

Government at Work – Ain't It Grand?



I've said it a million times. If you love the way government runs the DMV, post office, SEC in dealing with Bernie Madoff, Fannie & Freddie Mac, education, the BP oil spill, TSA and Hurricane Katrina, you're gonna love Obamacare. We've already experienced government's track record and we haven't even scratched the surface of the health care reform bill. In the meantime, there's absolutely no shortage of stupid government ideas and actions which shouldn't see the light of day but have.

Traffic and parking citations given out by the police in the city of Cambridge, Massachusetts, have an image of a yoga position on the front of the envelope with instructions on the reverse on how to achieve it. The point of all this is to calm down angry recipients of the tickets. You tell me whether that would work for you.

The feds are at it again with cigarettes. I've yet to meet a smoker who gave up smoking because of the warning labels which have been on the packs for decades. The feds are now talking about putting gruesome images on the packs to get people to stop smoking. Corpses, cancer patients and diseased lungs are among the images being considered. I know only a few people who continue to smoke but I also see a huge number of high school kids smoking, decades after the connection was made between cancer and smoking. Young people believe they're invincible and warning labels aren't going to stop them from smoking. Unless they've been living on a different planet, they already know the link between cancer and smoking and they continue to smoke because of their "it's not going to happen to me" attitude.

My nephew sent me a photo of a sign posted at the ferry terminal in Seattle which reads, "ASSAULTS ON WASHINGTON STATE EMPLOYEES WILL BE PROSECUTED TO THE FULL EXTENT OF THE LAW." He commented, "Why would the government feel the need to post a sign like this? Will someone that's thinking about assaulting a WA state employee see it and think, "Oh my God, I didn't realize that I'd be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. I better not do it!"

The Federal Highway Administration is requiring the City of New York to replace its 250,000 street signs to "conform to national standards" at a cost of \$27.5 million.

My state of Washington spent probably millions producing what has to be one of the most stupid public announcements called "Wash-your-hands-ington." This is just plain embarrassing.

In June, a group of high school students were singing the National Anthem at the Lincoln Memorial and were told by the U.S. Park Police to stop singing because they were "in violation of federal law and their impromptu performance constituted a demonstration in an area that must remain 'completely content neutral.'" Had they moved 25 steps – yes 25 steps – from where they were standing, it would've been alright. The students, in an act of civil disobedience, continued to sing. Yes, I'm fully aware the right to assemble may be restricted but, despite Supreme Court rulings, I don't get why singing the National Anthem of the United States – anywhere – should be prohibited in America.

In early 2009, a Massachusetts parole board released a career criminal who was serving three concurrent life sentences after he convinced them his was a changed man. In December, he killed a police officer while attempting to rob a department store. Fortunately, he died in the shootout.

But, there is a tiny ray of hope amidst all this dopey stuff. Stanislaus County, CA officials have said that 13-year old

Cody Alicea could keep the American flag on his bicycle. Earlier, he was told to remove it because of “racial tensions” at the school. Even bikers from the American Legion Riders escorted Cody to school to show their support for him and the American flag. Like singing the National Anthem, anyone, anywhere, should be able to wear, display or carry the American flag. After all, this is America, and if you don’t like it, leave!

I don’t get any of it, but if you do, God bless you.

My Genes Made Me Do It!

✘ Not a day goes by that I don’t read an article which floors me. One of the most recent is an article entitled “Infidelity and 12 Other Things We Blame on our Genes.” I said to myself, “This is a joke, right?” Not!

The article goes on and describes various behaviors and syndromes which are somehow attributed to our genes: infidelity, overeating, overspending, smoking, bad driving, inability to remember faces, poor sense of direction, shrewishness, stuttering, laziness, bullying, carpal tunnel syndrome and the dislike of spinach and broccoli.

I’m obviously not a doctor so I’m not going to question legitimate studies about medical or physiological problems which may be genetic. What I’m not getting are the behaviors we can now excuse because of our “genes.” When did “free will” disappear?

