



Bit by Bit Strategy

There's a move on to prohibit Washington's football team from calling itself "Redskins," even though a 2009 U.S. Supreme Court decision said that it has that right. Now the name change advocates are turning to the political arena and intimidation. The NCAA has already banned the University of North Dakota from calling its football team the "Fighting Sioux."



This is the classic method of busybodies and tyrants; they start out with something trivial or small and then magnify and extend it. If these people are successful in banning the use of Indian names for football teams, you can bet the rent money that won't end their agenda. Our military has a number of fighting aircraft named with what busybodies and tyrants might consider racial slights, such as the Apache, Iroquois, Kiowa, Lakota and Mescalero. We also have military aircraft named after animals, such as the Eagle, Falcon, Raptor, Cobra and Dolphin. The people fighting against the Redskins name might form a coalition with the PETA animal rights kooks to ban the use of animal names.

Another example of the strategy of starting out small is that of the tobacco zealots. In 1965, in the name of health, tobacco zealots successfully got Congress to enact the Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act. A few years later, they were successful in getting a complete smoking ban on planes, and that success emboldened them to seek many other bans. The issue here is not smoking but tyrant strategy. Suppose that in 1965, the tobacco tyrants demanded that Congress enact a law banning smoking in bars, in workplaces, in restaurants, in apartments, within 25 feet of entrances, in ballparks, on beaches, on sidewalks and in other places. Had they revealed and demanded their full agenda back in 1965, there would have been so much resistance that they wouldn't have gotten anything. By the way, much of their later success was a result of a bogus Environmental Protection Agency study on secondhand smoke. I'd like to hear whether EPA scientists are willing to declare that people can die from secondhand smoke at a beach, on a sidewalk, in a park or within 25 feet of a building.

During the legislative and subsequent state ratification debates over the 16th Amendment — which established the income tax — the political task of overturning the Constitution's prohibition of such tax was considerably eased by political promises that any income tax levied would fall upon only the wealthiest 3 to 5 percent of the population. Most Americans paid no federal income tax, and those earning \$500,000 or more paid only 7 percent. In 1913, only 358,000 Americans filed 1040 forms,



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compared with today's 140 million. That's the rope-a-dope strategy. To get the votes of the masses, politicians start out small and exploit the politics of envy by promising that only the rich will be taxed.

In 1898, Congress imposed a temporary federal excise tax on telephones as a revenue measure during the Spanish-American War. At that time, only the rich owned phones. Soon nearly all Americans owned phones. Both the rich and the poor paid the telephone excise tax. Congress repealed this "temporary" Spanish-American War tax in 2006. Nobel laureate Milton Friedman had it right when he said, "Nothing is so permanent as a temporary government program."

The Tax Reform Act of 1969, called the alternative minimum tax, was created to raise revenue from 155 "rich" Americans who legally avoided federal income taxes by buying tax-free municipal bonds. Today more than 4 million Americans are hit by the AMT, and most of them hardly qualify as rich.

Here's another rope-a-dope just beginning. The National Transportation Safety Board recently recommended that states reduce the allowable blood alcohol content by more than a third — to 0.05 percent, as opposed to today's 0.08 percent. The NTSB is calling it a recommendation just to test the waters. If the board doesn't see resistance, its next move will be to threaten noncomplying states with a cutoff of highway construction funds. Setting the legal limit at 0.05 percent is not these people's end objective. Their end objective is to outlaw any amount of alcohol in the blood while one is driving.

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