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**OMB REPORTS 12 CABINET DEPARTMENTS
REDUCED PAPERWORK BURDENS IN FY2005**

WASHINGTON – In its annual report to Congress on Federal government paperwork, the Office of Management and Budget reported today that 12 cabinet agencies reduced the paperwork burdens imposed on the American people.

“The Paperwork Reduction Act is intended to make government work more effectively for our citizens, and this year’s report demonstrates progress has been made on many fronts,” said Rob Portman, Director for OMB. “In some important areas, agencies have significantly cut the time it takes the public to fill out government forms. Even more agencies this year are reporting a reduction in paperwork burden. These are steps in the right direction as we look to provide the best possible services for our taxpayers.”

Of the 15 Cabinet departments, 12 achieved net reductions in burden resulting from discretionary actions, up from 10 in FY2004 (See Figure 3). Examples to improve service to the public outlined in the report include providing customer service support electronically and simplifying agency forms to make them easier to understand and fill out.

The annual Information Collection Budget (ICB) report to Congress is required by the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) and is prepared by OMB's Office of Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) to report on the significant information collection activities across the Federal government. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires each Federal agency to establish a process to evaluate proposed collections of information, manage information resources to reduce information collection burdens on the public, and ensure that the public has timely and equitable access to information products and services.

Additionally, the report documents the continued, successful efforts of OMB and Federal agencies to ensure that agencies comply with the PRA's requirement that they obtain OMB approval for their information collections. As a result of the "zero tolerance" initiative, begun in the fall of 2001, the Administration has completely eliminated the backlog of ongoing collections for which agencies had allowed OMB's approval to expire (without timely requesting and obtaining a renewed approval), and has vastly reduced the incidence of new violations.

Though the number of Cabinet agencies reporting decreases in discretionary paperwork burden grew from 10 to 12, the advent of the new Medicare Prescription Drug program -- along with several other new statutory programs and other factors -- caused the Federal government's overall paperwork requirements to increase by 5.5 percent over the previous reporting year, FY2004 (total paperwork burden was 8.4 billion hours in FY2005, up from 7.9 billion hours

in FY2004). One of the other causes of the increase is the implementation of the new CAN-SPAM Act, legislation that enables the public to protect their privacy by regulating unsolicited commercial email.

Link to ICB report: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg/icb/fy2006_icb_report.pdf

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