

12/4/85

Seat belts, fat patrols and killer jeans

Representative Dick Lane (D-East Point) may be just the man to save us from the dreaded killer blue jeans.

Lane is the sponsor of a mandatory seat belt law that will be coming up in the next Georgia General Assembly session. His bill would require anyone in the front seat



of automobile to buckle up or face fines of up to \$100.00.

The principle behind such legislation is clear: government should forcibly prevent people from taking personal risks of their own choosing. The government should, in effect, protect people from themselves.

Rep. Lane obviously believes this principle is a sound one. So naturally he's irked by those Georgians who object to being ordered by the state to wear seat belts.

"(Their) reaction is, 'Don't tread on me. Don't tell us what to do,'" says an exasperated Rep. Lane of his opponents on this issue.

You can certainly understand

his frustration. After all, that old 'Don't tread on me' slogan went out of fashion a long time ago. It was used by the Minutemen during the American Revolution, during a time when people actually cared enough about personal freedom to stand up and do something about it. But those days are long gone. Heck, today people **expect** to be pushed around and controlled by the government. It's the American way.

My advice to Rep. Lane is to ignore all those troublemakers and their prattle about liberty and freedom of choice. He should press on with his mandatory seat belt crusade. And when he's done, I hope he'll turn his attention to some similar pressing problems.

For example: Last year, a National Institutes of Health report declared obesity to be "a killer disease...a killer as smoking is."

Now here is a situation that cries out for the government to step in and save people from themselves. I suggest that Rep. Lane sponsor a bill to create a statewide Fat Patrol. This organization would set up posts near the check-out counters of every grocery store in the state.

Before customers would be allowed to buy food, Fat Patrol agents would weight them, check their blood pressure, and give them a pinch test.

Those who were only a bit overweight would be given warning tickets. Those who were several pounds or more overweight, however, would have all the ice cream, cookies, steaks and other fattening goodies taken out of their shopping carts, and they would be restricted to celery, bean sprouts and similar low-cal items until they shaped up to government standards.

Naturally, some of the same hardheads who are against mandatory seat belts will get all riled up about this, too. But Rep. Lane can just ignore them again. After all, the Fat Patrol idea is based on exactly the same principle as mandatory seat belts, and it isn't a whit more tyrannical. And it would save many thousands more lives than seat belt legislation.

The Fat Patrol is just the beginning. There are endless other ways to save lives by protecting people from the consequences of their own choices. We could reduce the speed limit to a maximum of, say, 10 or 15 miles per hour. We could try Prohibition

again—there seems to be plenty of support for that in the General Assembly already. And we could outlaw cigarettes, skateboards, bathtubs, fat-soluble vitamins, you name it.

The possibilities are endless, once we accept the basic principle behind the mandatory seat belts.

Eventually, I hope Rep. Lane and his supporters will turn their attention to something that's been worrying me ever since I read about it a few years ago: killer blue jeans.

That's right. It seems a gentleman in the Netherlands had a bit too much to drink at a party one night. Still wearing his clothes, he climbed into a bathtub full of water and fell asleep.

When he awoke the next morning, he found his jeans had shrunk tightly around his right knee. By the time he got them off, he was crippled in that knee for life.

Now it only takes a little imagination to see how that accident could have been worse—even fatal. Yet here in Georgia, thousands of unsuspecting men, women and children go about in blue jeans daily, unaware of the

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Killer jeans

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grave potential dangers of these garments.

I urge Rep. Lane to look into this at his earliest convenience, and to work up legislation to control this menace—to ban jeans altogether, if need be.

Such measures may sound severe. But if only one life is saved, it will be well worth it.

(A Reader Responds)

Dec 5, 1985

Sii:

I am writing this in response to Jim Harris, Seat Belts, Fat Patrol + Killer Jeans.

As far as seat belts go I don't see anything wrong with them, as they do save lives.

But this fat patrol as he calls it is a dumb idea. What gives you the right to think that anyone has the right to tell anybody what they can buy or what they can eat. As you might not realize this is America and I am damn proud to to be Am American.

I would like to see someone try and take anything out of my shopping cart, also try and weigh me. I work ~~hard~~ hard for my money and have the right to spend it the way that I want to.

If you think your idea is a smart one, next time you go to to the store try and take this food out of someone's cart, but remember this before you do, you liable to suffer a few knots and bruises.

Jim if you think you are right go live in Russia.

As for Jean they are like Morris Apple pie to American.

Anger,
Lion