



Written by [Wallis W. Wood](#) on January 3, 2014

Big Nanny Government's Assaults on Light Bulbs, Coal

If you like your light bulb, you can keep your light bulb.

Actually, just like Barack Obama's promise regarding health insurance, this one's not true either. As of Jan. 1 (Happy New Year, by the way!), the import or manufacture of 40-watt or 60-watt light bulbs is now forbidden in the United States. This follows the ban on 75-watt and 100-watt bulbs, which had already been implemented.



I wish we could blame this on the current Administration, but actually this assault on our freedom of choice goes back to 2007, when Congress passed the Energy Independence and Security Act and it was signed into law by President George W. Bush.

Yep, the prohibition on incandescent bulbs is actually six years old. It just didn't get much publicity until replacement light bulbs began disappearing from store shelves. Now that more consumers realize what's happening, a whole bunch of people are stockpiling the ones that remain. If this is the first you're learning of it and you want to keep some incandescent bulbs on hand, good luck finding some.

The experts who've decided they know what's good for us say that, in time, we'll learn to appreciate the wisdom of their policies. After all, the new compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) and light-emitting diodes (LEDs) that we're being forced to use are much more energy-efficient than the trusty old favorites. The new bulbs last so much longer — up to 23 years, we're told — that we'll save money in the long run. So what if they cost 10 times more money than the old, familiar light bulbs that we've used for the past 100 years?

And so what if we hate the way these new light bulbs look? Or the weird kind of light many of them give out? Your not-so-friendly Federal government has decided that it doesn't matter what your preferences might be. No consumer choice here — except which kind of new, energy-efficient light bulb you're going to buy.

Welcome to one more way that Big Nanny government manages to intrude into the bedroom — not to mention the kitchen, living room and anyplace else where you flip a switch and expect a light to come on.

Oh, and how do you like how long it takes for some of these bulbs to come to full strength? I went into a guest bathroom recently. When I turned on the switch, it was still so dark in the room that I could barely find the toilet. In time, the room got a little bit brighter. But forget about bringing any reading material in with you.

Don't look to Congress for any relief from these edicts. The House tried twice, back in 2007, to let us keep our incandescent bulbs. But two alternatives offered up by conservative lawmakers, the Better Use of Light Bulbs Act or the Light Bulb Freedom of Choice Act, failed to pass the House.

Facing the inevitable, General Electric has closed the last factory in the U.S. that manufactured incandescent bulbs. The shutdown of the plant in Winchester, Virginia cost 200 employees their jobs.



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And don't count on the forced demand for CFLs and LEDs creating a bunch of new jobs in this country. All of those are being manufactured abroad, mostly in China. Thanks, Uncle Sam, for helping export even more U.S. jobs.

The assault on the light bulb is mere trifle, however, compared to the job losses and financial costs of Obama's war on coal. And this isn't happening because of any laws passed by Congress. No, the culprits here are the bureaucrats in the Environmental Protection Agency, who simply decree whatever regulations they deem necessary to achieve their goals.

Estimates are that some 600,000 jobs will be lost because of the EPA directives, mostly in Kentucky and West Virginia. Last week, both Kentucky Senators, as well as all five of the State's Representatives, filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the Supreme Court, in support of a lawsuit challenging the EPA's authority to regulate coal plants.

Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) said the case is "an egregious example of the EPA's violation of the law in pursuit of its overzealous, anti-coal agenda." And he added, "The ability to create laws is the purview of Congress and the EPA has clearly overstepped its authority."

We'll find out later this year if the Supreme Court agrees with him and does anything to retard the EPA's onslaught against the coal industry. If not, you can expect to pay a lot more for electricity in this country. Nicolas Loris, an economist at the Heritage Foundation, warned that the EPA assault on coal-fired power plants "will deliver a blow to the economy and raise costs for consumers." He added: "Any way you shake this, it's a no-win for our economy."

And speaking of a no-win, how about the latest on Obamacare? Just before Christmas, the Obama Administration announced that it was waiving the individual mandate for people who have had their existing health insurance policies canceled.

Geez, wasn't it only a few weeks ago that the Democrats allowed a partial shutdown of the federal government, rather than pass any Republican-endorsed measure to delay the individual mandate? Now it seems that Obama and his allies are tacitly admitting that Senator Ted Cruz and the House Republicans were right in demanding a delay.

This is just one more example of how the Obama Administration is changing the law without bothering to get Congress involved. Columnist John Fund says delaying the individual mandate "is at least the 14th unilateral change to Obamacare that's been made without consulting Congress."

Ho-hum, another crisis, another unconstitutional edict from the folks in the White House.

Considering all of the attacks on our freedoms, is it any wonder that the latest Gallup poll says that 72 percent of Americans now say that Big Government is a threat to our liberties? That number is a new record high, by the way.

As I said last week, there are some encouraging signs that more and more Americans are standing up and speaking out in defense of their principles. It was wonderful to see the furor that erupted when A&E Networks suspended "Duck Dynasty" patriarch Phil Robertson.

Let's hope the new year will bring us some more such victories. I hope that one of your resolutions will be to do your part in making it happen.

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

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