

Dear Committee,

When I saw the newspaper article about you on Aug 29, I was dismayed and appalled. It then became necessary to write this letter, since apathy was not an option.

Conservatives the world over are obsessed with reducing government "interference" in the lives of its citizens. America's Republicans are the most egregious example of this mania for "small" government, though Australia's right-wingers seem almost as passionate.

The Nanny State. Toxic words to some, yet golden to me and anyone with a shred of common-sense. We need MORE regulation when it comes to health, not less in my opinion.

Sadly, the human race is an extremely underwhelming species. Just go to any newspaper or media news outlet and the proof will be on stark display. Yes, we are capable of achieving great things, but we also have a tragic propensity for inflicting misery and evil on each other. Moreover, we are an incredibly lazy species and government regulation is essential for controlling our dark side.

What the committee needs to do is get out of their cosy offices and see reality. Go to an average shopping centre and observe the consequences of "choice". Watch how every second child is either clutching a box of hot chips or sucking on a can of Coke or both while an obese parent waddles along beside them. This is why we desperately need a sugar tax, though our spineless politicians are too scared of the sugar lobby to act. Meanwhile, the nation's medical spending will continue to soar and no amount of public-service commercials or education will make a difference.

Humans tend to indulge their baser instincts without adequate regulation. Hence the Great Depression and its modern counterpart a few years ago and the villainous activities of the banking sector as exposed recently. Yes, corporate greed/malfeasance has become a bit of a cliché (Hardies anyone ?) but the average person needs regulation too because they will usually take the path of least resistance.

Take smoking. More regulation is needed, as in banning tobacco etc. How on earth can a "product" so demonstrably poisonous be allowed ? Especially as Big Tobacco takes pains to make the nicotine more addictive. And throw their top execs in the stocks while you're at it & charge a dollar a throw for anyone wanting to fling a rotten tomato or egg. Bingo, lots of money for charity + sell the TV rights for even more money to reduce the budget deficit. Alcohol can't be banned of course, as proven in America and even the concept would be too horrendous for most people to contemplate. Especially as it's now become a "staple" rather than "discretionary" in terms of human spending, which is extremely sad on its own as it's the source of so much pain.

Bike helmets ? Oh look, here's a cyclist proudly riding along without a helmet yet they'll usually end up in the public hospital system if injured and thereby expect the bossy old government to fix them up at taxpayer expense ! Solution : compel cyclists without helmets to use PRIVATE health care if injured.

Lifejackets ? Ditto. The logic is compelling in its simplicity, just like the law about wearing seatbelts in cars and not texting while driving. Why don't the "choice" crusaders try and abolish those ?

And E cigarettes ? Smoking in all its forms is bad for humans, yet the suits at Big Tobacco are constantly scheming to find new ways to enslave the gullible while loudly and predictably declaring the virtues of "choice". So please keep the ban.

Oh wait, I see a pattern emerging : whenever “choice” turns sour, it’s the public purse/health system which has to pick up the pieces. Totally unfair, as the “choosers” should be footing the bill for their stupidity at all times. Alas, we know that’s too hard to achieve so Nanny State to the rescue !

Sorry I can’t put my name to this, as I work for the government & can’t risk a backlash from my employer.

Nevertheless, I’m a taxpayer & entitled to express my opinion to those whose salaries I contribute to, so I hope this email (which is pretty short compared to some submissions I’ve seen) will at least be read. No doubt the conservative committee members will scoff, but that’s fine.

Thanks very much !

A very concerned citizen.

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