

AMSPECBLOG

Block the Bulb-Smashers!

By Doug Bandow on 6.3.11 @ 7:58AM

In 2007 President George W. Bush and the Democratic Congress passed one of the dumber nanny-state measures in a long time. They said we could no longer have incandescent light bulbs. The restrictions start in December.

There are several important reasons to prefer incandescent light bulbs. One of the most important is that breaking a compact fluorescent bulb results in the home equivalent of a hazmat spill. Get some mercury on your clothes and the Energy Department says to throw them away!

Where is the Republicah House majority, supposedly dedicated to restoring Americans' liberty? AWOL, of course! Wrote Diane Furchtgott-Roth:

President George W. Bush signed the light bulb ban -- the brainchild of Reps. Jane Harman, D-Calif., and Fred Upton, R-Mich, -- into law in 2007 as part of the Energy Independence and Security Act.

Upton is now chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. While lobbying among Republicans for the position following their November 2010 election victory, he promised to seek repeal of the ban.

"We have heard the grass roots loud and clear, and will have a hearing early next Congress," he said last December. "The last thing we wanted to do was infringe upon personal liberties -- and this has been a good lesson that Congress does not always know best."

Rep. Joe Barton, R-Texas, proposed a bill to save incandescent light bulbs in January. Barton's measure has 62 co-sponsors, including 61 Republicans and one Democrat. A companion bill with 28 backers in the Senate is sponsored by Sen. Michael Enzi, R-Wyo.

The bills have not yet been considered in committee.

Solving Medicare is hard. Blocking the bulb-smashers is easy. One gets the sense the House Speaker John Boehner and the leadership really aren't against Big Government. They just like posturing against Big Government. After all, most of them have spent their careers voting for most of the programs and agencies that are bankrupting us today.

If Congress doesn't act, there is an alternative. Stock-piling bulbs. I've been buying 100 watt bulbs whenever they go on sale. Next year I'll stockpile 75 watt bulbs. And the year after, 40 and 60 watt bulbs.

Of course, if President Barack Obama is reelected, we probably will see creation of the Bulb Enforcement Agency to combat the bulb black market that otherwise will develop!

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