As usual, I’m wondering how many of these studies are funded with our tax dollars thanks to my favorite government agency, the National Institutes of Health. Who’s paying for this

nonsense?

These type of studies do nothing but allow people who behave badly to choose to escape personal responsibility and provide them with a new set of excuses instead of forcing people to own up to their actions. There are enough excuses floating around these days to justify people's behavior. The devil made me do it, my mother didn't breast feed me, my father didn't hug me, I only ate fast food, I didn't get a puppy for Christmas, I was bullied in school, my father sold my bicycle when I went to summer camp, I'm the youngest, I'm the oldest, I'm the middle child, I have brown eyes, I have blue eyes, and on and on and on. Stop whining already. It's boring. We don't need more excuses; we need people to take personal responsibility.

In the area of law in which I've practiced over the past twenty years, child abuse and neglect, I've heard every excuse in the book to explain an adult's malevolent actions against a child. So the fact that someone can't control their anger is not his or her fault, it's because of how they were raised? Well, at some point, the vicious cycle has to stop and the adult has to face up to his own shortcomings and failures as a parent.

So, let's take a look at some of these so-called genetic problems facing people today.

When your wife catches you with a hot babe, it isn't because you have a busted moral compass. You can now blame it on your "I can't keep it in my pants" gene.

Or the reason you're seducing someone else's husband who's got lots of money isn't because you're an amoral whore, it's probably because you've got the "I'm-allergic-to-men-who-work-at-Jiffy-Lube" gene.

Or if you're like the woman I know who has two "under-the-table" jobs but is still fraudulently collecting unemployment

benefits, you're not stealing and receiving welfare, it's because you've got the "I'm-entitled-to-take-free-money-from-the-taxpayers-and-get-what-I-can-from-the-government-dole" gene.

When someone is 26 years old and living in his mother's basement and playing video games 20 hours a day while sitting in a puddle of his own urine, it isn't because he's just a loser, it's because he's got the "I-think-I'll-blame-the-video-game-designer-for-my-addiction" gene.

When I see morons in Los Angeles who after drinking all day decide to destroy property throughout the city to "celebrate" a championship win, I should re-think this and say, these people aren't idiots they must suffer from the "I-Love-the-Lakers" gene.

The fact that someone maxes out their credit cards isn't because they're out of control in their spending habits, it's probably because they have the "money-challenged" gene or "I-love-spending-money-I-don't-have Syndrome."

If you're frustrated with other people's driving, not to worry. You're no doubt suffering because of the "I'm-usually-in-a-hurry-because-I-haven't-allocated-my-time-properly" gene. You can't help yourself.

On the other hand, maybe it does all have to do with genes and not personal behavior.

Maybe the guy who doesn't act the fool this month actually has the "I-love-my-wife-and-I'm-not-going-to-risk-losing-her-by-going-for-a-quickie-at-the-office-Christmas-party" gene.

And maybe the gal who's an alcoholic isn't drinking because of her own free will but because part of her DNA makeup contains the "I'm-a-member-of-AA-for-the-past-ten-years-and-don't-make-excuses-for-being-an-alcoholic" gene.

And does the guy in the wheelchair at our nearby Walmart work because, despite his overwhelming disabilities, he wants to be a productive member of society or does he really suffer with “I-choose-to-work-in-spite-of-my-illness-because-I’m-not-a-victim Syndrome?”

We know the difference between right and wrong but we all make mistakes. We’re not perfect. We’re all human. We all, at some point, behave in ways we afterwards regret. But most of us deal with it and don’t make excuses for our failings.

Sure, it’s easier to blame someone or anything else for one’s foibles. It’s easy not to have a game plan in life because that requires awareness. Having options and making choices requires personal responsibility. For some, it’s easier to blame outside causes – the nuns, astrological signs, tarot readings, the weather – or just about anything else rather than take control over their own lives and circumstances. I expect that type of rationale from children. Studies like those mentioned in the article just give people additional crutches in order to escape their accountability rather than a good swift kick in the pants followed by someone saying, “grow up!”

I don’t get it, but if you do, God bless you.