



Written by [Walter E. Williams](#) on December 28, 2011

## Moral Busybodies and Banning Cellphone Use While Driving

With very little evidence, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration claims that there were some 3,092 roadway fatalities last year that involved distracted drivers. Americans ought to totally reject Hersman's agenda. It's the camel's nose into the tent. Down the road, we might expect mandates against talking to passengers or putting on lipstick while driving. They may even mandate the shutdown of drive-in restaurants as a contributory factor to driver distraction through eating while driving. You say, "Come on, Williams, you're paranoid. There are already laws against distracted driving, and it would never come to that!" Let's look at some other camels' noses into tents.



During the legislative debate before enactment of the 16th Amendment, Republican President William Taft and congressional supporters argued that only the rich would ever pay federal income taxes. In fact, in 1913, only one-half of 1 percent of income earners were affected. Those earning \$250,000 a year in today's dollars paid 1 percent, and those earning \$6 million in today's dollars paid 7 percent. The 16th Amendment never would have been enacted had Americans not been duped into believing that only the rich would pay income taxes. It was simply a lie to exploit American gullibility and envy.

The fact of the matter is that the founders of our nation so feared the imposition of direct taxes, such as an income tax, that Article 1, Section 9 of the Constitution says, "No Capitation, or other direct, Tax shall be laid, unless in Proportion to the Census or Enumeration herein before directed to be taken." It was not until the Abraham Lincoln administration that an income tax was imposed on Americans. Its stated purpose was to finance the war, but it took until 1872 for it to be repealed. During the Grover Cleveland administration, Congress enacted the Income Tax Act of 1894. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional in 1895. It took the 16th Amendment (1913) to make permanent what the founders feared.

Another camel's nose in the tent lie that's threatening the economic collapse of our country is the Medicare lie. At its beginning, in 1966, Medicare cost \$3 billion. The House Ways and Means Committee, along with President Lyndon Johnson, estimated that Medicare would cost an inflation-adjusted \$12 billion by 1990. In 1990, Medicare topped \$107 billion. That's nine times Congress' prediction. Today's Medicare tab comes to \$523 billion and shows no signs of leveling off. The 2009 Medicare trustees report put the unfunded Medicare liability at \$89 trillion. The 1966 Medicare cost estimate was simply a congressional and White House lie to get the American people to buy into their agenda. But not to worry; the real Medicare crisis won't hit the nation until today's beneficiaries and political supporters are dead. It's today's children who'll bear the burden of our profligacy.



Written by [Walter E. Williams](#) on December 28, 2011

---

But back to the proposed cellphone ban. NTSB Chairwoman Hersman said: "It's going to be very unpopular with some people. We're not here to win a popularity contest. We're here to do the right thing." C.S. Lewis warned us about people like Hersman, saying: "Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It would be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience."

*Walter E. Williams is a professor of economics at George Mason University. To find out more about Walter E. Williams and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).*

**COPYRIGHT 2011 CREATORS.COM**



## Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,  
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



**Subscribe**

### What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.