

You MUST Own a Gun – Or Else!

✘ With everything else going on in the world, you may have missed a piece of news coming out of South Dakota. It seems that a few legislators in that state have introduced a bill that would require every one of South Dakota's citizens over 21 years of age to own a gun.

Can you imagine? Lawmakers insisting that citizens own a gun or buy one they don't already own one – under penalty of law, no less! Government can't force people to buy something they don't want, can it?

Okay, you get it. So do the South Dakota lawmakers. According to State Rep. Hal Wick, one of the bill's five sponsors, "Do I or the other co-sponsors believe that the State of South Dakota can require citizens to buy firearms? Of course not. But at the same time, we do not believe the federal government can order every citizen to buy health insurance."

Just between us, I never associated South Dakota with funny. New York and funny? Sure. LA, funny. Yeah. But live and learn. This guy Hal Wick from the frozen plains is a regular riot. And smart, too.

Frankly, I think it would be great if everybody owned health insurance. But there's that pesky matter of the Constitution. If the federal government can force Americans to buy an insurance policy, why can't it force them to buy a health club membership? If we all went to the gym, we would be healthier – and healthy people spend less money on doctors, right?

And why stop there? How about a law that would require all Americans to eat three servings of fruits and vegetables every day? "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." That, too, would bring down our out-of-control health care costs.

And why couldn't the federal government make all Americans buy pogo sticks and hop around on them at least an hour a day. You don't see a lot of out-of-shape fatsos jumping around on a pogo stick, do you? One more way to reduce health care costs that are devouring way too much of our spending.

A few days ago, a federal judge in Pensacola, Florida ruled that last year's health care reform law, known in some circles as ObamaCare, was unconstitutional. Judge Roger Vinson wrote a long, thoughtful decision, but it pretty much came down to this: The federal government does not have unlimited powers. It cannot mandate that all Americans buy an insurance policy – and then punish them if they don't.

The New York Times predictably condemned the ruling, saying it was “a breathtaking example of judicial activism and overreach” motivated “at least in part by ideology.” Let's set aside the inconvenient fact that the gods who write editorials at the New York Times are never bothered by judicial activism, overreach or ideology when it comes from judges on the Left. Let's stop snickering at their hypocrisy and simply ask them – and all liberals who supported the personal mandate to buy health insurance – this brief question:

How do you feel about that South Dakota bill that would make it mandatory to own a gun?

I thought so.

