds of libertarians. There are the more cerebral, classic libertarians, who believe in some combination of free market economics, individual freedom, and skepticism of government. Then there are the ego-driven libertarians. They're fans of the novelist Ayn Rand, an author whose appeal is otherwise limited to rebellious teenagers fantasizing about their future greatness. The Ayn Randers oppose government because they believe that truly superior human beings — themselves — should be unfettered by laws and regulations. The first kind of libertarians are represented by free market economist Milton Friedman; the second kind are represented by tech bros. Cato is in the first camp.

Back to the libertarian critique of Schedule F. Firey's writings on the subject are worth a read ([here](#) and [here](#)). According to Firey, "Schedule F and other 'deep state' plans would be little more than gimmicks, though they would likely produce serious problems for the implementing president and the nation." The reality, he says, is that "Injecting thousands of short-term, inexperienced, presidentially appointed mid-level managers into this convoluted dynamic would not change career civil servants' incentives." Nor would it change "the statutes, directives, orders, guidelines, rules, procedures, and judicial decisions that those workers are incentivized to follow." The main effect of Schedule F would be gridlock rather than policy change: "Schedule F would bungle and bog down the administrative state." After all, Firey says, "cumbersome processes are seldom improved by becoming outright gridlocked; instead, they need to be either improved or removed."

Here's Firey's conclusion:

Reforming the administrative state and rewriting statutes and regulations is hard work, requiring careful policymaking, talented people, and consensus-building. It's not the product of gimmicks like Schedule F and databases of inexperienced people. That's why reinstating Schedule F would likely prove disastrous — especially for people who truly want to see the bureaucracy downsized.

What Firey would really like to see is deregulation by Congress. He's smart enough to realize that installing inexperienced ideologues in the executive branch won't accomplish anything useful and would only make it harder to implement deregulatory policies. Not surprisingly, libertarians like Firey have had a hard time finding a place for themselves in the MAGA-era conservative movement.