

Last week, President Obama nominated Federal Trade Commission (FTC) [Chief Economist Howard Shelanski](#) to be the next Administrator of the [Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs](#) (OIRA) within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If confirmed by the Senate, Shelanski would fill the position vacated by Cass Sunstein, who returned to Harvard's law faculty in August 2012. [Boris Bershteyn](#), former OMB General Counsel, had held the position in an acting capacity until his departure from OMB last month. Career Deputy Administrator, Dominic Mancini is currently Acting Administrator.

Shelanski, who earned his JD and Ph.D. in economics from Berkeley, taught at Berkeley from 1997 until 2011, when he joined the Georgetown faculty. According to his [Georgetown Law faculty profile](#), Shelanski's teaching and research focus on antitrust, regulation, and telecommunications policy. In addition to his academic experience, Shelanski has first-hand experience with regulatory policy: he served as Chief Economist of the Federal Communications Commission, as well as both Deputy Director and (currently) as Director of the Bureau of Economics at the FTC, and Senior Economist for President Clinton's Council of Economic Advisors. He also clerked for Justice Antonin Scalia of the United States Supreme Court, Judge Stephen F. Williams of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, and Judge Louis H. Pollak of the U.S. District Court in Philadelphia, and practiced law at firms Davis, Polk & Wardwell, and Kellogg Huber Hansen Todd & Evans.

OIRA plays an important role in U.S. regulatory policy by overseeing the regulatory, information collection, and statistical activities of federal executive branch agencies. For over 30 years, presidents of both parties have relied on OIRA to coordinate and review executive branch regulatory activity to help ensure that regulations are consistent with presidential priorities and that they improve public welfare. Pursuant to [Executive Order 12866](#), OIRA is "the repository of expertise concerning regulatory issues." While Shelanski's regulatory experience is with agencies not subject to OIRA regulatory review (both the FTC and FCC are independent regulatory commissions), his economic and legal training and experience suggest that he would be well-qualified to head the office that ([in President Obama's words](#)) "offer[s] a dispassionate and analytical 'second opinion' on agency actions."

