



If Your Clothes Sometimes Stink as Badly as the Culture, Blame Big Brother

Have you noticed that modern “efficient” washing machines sometimes really stink — and that clothes emerging from them also may? Or have you wondered why new washers’ electronic displays are reminiscent of the space shuttle or why they can have wash cycles approximating low-Earth-orbit space-flight length? Uncle Sam’s regulations, which now touch virtually every aspect of our lives, are the reason.

Ronald Reagan once said that the nine scariest words in the English language are, “I’m from the government, and I’m here to help.” The feds have long had their claws in appliances such as refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, and air conditioners (and even in toilets). Unfortunately, Reagan himself helped author the washing machine “help,” signing into law The National Appliance Energy Conservation Act of 1987, which established “energy and water efficiency” standards for washers and dryers. More regulations would follow in, for example, 1994, 2004, 2007, and 2018.

The result is that a simple, effective appliance has become more expensive and, many say, less effective. One of these individuals, American Thinker’s Robert Arvey, spoke of his experiences after he and his wife replaced their old noisy washing machine with a modern marvel. With his old washer, you merely “adjusted three knobs for temperature, size, and fabric (heavy, delicate, or medium) and that was about it,” Arvey [wrote](#). “Push start, and come back to a clean load of laundry when the spin cycle ends.” He continued:

The new, high-tech version was a silent wonder of modern technology, but the technology did nothing for the human user. It was designed to conserve water and energy, presumably to save the planet. It had sensors, to measure the load, and electronics to calibrate how much water and power to use.

All that would have been commendable but for two other factors. First, the sensing features were maddeningly slow. They took so long that I would be on the verge of thinking the machine was never going to start. It did this before and after each procedure (wash, rinse, spin) as well, stopping for no apparent reason between each, before finally, at long last, starting up again. Second, the lid would lock. It would lock me, the owner, out of my own



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washing machine that I had paid for. It was for my own protection, of course. I am too stupid to avoid sticking my head into an agitating or spinning tub. I don't know how I ever survived the death trap of my old machine for so many years.

Arvay elaborates further on how the modern technology takes control, as if the machine says, "My body, my choice!" But I have my own experiences.

When a fleece I often wear during outdoor activity would get wet and I couldn't let it dry sufficiently, it would sometimes develop that putrid odor that results from extreme bacteria build-up. Then it was time for a good washing, of course. But I found this difficult in my building's a communal laundry, which only has "high efficiency" machines that appear to just spray the clothes with water. I found myself running the fleece through cycles multiple times to effect a sufficient cleaning. High efficiency?

Don't think it's just me, either. As a 2013 FreedomWorks article [pointed out](#) in relation to the 2007 standards, [Consumer Reports had concluded](#) that year, "For the first time in years, we can't call any washer a Best Buy."

"Government regulations effectively eliminated good technology from the market and artificially imposed other types of technology through the standards," the site continued.

Of course, though, as the *New York Times* proclaimed in 1997 in "Washday's Frontier: The Front-Loaders," the new machines would save consumers money, right?

Perhaps not. Their greater cost (regulation is typically expensive) was supposed to be more than offset by energy and water-cost savings over time. Yet this claim is based on a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) "scenario in which the government washer is used 392 times a year (or 7 1/2 loads each and every single week) over a period of 14 years," [wrote](#) the Foundation for Economic Education in 2002. (For low-income families, the DOE used an even higher figure — 410!)

Who, unless running a camp or an orphanage, does more than one load every day?

It doesn't matter, however, because modern washers are about as likely to last 14 years as that soft cheese in your fridge. As [LewRockwell.com reported](#) in 2012 relating passages from an Epinions article:

Too many large appliance products are now being engineered to meet priorities that do not include a reasonable interval between repairs and a service life commensurate with their initial cost.

... All high efficiency, high-speed spin washers (both top and front-load) invariably possess a motherboard and a host of electronic parts, and according to those who repair them for a living, washers crammed with multiple electronic sensors, touchpads, digital displays, and miniaturized circuit boards tend to need more frequent repair — i.e. — replacement. They must be kept on an electrical circuit with functioning surge protection, because their vulnerable and expensive solid-state components can easily degrade or burn out with electrical power surges.

But whatever you think about the modern machines — and their bells and whistles can impress — a couple of questions should be asked. First, how does the federal government have constitutional warrant to regulate appliances?



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Note that states do have such power, and not just constitutional imperatives but also common sense dictate that they should be the ones to regulate energy and water efficiency *if* it is to be done (and I oppose such). After all, the water situation is very different in rainy Washington State than in Nevada, and California's electric-grid woes aren't experienced elsewhere. Having a federally imposed, one-size-fits-all energy/water regulatory regime is lunacy.

The second question is: If these modern washers really are "better for the consumer," why does Uncle Sam have to compel their use via law?

Of course, the deeper matter here is that the washing-machine issue just reflects how regulation-mad, all-encompassing statists have put the Constitution through enough hot-water cycles so that our rights have been washed away and all that's left is "Congress shall...."



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