

# Blame the lawyers and law schools

Column by  
**BOB INGLE**

All these years I've been laying blame on the sorry state of affairs at the feet of colleges and the loony political correctness that started on campus and rolled off the quad to needlessly envelop the lives of ordinary people. Maybe I missed the mark.

Walter Olson, journalist and author, has written a book called "Schools For Misuse: Legal Academia and an Overlawyered America" that contends it is the law schools that have done us in. He makes a convincing argument:

"In New Jersey, after the freestanding Education law Center (founded by the Rutgers law prof Paul Tractenberg with Ford (Foundation) funding launched a series of finance suits that convulsed the state's politics for the next thirty years, reporters covering the suits often turned for commentary and analysis to the Institute on Education and Policy (also founded by prof Paul Tractenberg with Ford funding but housed, unlike the Education Law center, within the law school itself.)"

Olson, a fellow at the conservative think tank Cato Institute, maintains the top legal schools in the country have a left-leaning profile so that opinions, such as there should be a crackdown on fast food, are expressed often but conservative ones, such as immigration laws should be enforced, are not.

A 2006 class action suit against the Apple Corporation alleged that it had wrongfully failed to tell buyers its iPod could damage hearing if listened to at too high a volume. The user guide contained such a warning but the lawyers said it was not prominent enough. The named plaintiff did not allege his own hearing had been damaged.

Shouldn't users have some responsibility for their actions? This is the kind of thing that has lead to warnings that you shouldn't use the toaster oven in the bathtub.

Since legislatures are full of lawyers and so is Congress, any change would be slow in coming. One of the things about which I am proud of my home state is that in the early days there were only three formal laws: the use of strong spirits was banned (wine and beer were all right) so was the importation of slaves and there was a requirement for compliance for maintaining peace with Native Americans.

It worked well because until 1755 attorneys also were banned since early settlers wanted Georgia to be “free from that pest and scourge of mankind called lawyers.”

**Bob Ingle is senior political columnist for New Jersey Press Media. He can be reached via e-mail at [bingle@njpressmedia.com](mailto:bingle@njpressmedia.com)**